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**Audience development through cultural synergies:  
Organizing an exhibition of postmodern art at the  
Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti**

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# **Audience development through cultural synergies: Organizing an exhibition of postmodern art at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti**

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## **Abstract:**

Audience development, the notion of maintaining and increasing cultural organizations' audiences, is inextricably linked to marketing. Marketing tools facilitate constant communication with audiences and broaden the experience of art even after the actual visit to an organization's premises.

The paper examines the development of audiences in regional museums in Greece through synergies with other art forms and the use of marketing tools. The author examines the case of organizing a periodical postmodern exhibition with works by an Austrian painter, in the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti.

The aim of the research is to develop the museum's audience by featuring a new artist and promoting the event through various marketing tools and technology. The research questions revolve around political, economic and social issues and the ways they affect audiences' attendance, the sustainability of regional museums, the recruitment of specialized staff, the creation of a strategic financial management and marketing plan for the museum and the specific exhibition.

The outcome of the research could be used as a guide for regional museums that strive to increase their audience, as it proposes synergies with various art genres, periodic exhibitions of new artists as marketing tools for audience development.

**Keywords:** *audience development, synergy, regional museums, postmodern exhibition, Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti*

This research is based on my thesis *Audience development in regional museums through synergies with other art forms: Organizing an exhibition of postmodern art at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti*, supervised by Professor Eirini Papadaki and copyright protected.

## **1. Introduction**

In order for cultural organizations to fulfil their goal of educating and entertaining the public they aim for audience development by maintaining the already existing audience and increasing it (Sifaki & Sifakis, 2007: 262-266, Kouri, 2010: 63-73). However, audience development has become increasingly challenging amidst ongoing crises, exacerbated by shifts in audience needs and communication methods due to technology and the COVID-19 pandemic (Orlandi, 2020: 57-66).

The topic of this paper is based on the researcher's postgraduate studies and investigates the development of regional museum audiences through synergies with various art forms, the presentation of new artists, the utilization of marketing tools and technology. In order to create a guide for the development of regional museum audiences, an exhibition of postmodern art was organized at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti with works by an Austrian artist. The guide is divided into three categories of study investigating the museum, the artist and the audience.

The research questions focused on audience needs and requirements, whether they are interested in this exhibition and whether audience development can occur through the guide. The hypothesis of the research is that the regional museums of Greece face difficulties to communicate with the public due to various factors such as lack of flexibility, technology, specialized staff and lack of strategy. At the same time, we assumed that their audiences wish to participate in art in various and multidimensional ways. Young visitors, in particular, may benefit from engaging with contemporary art exhibitions that address political, economic, and social issues prevalent in our daily lives. By offering such exhibitions, we provide access to art without the need to travel to major city galleries or museums. By organizing a post-modern art

exhibition at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti, we fuse the museum's traditional provincial heritage with contemporary art, marketing, and technology.

## **2. The Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti: vision, mission, audience**

The Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti is a historic listed building, located in the old settlement of Nikiti, Halkidiki (Sithonia) and its collection consists of objects of folklore/historical importance, such as tools<sup>1</sup>. Its mission is to highlight the history of the region (Government Gazette, 2005: 12403-12414), educate the new generation and promote awareness of local culture (Museum Charter, 2011: article 2).

Through on-site observation, continuous monitoring of the museum's activities and the study of the visitors' comment book, it was confirmed that the museum is underperforming, endangering its viability. There are not frequent visits by locals or schools and most visitors are tourists. The museum currently lacks technological integration, a defined investment strategy, and specialized staff.

In addition, it was observed that especially in the region, museums often lag behind technological development, under the guise of their folklore/historical character, ignoring the new needs and demands of the audiences. The museum should manage its resources and capital, hire skilled personnel, seek market opportunities for funding, and turn to marketing and technology (Garibaldi, 2015: 230-243, Kavoura & Sylaio, 2018: 7002-7013) in order to generate the required income for its operation and sustainability.

### **2.1. Environment analysis**

#### **2.1.1. Key figures**

With the post-modern exhibition at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti, a broad, mainly young audience is targeted. In order to understand the needs of the Greek market and consumers, an environmental analysis was carried out by studying statistical data from ELSTAT (statistics.gr) and STATISTA (statista.com). It was suggested that women with a higher educational level are considered the main visitors of museums (Hill & others, 2017: 38), the increased unemployment rates among young people and women were observed (O'Neill, 2024: no page), affecting the museums pricing policy of cultural products. Moreover, the high numbers of children under the age of 18 (ELSTAT, 2018: 23) and the number of refugees (ELSTAT, 2022a: 1-37, ELSTAT, 2022b: 15), show the need for educational programs. Also, archaeological sites seem to be more popular than museums (ELSTAT, 2022c: 1-4). Finally, the study aimed to assess the age distribution and educational backgrounds of museum visitors in Greece, but the data that was found was rendered obsolete and therefore not notable.

Information about the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti was obtained from a notebook, which the organization keeps to record visitors' comments. The content of the notebook could function as a state of statistical data, but we cannot consider it reliable, due to the lack of accuracy and consistency in its completion. From the notebook data examined by the researcher, it is noted that in 2019 during the museum's opening hours from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. until 22:00 pm (closed on Sunday), mornings were less busy than afternoons, especially in July and August. September was the least busy month. The most popular day was Saturday, both in the morning and in the afternoon. For 2020-2023 there are no data at our disposal.

As part of the research, the researcher made a total of 26 visits to the museum from the summer of 2021 to 2023. Based on the researcher's observations of museum visitors, the average duration of a visit was twenty minutes. Discussions among visitors revealed that their overall experience did not entirely meet their expectations. While some positive feedback was received regarding the museum's location, architecture, and the authenticity of exhibits, guests commented on the absence of a rest area.

#### **2.1.2 Competitor analysis**

In the ODYSSEUS database (odysseus.culture.gr), the ELSTAT statistical portal (statistics.gr), and the ICOM catalogs (icom-greece.mini.icom.museum), numerous historical and/or folklore museums are listed. However, none of the historical or folklore museums in Chalkidiki are mentioned in any of these lists, possibly due to their abundance. The challenge might lies in the limited number of exhibits, primarily

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<sup>1</sup> The information was obtained from a CD provided to the researcher on April 11, 2023, by Mr. Dimaras Dimitrios, former chairman of the organization's Board of Directors.

sourced from donations by local residents, and the infrequent presence of specialized staff<sup>2</sup>. Hence, it could be inferred that the establishment of these museums serves not only the public's needs but also personal ambitions and the belief that every region requires a historical museum. This inference arises from the following facts:

It's frequently noted that some museums in Chalkidiki lack specialized staff for financial management, services, and marketing. Moreover, several museums either lack consistent opening hours or have no staff during scheduled times. This may stem from low visitor numbers, prompting the question: Without an engaged audience or efforts to inform and educate them, what is the purpose of establishing these museums?

The prevailing conditions suggest that these museums may have served a purpose upon their establishment, but later, there was insufficient interest in their upkeep and growth. Another possibility is that the absence of specialized staff led to misguided decisions, ultimately leading to a lack of audience engagement.

However, to identify the museum's main competitors, searches were conducted using Museum Finder (museumfinder.gr), ELSTAT, ODYSSEUS, and TripAdvisor (tripadvisor.com) listings. The competitor analysis focused on the main competitors of the area, the regional museums of Chalkidiki and was divided into two tables, one with reference to the archaeological museums due to consumer preference (ELSTAT, 2022c: 1-4) and one referring to all other competitors. No additional research was done on the historical and folklore museums of Sithonia, as they are currently not operating at full capacity. After the research it was concluded that the competition in the area is not significant, considering the range of services offered and ticket prices. The primary competitor, based on its content, technology, and services, is the Cultural Center of Ierissos [Municipality of Aristotle | Cultural Center of Ierissos \(dimosaristoteli.gr\)](http://Municipality of Aristotle | Cultural Center of Ierissos (dimosaristoteli.gr)), located approximately an hour's drive from Nikiti.

### **2.1.3. SWOT**

The SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) was used, so that depending on the mission, the vision and the goals of the organization we could draw up its new strategy, which should continuously be evaluated and revised when necessary (50Minuten, 2018: 9-48).

Two SWOT analyses were conducted, one focusing on the museum itself and the other on its exhibits in order to examine all relevant parameters. Information for the analyses was obtained through a free-form telephone interview between the researcher and the museum's representative, Mr. Dimaras Dimitrios, on April 11, 2023. The purpose of the interview was to gather essential information and ensure alignment with the organization's vision and mission.

Based on the SWOT analysis of the museum, promising opportunities for development emerge. The museum, housed in a traditional and spacious building renovated prior to its opening, provides an ideal space for exhibitions and events. Its strategic location offers the potential to rejuvenate the old settlement of Nikiti, while collaboration with other regional organizations presents an opportunity to boost museum visits and promote Sithonia as a cultural destination.

Additionally, the researcher created a museum logo with the aim of establishing a distinctive identity and enhancing the promotion and presentation of the museum and its exhibitions. This initiative was prompted by discrepancies in the museum's name, as it is referred to as "Nikitis Museum" in the Official Gazette and the Museum Charter (Government Gazette, 2005: article 1, Museum Charter, 2011: article 1), while signage and online platforms label it as the "Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti" or simply the "Folklore Museum". It is crucial to adopt a consistent name that reflects the unity of the Sithonia region as a whole, thereby mitigating competition among smaller historical and/or folklore museums, creating a strong brand and facilitating opportunities for state/European financial support and sponsors (Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014: 18-30).

Figure 1: The researcher's suggestion for the museum's name and logo.

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<sup>2</sup> Personal background knowledge of the researcher due to origin, experiential/participatory observation and field research.



Aside from the lack of qualified staff and a comprehensive marketing/management strategy, the organization currently lacks an online presence, with no website or social media profiles. Communication with the audience is limited to occasional posters, typically only when hosting events. To foster audience development, it is essential for the organization to establish a digital presence, engaging with followers on a daily basis to build trust and familiarity (Kyprianidou & Papadaki, 2018: 172-173). Moreover, observations from the SWOT analysis of the exhibits at the Nikiti Historical and Folklore Museum reveal numerous weaknesses. Nevertheless, it is believed that with proper care and specialized personnel, many of these weaknesses can be resolved.

#### 2.1.4 Visitors Analysis

Cultural marketing is the tool of cultural organizations to educate and entertain audiences through the artistic experience (Kavoura & Sylaiou, 2018: 7002-7013). By adopting an audience-centered approach, the focus shifts to prioritizing the audience and their needs, fostering an open, two-way, and enduring relationship (Sifaki & Sifakis, 2007: 262-266).

Audiences can be now digital and global favoring audience growth (Kyprianidou & Papadaki, 2018: 182-193, Arnaboldi & Diaz, 2022: 299-321). In addition, the audience is constantly expanding and its needs are evolving, creating a need for ongoing audience research (Kavoura & Sylaiou, 2018: 7002-7013), upgraded websites (Kyprianidou & Papadaki, 2018: 182-193), secure online payments, and online commerce, among others.

For the analysis of the museum's audience, the researcher created two "Personas", two fictional characters, who represent the museum's audience and their needs, in order to better understand and approach them using the appropriate channels (Kirchem & Waack, 2021: 23-40, Häusel & Henzler, 2018: 13-47, Revella, 2015: 3-10).

In addition, the Sinus-Milieus analysis was used to research the target group. This analysis groups consumers into categories according to their needs and desires, work environment, etc., constituting an important marketing and decision-making tool (Barth & others, 2017: 3-47, Hempelmann & Flaig, 2019: 3-9, Barth, 2021: 470-479, Häusel & Henzler, 2018: 19-50, Flaig & Barth, 2017: 3-21, Barth & Flaig, 2017: 23-43). Based on the Sinus-Milieus analysis, the target audience consists primarily of the middle class, influenced by income, interests, and preferences, alongside the traditional audience drawn to the museum's folklore focus.

In summary, the findings aid in identifying the organization's target audience and fostering a relationship of trust. While the public generally resists change (O'Sullivan, 2009: 209-223), improvements are deemed necessary for the museum's development, while still preserving the cultural entity's identity.

#### 2.1.5. USP

The USP (Unique Selling Proposition) is the element that gives a business or organization the competitive advantage to stand out from competitors and attract its audience successfully (Caldieraro & Cunha, 2021: 724-744, Niu & Wang, 2016: 874-896). The USP is based on the museum's vision and mission and was confirmed by the museum's representative Mr. Dimaras during the telephone interview with the researcher granted on April 11, 2023.

The museum as a cultural organization has specific characteristics. It is traditional, family-oriented, and committed to preserving and promoting culture. Operating as a non-profit entity, its goal is to serve as a cultural hub, providing education, entertainment, and information to the public. The USP of the museum stems from its architecture, its central location within the historic Nikiti settlement, the scenic views it offers, and its historical significance as a former regional school. Therefore, the USP can be formulated as follows: *The Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti represents the unique cultural institution in the heart of the*

*old (traditional) settlement, evoking memories in the locals and contributing to the preservation of national and local identity.*

### **3. Susanne Wieser and her works**

The researcher chose for the organization of the temporary exhibition, the works of Susanne Barbara Wieser, an Austrian artist who lives in Leoben, near Graz. The decision was influenced by the researcher's personal inspiration drawn from Wieser's artwork. The combination and contrast of folklore with postmodern art in a regional museum in the Greek countryside, arose because of the researcher's acquaintance with the artist.

The artist uses acrylic paints on canvas and expresses herself through pop art and expressionism awakening emotions through intense colors and hard lines. The artist's works inspired by the above movements comment on social and political issues, expressed through everyday people, celebrities, politicians, historical figures, fantasy and mythological figures.

The communication with the artist was based on a relaxed, open and continuous dialogue, giving her the opportunity and time to express and describe herself and her works. Ongoing repeated interviews took place between the researcher and the artist from summer 2022 to May 2023. The interviews used open questions ranging from general to specific topics (Hill & others, 2017: 76).

To better describe her and her works, the following is the content of a telephone interview between the researcher and Ms. Wieser that took place on February 16, 2023 and was translated from German to English by the researcher: *"What can I say about me? My painting came about as an unplanned pregnancy and I definitely wanted to keep my child, who lately has been growing faster and faster. Expressionism has always fascinated me, with all its tricks, distortions, emphasis on the individual features of the subject's face and body. Otto Dix is one of my heroes, but El Greco also knew how to artistically distort people. African wooden masks as well as sculptures (Venus von Willendorf) from old cultures have shown me that visual art has a deeper meaning for us humans. It expresses more than just an elaborate or realistic representation of reality. Most painters and sculptors provide a subjective interpretation of their subjects, emphasizing certain elements and omitting others, to create their own reality or values, utopias and dystopias. Caricature is an extreme application of this principle and offers many opportunities to express positive and negative emotions. However, I use caricature in a watered down form, I like to combine it with realistic elements to get a mixture of humor and seriousness, much like how life supplies me with these two ingredients on a daily basis".*

### **4. Material and methods**

Audience or visitor research is a means of making decisions about the effectiveness of an exhibition or an organization (Hill & others, 2017: 74, Bounia, 2015: 150-169). It consists of five stages: planning, data collection, processing/interpretation, reflection and reporting of results (Woolf, 2004: 8, Bounia, 2015: 150-169). It is categorized into market research, evaluation research and externally focused study (Bounia, 2015: 150-169).

Market research studies the various audiences and the appropriate way of communicating with them (Bounia, 2015: 150-169). Evaluation is related to the design of an exhibition/programme. It can be front-end evaluation, formative evaluation, remedial evaluation or summative evaluation (Bounia, 2015: 150-169). The front-end evaluation takes place during the planning of the exhibition. It helps to collect information about the audience, to prevent mistakes and meet the needs of the audience (Bounia, 2015: 150-169).

Audience research, front-end evaluation, environmental research and competitor analysis were conducted for the implementation of the postmodern exhibition at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti. Specifically, primary and secondary data were used. Initially, the available information about the organization (secondary data) were researched, for example the visitor's notebook, articles, publications, interviews, the statute and the CD given to the researcher by the representative of the museum.

The primary sources were based on qualitative and quantitative methods. As part of the qualitative method, an on-site investigation (O'Sullivan, 2009: 209-223) was carried out by the researcher with 26 visits to the museum from the summer of 2021 to 2023, at a random time and day to observe the behavior of the visitors. On the other hand, the researcher carried out a series of repeated personal telephone interviews (qualitative method) with Ms. Wieser from summer 2022 until May 2023 and translated their content from German to English. Moreover, a telephone interview was held with Mr. Dimaras Dimitrios on April 11, 2023, to obtain information about the museum. The interviews were conducted in a free-form manner to

establish an environment of trust, allowing the interviewees to respond as objectively as possible (Recupero & others, 2019: 1-10, Richardson, 2015: 206).

The researcher also created a questionnaire to study the preferences and needs of the audience (Hill & others, 2017: 56-92) (quantitative method). The quantitative method involves gathering, categorizing, and comparing data (Bounia, 2015: 151-169). The selection of the sample, the participants in the research, is a crucial factor, as well as the sequencing and wording of the questions (Bounia, 2015: 156). Questions can be either open-ended or closed-ended (Bounia, 2015: 151-169, Hill & others, 2017: 56-92).

Finally, the researcher's background knowledge due to origin, experiential/participatory observation and field research, resources in Greek, English and German, marketing tools from the Vienna Academy of Economics and the Cultural Institute of Vienna were utilized, while information/tools from the researcher's work experience in the field of culture and marketing in Austria were also used.

## **5. Audience research for the organization of the postmodern art exhibition at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti**

At this stage, research was conducted to gather information about our audience. This included assessing their interest in the exhibition, their familiarity with the topic, and their level of knowledge necessary to grasp the messages conveyed by the exhibition. Additionally, existing preconceptions or lack thereof regarding the subject matter of the artist's works were explored (Bounia, 2015: 151-169).

A purely digital questionnaire was designed due to the researcher's residence in Austria, despite her origin in Nikiti Chalkidiki. Additionally, the use of a free Google Docs application (docs.google.com) eliminated any associated costs. The questionnaire was subsequently shared on the researcher's Facebook and Instagram accounts, as the museum lacks a website, social media presence, or staff to facilitate distribution.

The sample, the individuals who were invited to participate in the survey (Bounia, 2015: 156), comprised the researcher's 2,126 "friends" and "followers" on Facebook/Instagram. This convenience sample (Oakes, 2010: 110-119) primarily targeted residents of Chalkidiki, as well as individuals residing in other regions of Greece or abroad, particularly in Austria where the researcher resides. The objective was to conduct a pilot survey of the audience (Cuadrado & Frasquet, 1999: 260) to establish a foundational understanding during the exhibition's pre-planning phase. However, it is recommended that if the organization proceeds with the exhibition, a more comprehensive questionnaire should be developed to engage both digital and physical audiences.

The vision and mission of the organization played a decisive role in the structure and content of the questionnaire (Bounia, 2015: 163). The questionnaire was divided into three sections that explored the categories of the public, their opinion of the museum and their opinion of the postmodern exhibition designed. The questions were simple, short, within a structured content. The questionnaire was in Greek in English, in order to respond to all the audience of the researcher's sample.

In the first section, demographic information was collected in order to profile the audience (O'Sullivan, 2009: 209-223, Sheng & Chen, 2012: 53-60). Attention was paid to the question about the audience's residence, so that we could easily differentiate the answers of the audience residing in Chalkidiki or Thessaloniki, from those who live in Austria.

In the second section, focusing on the public's perception of the museum, the absence of historical records or catalogs for past exhibitions prompted an examination of the public's perception of the permanent exhibition and the organization itself. Additionally, the study aimed to gauge the level of interest among the public in accessing the organization's exhibitions digitally.

In section three, participants were queried about their interest in the exhibition's occurrence, their inclination towards exhibitions addressing social, religious, and political themes, as well as their familiarity with postmodernism, expressionism, and pop art.

Each section comprised five questions to ensure a balanced structure. The questionnaire primarily consisted of closed-type, multiple-choice, and scaled questions to maintain brevity and facilitate easy comparison of results (Hill & others, 2017: 83-85). However, an additional open-ended question was included at the end to encourage participants to share ideas, express their needs, and voice any complaints freely (Hill & others, 2017: 83-85). This question was optional, allowing participants to skip it if they wished. Placing it at the end helped prevent early fatigue among respondents.

The questionnaire was initially posted on February 1, 2023, and remained open to the public until 300 responses were received. Prior to its official release, the researcher distributed the questionnaire on Instagram using the "post to close friends" feature to a small group of thirty individuals. This pre-release distribution aimed to identify and rectify any errors, as well as to assess the application's functionality and

quality (Woolf, 2004: 58).

Through the digital format of the questionnaire, the 300 responses were automatically collected. The process was straightforward: users clicked on the shared link, which redirected them to the questionnaire where they completed it digitally. Google Docs automatically collected and processed the responses, generating graphical statistics for analysis.

## 6. Results

In the first section of the questionnaire, it was noted that the majority of the audience comprised women aged between 20 and 45 with a university education. Additionally, 63.2% of respondents reported residing in Chalkidiki or Thessaloniki and visiting cultural sites 2-3 times a year. From these findings, it can be inferred that our target audience primarily consists of a younger demographic, with education playing a significant role in museum visitation. Furthermore, the data suggests a greater interest among women in the realm of art.

In the second section, concerning the public's perception of the museum, two distinct groups emerged, with only 50% having visited the organization, while over 40% were unaware of the permanent exhibition or the museum itself. The lack of advertising and marketing is evident, which could address the issue of visibility and contribute to audience growth (Kavoura & Sylaiou, 2018: 7002-7013, Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014: 10-11). The responses from the section also indicate the audience's demand for periodic exhibitions, infrastructure upgrades, and digital content.

In the final section, it is observed that nearly 90% of the respondents express interest in a periodic exhibition addressing social, political, and religious issues, while 83.8% are familiar with expressionism and pop art. This suggests that the proposed exhibition aligns with the audience's interests and needs. Furthermore, there is a clear indication of the audience's desire for educational programs, events, and initiatives tailored to the local community.

Only nine individuals responded to the last open-ended question, indicating a preference for multiple-choice questions among the public. To encourage greater participation in future questionnaires, it is recommended that the organization provide incentives such as free tickets.

Finally, the posting of the questionnaire on social networks rekindled public interest, since the researcher received positive feedback on the planning of the exhibition from the respondents with a personal message on Facebook and Instagram.

The researcher will present the data to the organization's managers in the form of a written report detailing the research results, methodology, and relevant proposals (Hill & others, 2017: 86-89, Kirchberg & Tröndle, 2012: 435-452). It's essential to emphasize that the research doesn't guarantee entirely objective or realistic results, but rather indicates potential public behaviors (Hill & others, 2017: 86-89). Additionally, ensuring the security and legal use of personal data (Bounia, 2015: 151) and addressing the needs of the minority are also crucial aspects to consider.

## 7. Discussion and planning of the postmodern art exhibition at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti

The positive results of the research laid the foundation for the discussion about planning the exhibition. The researcher used the service marketing mix (7 Ps) in order to plan the exhibition (Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014: 7-11, Hill & others, 2017: 99):

### *Product*

The product is the exhibition of postmodern art, alongside the permanent exhibition and facilities protected by the museum and made accessible to the public. The periodic exhibition was meticulously crafted to align with the historical and folklore essence of the museum, presenting postmodern exhibits methodically through the integration of technology and innovative concepts. To enhance the museum's value and cultural offerings, ongoing monitoring is proposed to uphold the quality of products and services.

For the exhibits, simple and understandable descriptive labels will be provided in both Greek and English. Additionally, a map will be created at the museum entrance highlighting key areas such as restrooms and the cafeteria, along with the exhibit locations. To educate the public, a digital application and tablets will be utilized. Educational programs and events should be tailored to engage a broad audience, particularly the younger demographic, through the use of audio-visual and technological tools, as well as vibrant colors.

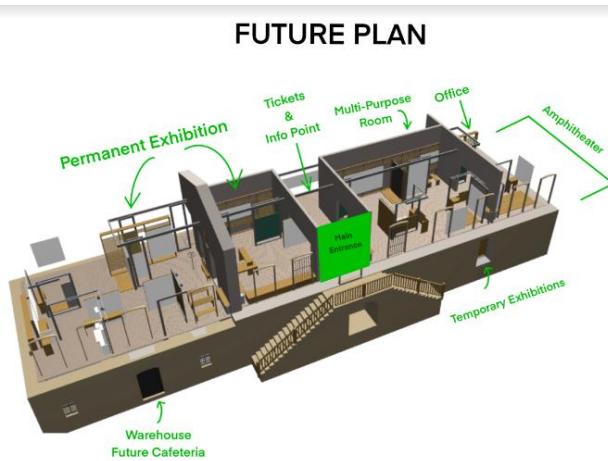
The artist will collaborate with museum officials to select the works for the exhibition. Given the museum's lack of specialized staff, the researcher will serve as a liaison between the artist and the organization, facilitating the selection process, presentation arrangements, and marketing opportunities. A detailed list of the dimensions and weight of the exhibits will be compiled to ensure their safe transportation and maintenance. Contracts will be established with the artist, transportation company, and insurance provider to manage these aspects effectively.

#### *Place and physical facilities*

The museum consists of a space on the upper floor, which houses the permanent exhibition and the administration office. On the ground floor, there are two small rooms, one serving as a storage area and the other designated for temporary exhibitions. A wooden, traditional staircase leads to the upper floor, while the entrances to the two lower areas are downstairs. Outside there is a garden with a kind of amphitheater and restroom facilities. Next to the museum is the church and the center of the old settlement.

To enhance audience development, the museum requires a multipurpose hall, cafeteria/rest area, sales shop, WiFi access, and improved accessibility for individuals with disabilities and older age groups. In response, the researcher has devised a plan for a new spatial layout:

Figure 2: New spatial layout. Information sourced from the website dimossithonias.gr.



#### *Price*

While the museum currently does not charge for admission, there is ongoing discussion about changing the pricing policy. The researcher proposes the development of a financial plan (budget). This plan will determine the pricing of the periodic exhibition, as well as associated programs and souvenirs, based on expenses and income. The objective is to offer free entry for children, with discounts for students and senior citizens. Additionally, efforts will be made to secure sponsors and explore alternative forms of financing.

#### *Advertising*

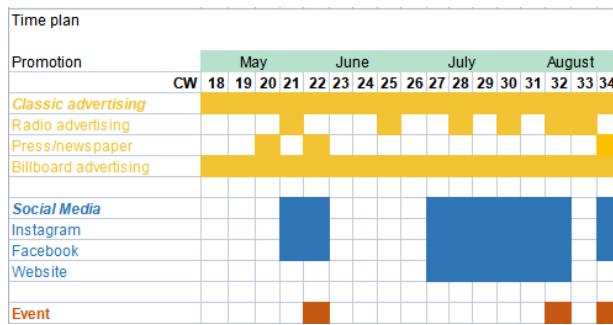
The advertising objectives aim to introduce and educate the public about the exhibition while revitalizing the museum's image through word-of-mouth (WoM) communication and the creation of viral, rapidly disseminated content (Torres & Zhang, 2023: 114-124). To achieve this, a website dedicated to the museum will be developed, featuring a comprehensive catalog of its history accompanied by photographs and descriptive materials outlining its activities and exhibitions. The website will prominently display the museum's logo and relevant information, fostering trust and providing valuable information to visitors (Bernstein, 2011: 177, 209, Quinton, 2009: 171-178). Additionally, the website will be available in English to cater to a wider audience.

Professional profiles will be established for the museum on social networking platforms including Facebook and Instagram. Depending on the budget allocated, decisions will be made regarding advertising expenditures on these platforms, as well as in printed media and on radio channels. To build an audience, it is essential to have a daily, continuous and consistent dialogue with the audience on social networks (Kavoura & Sylaiou, 2018: 7002-7013, Kyprianidou & Papadaki, 2018: 172-173). At the same time, attention should be paid to the messages conveyed to the public, as their interpretation cannot be predicted.

Finally, the idea of organizing two events for the opening and closing of the periodical exhibition has to be discussed with the museum managers. The researcher suggests that the former takes place at the

beginning and the latter at the end of the summer/tourist season. To achieve the above, a clear schedule is required (Woolf, 2004: 52), for each advertising campaign:

Figure 3: The researcher's proposal for the advertising schedule.



### People and Process

The museum's primary challenge is the absence of specialized staff, crucial for enhancing visitor experience across all touchpoints-from the cashier to the cloakroom and cafeteria (Kyprianidou & Papadaki, 2018: 182-193). Careful recruitment tailored to each role is imperative.

Specialized security personnel and cameras are required to protect the exhibits and, according to the Austrian model, it is recommended to select supervisory personnel with studies in art and history to act as tour guides at the same time. Staff could facilitate feedback collection, both on-site and online. Post-visit questionnaires could solicit opinions on pricing, quality, and payment methods.

Finally, collaborations with other cultural institutions, such as the Cultural Center of Ierissos, mentioned in the competitor analysis, could stimulate public interest and contribute to synergy with other art forms in various ways.

## 8. Conclusions

The research proposes a three-pronged audience development approach to assist regional museums in meeting audience needs, expanding reach through collaborations with other art forms, and fulfilling their educational and entertainment roles. As part of this research, a periodic exhibition of postmodern art was conceptualized at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti.

Firstly, it was emphasized that the cultural significance of a museum does not excuse the absence of a marketing strategy, proper management, and financial planning. In addition, specialized personnel are necessary for the proper functioning of a cultural organization, such as the shift to technology, adaptability, and flexibility.

In the first category of the guide, the mission/vision, activity, and audience of the museum were studied, which play an important role in the selection of the corresponding strategy. The available sources concerning the museum were studied, and at the same time field research/observation was carried out. This was followed by environmental analysis by researching relevant statistics with Greek market trends, competitor research and two SWOT analyses, one for the organization and one for its exhibits.

Audience analysis was conducted to understand the audience and their desires to approach them and meet their needs. For audience analysis, the marketing tool Sinus-Milieus analysis was utilized, and two Personas were created to discern our audience and determine the appropriate medium of communication. Next, the organization's USP was formulated.

Regarding the methodology, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed, involving the conduct of two interviews and a questionnaire with the aim of gathering information from the three main factors: the organization, the artist, and the public.

In the second category, the artist and her work were presented. The contrast between the museum's nature and the artist's works inspired by pop art was the main idea and incentive for creating the research. Meanwhile, in the third category, the needs of the audience were researched. The questionnaire responses confirmed the audience's desire for cultural participation, the integration of various art forms, and their interest in the design of a postmodern exhibition at the Historical and Folklore Museum of Nikiti.

Marketing tools were employed throughout the research process. The exhibition design utilized the marketing mix framework, which led to the proposal of a new pricing policy and advertising strategy. Additionally, the researcher developed proposals for revising the museum's spatial layout and creating a new museum logo. Promotion and advertising of both the museum and the periodic exhibition were deemed

crucial in convincing the audience of the organization's quality and the exhibition's value. Furthermore, these efforts aimed to foster a lasting and mutually beneficial relationship with the museum.

In conclusion, effective audience development, as outlined in the guide, highlights the crucial role of specialized staff within the organization and the utilization of marketing tools. By employing these resources, we gain valuable insights into audience needs and preferences, allowing us to curate exhibitions that resonate with contemporary societal issues. The researcher's guide not only facilitates a deeper understanding of audience dynamics but also empowers us to showcase artists whose work addresses modern challenges. Ultimately, this approach ensures the development of the audience in regional museums and contributes to the creation of significant connections between art and society.

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