

## MAXXI FOUNDATION - ROME, ITALY

**Key words:** place | digital | by habit | by choice | organisational change | data | community rooted

### *Synthetic data sheet*

Full name	MAXXI – Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI
Address	Via Guido Reni 4a, 00196, Rome, ITALY
Legal status	Private foundation
Year of establishment	2009
Website	www.fondazionemaxxi.it
Social media	Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Flickr, LinkedIn, YouTube, Theartstack, Artbubble
Area of activities	Visual Arts
Kind of activities	Permanent collection, exhibitions, events
Total amount of budget	10.000.000 €
Sources of funding	Public funding: 60% Ticket sales, sponsors, royalties: 34% Other revenues: 6%
Number of employees	35
Number of exhibitions	35
Number of annual attendances	355.268

Data refer to 2015

### *Background information*

MAXXI – Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo is a private foundation established in 2009 and funded by the Ministry of Culture, Regione Lazio and Enel, a national energy supplier (former national electric company).

The famous architect Zaha Hadid on the structure of a former military industrial plant created the building and it is located in the Flaminio area, a district inhabited by upper class, boasting a number of modern and contemporary buildings (the Auditorium by Piano, the Palace of Sport by Nervi, Ponte della Musica of Buro Happold-Kit Powell-Williams Architects, etc.).

MAXXI is not only a museum, but a space where new cultural productions are developed and partnership is the main tool to achieve this result: the Foundation has more than 150 institutional and private partners and donors.

MAXXI contains 134.926 works of art in its Architecture and photography collection; 413 in the Art collection.

MAXXI is an expression of awareness of the importance of the contemporary creative expressions of a nation such as Italy, characterized by centuries of primacy in the artistic

**Catalogue – Case studies – Study on audience development -  
How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations**

---

and architectural fields. The aesthetic tensions of our time are, in fact, the extension of the artistic and cultural expressions of past eras, albeit through radically different expressive forms.

MAXXI's mission is therefore promoting and developing this sense of continuity, projecting it towards the future.

MAXXI intends not only to be a container for the exhibit of the works of art of our century, but also a place for cultural innovation and the overlapping of languages, a laboratory for artistic experimentation, a machine for the production of aesthetic materials of our time.

MAXXI aims to be a centre of excellence, an interactive hub in which the most diverse forms of expression, productivity and creation may converge, combine and reproduce.

Art also has a vital role as a means of communication. Art is an iconic and symbolic idiom and therefore more readily comprehended than a spoken or written language. It is clear, therefore, that the immediacy and universality of artistic communication may contribute to the comprehension of worlds and cultures otherwise foreign and potentially conflicting, favouring the coexistence of differences.

Lastly, art and architecture are essential components of the image and perception of a nation abroad. MAXXI therefore intends to be a form of antenna transmitting Italian contents to the outside world while at the same time receiving from the outside the flux of international culture.

The programming of the activities – exhibitions, workshops, conferences, shows, projections, educational projects – reflects MAXXI's vocation as a place for the conservation and exhibit of its collections but also, and above all, a laboratory for cultural experimentation and innovation, for the study, research and production of the aesthetic contents of our time.

MAXXI is divided into four departments: MAXXI Arte, MAXXI Architettura, MAXXI Research, Education and Training and MAXXI Development. Giovanna Melandri heads the Foundation; since December 2013 Hou Hanru has been the Artistic Director of the museum, which includes MAXXI Architettura, directed by Margherita Guccione, and MAXXI Arte, directed by Bartolomeo Pietromarchi.

It has 35 employees and a variable number of temporary collaborators.

The turnover in 2015 has been as such:

*Revenues (year 2015)*

3.391.000 € revenues (ticketing, sponsors, royalties)

6.000.000 € from the Ministry of Culture

751.000 € different contributions

*Costs (year 2015)*

Exhibitions 4.387.250 €

Operating costs 5.705.050 €

### ***What do they want? Goals and achievements***

AD is considered as a means to support the social role of the museum. To open the museum to the participation of all public means transforming it into a place of active participation for everybody, an open structure, relational and dynamic, horizontal space of listening and exchange for all. Therefore, all the 3 dimensions of AD are explored (enlarging, deepening and - to a certain extent - also diversifying the audiences).

The museum started 5 years ago the monitoring and analysis of the public on a daily basis by analysing its characteristics (gender, age, nationality). It also provides questionnaires to analyse the customer's satisfaction. It is currently working towards a comprehensive visitor/audience study, including online surveys, and on exhibit-oriented analysis, which started in June 2016, by means of tablets available in the exhibit areas.

MAXXI published 3 annual reports so far (2013, 2014 and 2015).

The visitors profile in the last 5 years show that visitors are mostly women, mostly foreigners, mostly aged 19-45 (see Annual Report 2015).

The museum has a person in charge of AD, who is the Public Engagement Manager: she is supported by an assistant and – although she has been put in place only in 2016 – this is a strategic indication of the growing importance of the office itself. Also the Secretary General of the institution is involved in AD strategies. In terms of visitor's analysis and communication, there are persons in charge of the Quality Office and of the Marketing area.

Focus on AD and engagement has resulted in a net increase of the public, of the number of cultural events and initiatives, and also in the capacity of attracting sponsors, donors and fundraising.

### ***How do they do it? Making it happen***

In order to better understand MAXXI's policy in terms of AD, it is important to know that MAXXI had to tackle some issues since its foundation. In 2009, MAXXI started its activity with complex governance, leading to a difficult management, solved in recent years. MAXXI resents the fact that the cultural offer in Rome is not centred on contemporary art/architecture. Also, visitors' analysis shows that MAXXI is appreciated more by foreign rather than by local people. Therefore, the museums was forced to develop specific strategies to reach out the local population (for example, offering free admission to the permanent collection from Tuesday to Friday).

Open doors are not enough: reaching the public requires a specific, positive, proactive action.

The first steps to establish relationships, create familiarity and offer the experience of Art by encouraging the participation of disadvantaged and marginalised communities as migrants, refugees and people with disabilities have been based upon a welcoming and

**Catalogue – Case studies – Study on audience development -  
How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations**

---

embracing attitude, specially addressing people who live in isolation and do not usually attend art and places of culture. Engaging them in active participation means to focus the interest in the other and rethink the contemporary museum, making it a place of culture for everybody.

Activities realised in the realm of AD addressing special audiences are free of charge.

MAXXI's current AD strategy is based on the following assumptions:

- Children are facilitated in their relationship with contemporary art in comparison with adults, and this is an asset for the Foundation;
- Elderly people and other specific kinds of publics need to be approached through specific events and territorial marketing;
- The cultural production is not neutral: the selected exhibitions and artists are politically engaged and confront themselves with the main issues of contemporary society (choices are based on clear values). This has led to the fact that now MAXXI is recognised by stakeholders, which deal with these issues, as "one of them": this means that now the museums receives proposals from different subjects of the no profit sector (Amnesty International, Save the Children, Emergency, Greenpeace, etc.). A good example is the project *Refugee Scart*, in partnership with Spiral Foundation ONLUS with the patronage of UNHCR: it is a workshop where refugees create marketable objects with recycled material. The objects are sold in the MAXXI bookshop. Of course, one has to bear in mind that MAXXI, being a foundation, needs to raise money and cannot act only in the name of philanthropy.

The Secretary General is currently working in order to develop a more strategic and systemic functioning of all the departments (education, public engagement, marketing, quality and communication), which will benefit also the overall AD strategy.

**Interviews:** Stefania Vannini - Public Engagement Department; Laura Neto - Quality Office; Pietro Barrera - Secretary General

**Interviewer:** Cristina Da Milano – ECCOM (Italy)

**References:**

MAXXI, *Rapporto annuale 2015*

G. Melandri, "Il sociale alla conquista dei musei" in *Vita 07*, 2016, pp. 18-19