

The discovery of arts and culture as global communication media.
High-visibility experiences in the Italian and international scenario

Descrizione

1. Introduction: discovering arts and culture as global communication media

During the last years, the Italian scenario shows an emerging phenomenon: a real rush toward *high-visibility* cultural projects by private corporations, wanting to associate their own brands to the country's major artistic symbols in order to take advantage of the "made in Italy" value and to successfully compete on the international market.

The rising interest in such communication events is clearly demonstrated by the increasing number of cultural patronage and sponsorship initiatives concentrating on the main Italian monuments and artistic cities. Among the preferred theatres of this phenomenon, it is possible to mention Florence, Milan, Naples, Venice, and, first of all, the capital city Rome, whose old town is today discovered as a sort of prestigious (and global!) "stage" by the major luxury and [fashion brands like lilybridal](#) contributing to the restoration of sites which are known worldwide, such as Trevi Fountain (Fendi), Pyramid of Cestius (Yagi Tshusho), Spanish Steps at Trinità dei Monti (Bulgari), and, not least, Colosseum (Tod's).

All these experiences illustrate not only an enduring gap between the private and public logic, on which the debate is burning and still open, but also the special opportunities both corporations and the territory can find in the arts. In particular, the rise of such spectacularization strategies can be explained in the context of a new approach to *corporate cultural communication* (Martino, 2010; Azzarita et al., 2010): this orientation views a company contributing with different levels of autonomy and continuity to a cultural project and playing alternatively the role of *patron*, *sponsor*, *partner* or *real promoter* (Bondardo, 2007), in order both to gain a strategic visibility and to qualify relations with the stakeholders.

More in general, the new models of interaction between arts and business are the result of a multiplicity of contemporary trends occurring since the first Nineties: among them, the evolution of strategic communication from a marketing into a corporate concept, focused on companies' identity and *reputation* (Invernizzi, 2012 & 2013); a wider goodwill by both citizens and institutions for the social role played by private organizations involved within the cultural field (Bondardo, 2000); the innovation of public's cultural behaviors, even for traditionally elitist and quality outdoor consumptions such as museums and exhibits, theatre, concerts, monuments etc. (Istat, 2013); the growth of the on- and off-line media coverage dedicated to arts and culture, even projecting them in a global arena; not least, the extraordinary European heritage, today acutely suffering the lack of public funding and seeking innovative opportunities for fundraising and promotion (Sacco, 2006).

2. Objectives and methods: a preliminary research on the Italian case

From this scenario, the paper presents the first results from a preliminary research on the spectacularization of cultural communication models in Italy.

In particular, the objective is here to analyse on the field a multiplicity of experiences and case histories testifying to a rising *visibility value* associated to arts and culture (Symbola, 2014: 49-56), with special reference to the unique case of Rome: a city which is nowadays evolving into a world-capital (or perhaps a sort of vast "bin"...) for international patrons and sponsors interested in associating their name to famous heritage symbols. Then a secondary goal is to discuss, also in the light of the international debate, both the limits and quality prerequisites connoting contemporary companies' cultural communication policies (Herranz, Martino, 2014), comparing when possible the Italian case with contexts characterized by a deep-rooted philanthropic tradition (European Parliament, 2011).

For these purposes, the study includes several stages and explorative methods: analysis of the scientific literature and documentary sources, direct observations, listening to public discussions and experts. In addition some in-depth interviews are

still in progress, in order to examine in depth the point of view expressed by special witnesses in both the academic and professional sectors.

In particular, the literature review has examined specialized publications, statistical reports, and the main multidisciplinary studies discussing the emerging cultural innovation and communication within the frame offered by sociological studies as well as by cultural economy and marketing ones: in both such scientific traditions, in fact, arts financing and private contribution to cultural-artistic system represent important topics ever (Heinik, 2001: 44) and, beyond doubt, ones of the most emerging nowadays. Such perspectives can actually help to understand the evolution concerning patrons' and sponsors' role over time (Trimarchi, 1993; Wu, 2002; Besana, 2003), up to the contemporary rise of innovative models of corporate cultural communication (Martino, 2010; Azzarita et al., 2010), in the context of a wider *spectacularization* and *mediatisation process* involving, during the last decades, urban culture and setting (Amendola, 2010; Codeluppi, 2007; Hessler & Zimmermann, 2008).

3. Results: trends and experiences in the Italian context

3.1. Arts and business for the "made in Italy"

Differently from the present, in Italy arts and culture have been considered, for some decades, a secondary sector of intervention by private companies. In fact, if an illustrious patronage tradition was promoted in the past by the banks and major State-owned corporations (such as Enel, Eni, Fiat, and Olivetti), sponsors were instead more interested in taking advantage, on the one hand, of sport's popularity and media visibility (Barilli, 1987; Cherubini, 1997) and, on the other, of an emerging public sensitivity for corporate social responsibility (Carrol, 1999; Manfredi, 1997).

The evolution of sponsorship market clearly shows a deep gap existing, both in Italy and abroad, between culture and other strategic fields of intervention: in particular, since the first boom of sponsorship in all European countries during the last Seventies and the Eighties, companies' interest has heavily concentrated on sport, where sponsorship model is traditionally perceived to be more effective. It's not surprising, then, that in 2013 sport continues to absorb a large percentage of Italian companies' investment (60%), while their interest in culture remains only residual (13%) and, in any case, lower than in social causes too (27%; StageUp & Ipsos, 2013).

The fact is that, from sponsors' point of view, arts and culture (especially when compared with sport sector) have been traditionally considered a low-redemption investment, whose weak visibility is in general limited to an elitist and even niche public. Moreover, in the Italian context the association with culture has been long affected by a diffuse conservative sentiment by both public opinion and media operators, censuring companies' intervention in the artistic-cultural sector as a form of intrusion, or even an ethical and aesthetic provocation. By this way, the commitment in the cultural-artistic field often revealed itself a dangerous "boomerang": a source of a potentially negative visibility which in some cases, however, the "precursors" of corporate cultural communication was able to opportunistically capitalize (Barilli, 1987).

Such oppositions explain why, with few exceptions, cultural communication has remained for a long time a prerogative of a very selected group of companies (Zappalà, 1988; Confindustria, 1992), interested in qualifying their own corporate image and involving, above all, a cultured and polished target(1). And, by the first sponsor, a recurring mistake was to consider the association with the cultural-artistic sector as a sort of *status symbol*, rewarding in itself, rather than a strategic investment producing results over time; furthermore, they prefer a too reverential and "soft" approach (Fabris, 2003: 147), restricted to purely finance culture and often reply to an invitation by public institutions, without pointing to cultivate any exchange of competence or real relation (Barilli, 1987: 206-207).

3.2. From the past "great classics" to the present

In respect to the past, corporate intervention in the cultural field is nowadays recognized as a strategic value by both organisations and citizens. And, in fact, since the Nineties cultural communication has shown a relevant quantitative and qualitative growth in Italy (Civita, 2010) in spite of the economic crisis striking many business sectors, also thanks to a new normative frame incentivizing private companies by means of specific economic facilitations (Civita, 2013)(2).

In particular, the sponsorship model (representing a strategic evolution of the patronage one(3)) still remains today the most popular connection between the business and cultural sectors and, for most European companies, the first step to approach an interaction with the arts (Colbert, 1994; Wu, 2002). At the same time, the practice of cultural sponsorship appears to be nowadays evolving toward diverse directions: on the one hand, into a form of continuous *investment* or *corporate partnership* in the territory (Osservatorio Impresa e Cultura, 2004 & 2005), based on projects which are autonomously conceived by a company or, alternatively, shared with some cultural partners according to a relational model (Bodo, 1994; Assolombarda & Regione Lombardia, 1998; Bondardo, 1999, 2000, 2002 & 2007; Martino, 2013); on the other hand, into a *high-visibility communication* strategy seeking a large-scale visibility in both the urban and media context (Martino, 2010), by this way following the example of the sport sector where sponsorship is traditionally played as an ideal vehicle of “indirect advertising”.

There’s no doubt that, in the new millennium, an exponential extension of the on- and off-line media coverage plays a decisive role in encouraging new patrons and sponsors (Besana, 2003). Media operators appear today less reticent and disapproving than in the past; on the contrary, they are ready to recognize with a positive and widespread publicity the commitment of companies willing to sustain arts and taking on a subsidiary function in respect to public institutions. Furthermore, the new digital platforms contribute today to create a potentially global audience for this kind of initiatives, overtaking the geographical and linguistic boundaries of the past and, by this way, fully revealing the universal “community power” played by arts and culture (Toscano, 2008).

Such trends are finally promoting the discovery of arts and culture as real *global communication media*: an extraordinary source of resonance for aspiring patrons and sponsors, by which an enlarged public (including a precious sector of opinion leaders and young people) can be reached worldwide. From a so huge mine of positive values and community symbols, deposited over time, business organizations can draw then in profusion and with certainty about some extraordinary opportunities: those to distinguish a brand internationally and, at same time, to value its belonging to “made in Italy” tradition, especially in its most distinctive sectors such as motoring, design,

fashion, and food. Furthermore, companies have become conscious of the special *country of origin effect* associated to a virtuous Italian character: a value which a growing number of brands chooses as a relevant or even dominant identity characteristic in order to gain a recognizable positioning on the global market.

The traditional *commonplace* wanting culture to be a low-visibility sector, not attracting profit brands, can be considered then definitively debunked and left behind. But, it's important to underlie, this kind of sensitivity is not an absolute innovation of the present: on the contrary, the powerful symbolic language associated to the artistic heritage and its major "icons" is the most brilliant intuition by first patrons and sponsors, embracing in the past historical projects which represent still today real classics in the sector.

First of all, this was the case of Olivetti (the historical producer of typewriters that invented the first pc), promoting not only an extraordinary *humanistic* policy during the Fifties under the "enlightened" leadership of Adriano (Gallino, 2001), but also some memorable strategic sponsorship projects, carried out in the following decades in order to support the company's international start up and further expansion. Among the initiatives, it is possible to remember the restoration of the Horses of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice during the late Seventies (1977-1978), whose result was celebrated by a series of exhibits travelling in the major cities worldwide; and, above all, the choice to both economically and technologically support since 1982 to 1999, with the role of exclusive sponsor, the restoration of The Last Supper in Milan, the painting by Leonardo da Vinci which represents one of the world's most famous artwork ever (Wizemann, 2000).

During the Nineties, further exemplar case histories moved up the contemporary interest expressed by multinational corporations in branding some of the major artistic icons worldwide, in order to take advantage of their *testimonial* function as "meaning" and "memory" devices (Toscano, 2008). Among the experiences it is possible to mention, for example, the decision of Microsoft's founder Bill Gates to buy in 1994 the Leicester Code by Leonardo da Vinci at auction for 30 million Dollars, further exhibiting the precious manuscript it in the major cities in Italy and around the world (Invernizzi,

2001: 162-163); as well as Finmeccanica's technological commitment for recovering the Riace Bronzes in 1992-1994, after the ex State-owned company has entered the stock market (De Palma, 2003). Not least, an even more emblematic case concerns the façade of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City: a two-and-a-half-year restoration work for the Jubilee 2000 was supported by a technological partner as ENI, completing corporate privatization in the same period, and finally inaugurated in 1999 with a spectacular ceremony on Eurovision (Pitteri et al., 2002: 129-134)(4).

3.3. The spectacularization of urban heritage and the case of Rome

In the major Italian artistic cities, contemporary patronage or sponsorship projects are more and more often conceived as real *urban and media events* (Guala, 2007), able to guarantee a global showcase to the major luxury and fashion brands. It's happening today in Florence, Milan, Naples, Venice, and, first of all, the capital city Rome, whose major cultural events and landmarks are frequently branded by corporations looking for an international communicative exposure.

In particular, during the recent years companies have been often blamed for affixing invasive *maxi out-of-home advertising* (or real installations) on the sponsored restoration sites, by this way hardly provoking the attention and the aesthetical taste of tourists, citizens, and so called *city users* living the city for entertainment or other specific purposes. More and more often, such advertising spaces are located in the best frequented city landmarks and sold to pools of brands, in exchange for funding the local institutions can reinvest in the sponsored monuments.

A controversial experience was, for example, that involving in 2009 the retail group Esselunga, finally deciding to remove a hardly criticized jumbo ads on Ponte Vecchio in Florence(5). And, since 2008 to 2011, a really shocking sponsorship project was the one financing the restoration site of Doge's Palace in Venice: the most famous city's symbol appeared literally "packaged" by giant billboards, which were promoted in rotation by sponsors as Bulgari, Coca-Cola, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, fueling public outrage also for the use of not always appropriate contents in proximity of a religious site such as St. Mark's Basilica. More recently, in September 2014 maxi posters

looming on the façade of the Church of Trinità dei Monti in Rome instigated some protest on the web, where a specific hashtag was coined in order to contest the disturbing presence of sponsors such as Voiello (Stancati, 2014).

For other reasons, the sponsorship of Colosseum by Tod's Group represents the most discussed experience at present, as it involves one of the symbols mostly evoking not only the Roman and Italian tradition, but the world heritage itself: a monument which is able to attract every year over 5.6 million visitors, making it the most frequented State-owned cultural site in Italy, in addition to an enormous indirect audience internationally. The facts are well-known: on the one hand, the commercial agreement actually raised many public debates against the sponsor's exclusive rights on the monument's image, furthermore in exchange of a pure economical "deal" of only 25 million Euros; on the other hand, a real judiciary saga delayed the start of the restoration works for over three years, as at first the consumers' association Codacons denounced a lack of procedural regularity and transparency in selecting the sponsor.

It's really indicative to compare this experience with the strategic management of some world-famous monuments and their own brands (see, for example, Tour Eiffel, which Paris Municipality is economically valuing nowadays as the most remarkable city symbol). At the same time, thanks to Colosseum case a strong public attention has been stimulated internationally toward both the immense value belonging to Italian heritage and its desperate need for care: a situation probably finding in the crumple of Pompeii site (and also in the "hidden treasures" of Paestum) its most eloquent metaphor.

It's not by chance that, after the Colosseum affair, other multinational brands have strengthened their efforts in sustaining Italian beauties, finally producing a new business also for the professional agencies supporting private companies in order to both select and manage sponsorship opportunities. Furthermore, this kind of initiatives is encouraged by the new cultural policy embraced by both central and local institutions: this is the case of Rome, but also of Florence (promoting since 2011 a fundraising programme called "Florence, I care"(6)), Naples (whose Municipality launched in 2014 a specific "Monumentando" project, financing the preservation of 27

urban sites), and Venice (theatre of spectacular sponsorship interventions such as the one of Rialto Bridge by OTB Group(7)).

In particular, among the major cultural capitals, Rome distinguishes itself as an unique case worldwide. In order to assure the rescue of its extraordinary urban setting, local institutions are nowadays appealing for sponsors and patrons, making this city an ideal observatory for the phenomena which are here analyzed. Many branded restoration projects are actually in progress or near to be concluded, not only in the old town: among the first ones, it is possible to mention the case of the imposing Pyramid of Cestius, whose restoration has been financed since 2012 by the Japanese fashion export corporation Yagi Tshusho LTD donating a million Euros, in order to celebrate a 40 years-long business relation with Italy.

More recently a real *restoration show* has been promoted by Fendi, “unique patron” for the eighteenth-century Trevi Fountain, representing one of the largest fountains in Rome and a world-famous symbol of “Dolce vita”. The conservative intervention, begun in June 2014, is supported by a philanthropic donation of over 2 million Euros by the *maison*, operating in Rome since 1925 and today owned by LVMH Group. Furthermore the initiative has been promoted in the frame of a long-standing alliance with the city: on the one hand, in fact, a broader “Fendi for fountains” project will include the artistic restoration of other landmark fountains, such as the Four Fountains complex; on the other, LVMH Group has also assured to Fendi the location of the historical Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana (alias “Square Colosseum”) that from 2015 will house the new corporate headquarters, by this way celebrating the company’s 90 years(8).

Not least, in a real escalation, in March 2014 another important project has been launched by Bulgari, which is today part of LVMH Group too, in addition to several philanthropic initiatives already promoted in the past by the family owners (as private donors, for example, to Santa Cecilia Academy of Rome). Celebrating both the company’s 130 years and the restyling of the flagship store in via Condotti, an 1.5 million Euros donation to Rome Municipality was announced, in fact, in order to finance the conservative restoration of the Spanish Steps at Trinità dei Monti(9).

4. Discussion: shadows and lights of an emerging phenomenon

The above examined case histories help to focus shadows and lights related to the phenomenon as they show undeniable contradictions and, above all, that a virtuous triangulation among culture, public institutions and private companies must still be found in Italy.

Such experiences are summoning the world to be careful for the Italian artistic heritage, by this way stimulating other companies (also from abroad) to invest in the sector, even exposing themselves to different kind of risks such as possible red tape, controversies, and opposition by public opinion. At the same time, observers are worrying about the risks associated to a possible commercialization and even *Disneyization* (Bryman, 2004) of the Italian landmarks (Faiola, 2014), as so many sponsors seem to “aggress” the urban space and Italy is finally emerging as a new *Hollywood of the arts*, whose icons are exported and sold worldwide.

In a context already viewing the evolution of urban space into a hyper-communication environment (Hessler & Zimmermann, 2008)(10) and that of contemporary cities into global brands themselves (Anholt, 2007; Hauben et al., 2002), the major artistic centers risk to evolve then in a sort of “entertainment ones”: it seems to be the extreme stage of a social showcasing process (Codeluppi, 2007), transforming even monuments and historical palace in as many focal points of an enormous set, where advertising doesn't spare the most untouchable symbols of a community and, on the contrary, exploits both their uniqueness and need for funding in order to make a private use of cultural heritage. The invasion of massive ads, covering restoration sites in the main artistic centers worldwide, probably represents the most emblematic expression of this phenomenon: an alternative, and often not smart, form of urban advertising (Cronin, 2010), which is usually played on a pure size impression effect (rather than contents) as well as on an intentional dissonance (instead of dialogue) in respect to the surrounding city context (Morcellini, 2004: 121-122).

More in general, the contemporary process of spectacularization, not sparing the artistic sector, is inducing companies to prefer cultural *blockbusters*, fitting for the media and a mass public. The association with the main urban and tourist *attracters* points to maximize the redemption for sponsors, as they want to link their image to sites and also events of great acclaim such as, for example, “exhibits shows”(11) and festivals (Bernini et al., 2010; Guerzoni, 2008 & 2012); at the same time, such spiral risks to penalize more than ever the minor artistic monuments and activities, condemning them to an unequally competition for funding and public attention.

Under so relevant aspects, the attitude of contemporary patrons and sponsors seems actually to differ from the one of predecessors. In particular, differently from the past too often they prefer the heritage conservation to artistic creation or experimentation, in order to avoid risks and, on the contrary, to take advantage of the connection with the major arts, masterpieces, and artists. Secondly, corporate investment is in general purely economic, restricted to “spot” initiatives and, in any case, not commensurate to the priceless value belonging to the ancient relics of the past, which is above all an identity and community one.

In front of this situation – as clearly shown by the Colosseum affair – a decisive role is due to public actors, as they are responsible for creating a certain normative frame (regulating, for example, sponsorship contracts) as well as high-redemption contexts for both marketing brands and the territory. In particular, not without difficulties, Italy is trying nowadays to switch from a policy once conceiving cultural heritage in highly proprietary terms by the State to a more liberal one. But, despite the efforts promoted by the major Italian municipalities and with only few exceptions and best practices, the old policy hasn't been substituted by a new one: it is possible to observe, rather, a persisting lack of both strategies planning in the middle- and long-term the fundraising opportunities and of specialized professionals supporting institutions when they have to negotiate with private companies and conciliate their marketing needs to citizens' expectations (Moneta & Cantoni, 2012).

The truth is that, despite of its extraordinary heritage, Italy continues to value only little and clumsily companies' contribution to arts management and communication

(Conferenza delle Regioni e Province Autonome & Civita, 2012) and, when it does, it dramatically misunderstands the real value of its own cultural tradition (Settis, 2002). Such contradictions mostly emerge within the debates about not only the Colosseum sponsorship, but other paradoxical facts such as the recent “sale”, as private entertainment locations, of prestigious artistic sites (the Circus Maximus in Rome as well as the Museums of Florence); the discussed opportunity to move Riace Bronzes toward Expo 2015; and, not least, the tragic difficulty to find sponsors willing to save some extraordinary cultural treasures in jeopardy such as Pompeii, the Mausoleum of Augustus in Rome, and many others.

5. Conclusions: between contradictions and “shared value”

The cooperation between arts and business, even if not new, is emerging at present and, in particular, in the specific Italian context, characterized by a disinvestment of the State in the cultural-artistic sector, as well as by a growing need of private organizations for an *institutionalization* based on intangible assets such as visibility and social goodwill.

In this scenario, experiences such as the one concerning Colosseum reveal themselves a kind of positive “shock”. At the same time, they suggest that a meeting point between institutions and private organizations must be still found in Italy and, above all, that, differently from the Anglo-Saxon countries, the philanthropic support to arts is far from being the rule, while it seems to remain an “event” in itself. Furthermore, many efforts are needed in order to involve the vast Italian small and medium business, on the one hand encouraging the aggregation of pools or other forms of collaboration among companies and, on the other, using the major monuments and sites for pulling other and less attractive investments on the territory.

In general, as several trends and case histories illustrate, new sponsors and patrons seem to swing nowadays among different models of intervention in the cultural-artistic field. They have to choose, in fact, between *short-term* projects or, in alternative, *long-lasting* investments and partnerships; artistic *tradition* or also *creations and experimentation*; purely *economic resources* or, instead, experiences and competence

to exchange; brand *visibility* or, rather, *reputation* outcomes. Last but not least, if assure a revenue only for a company itself or, instead, a not ephemeral but sustainable added value (Zamagni, 2010), which could be *shared* with stakeholders too (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

The most decisive opportunity for the future appears to invest in quality projects, able to renovate the cultural-artistic system as well as business culture and communication. For this purpose, Italian institutions need to bet on sponsors and partners willing to experiment new languages and save the country from a fatal “museification” process (Santagata, 1998: 165). At the same time, companies are called to adopt a relational approach to cultural communication, inspired by a logic of responsibility and the search for measurable strategic results (Schiuma, 2011a & 2011b).

Such lessons come from some recognizable best practices in the sector, such as for example the Herculaneum Conservation Project, based on a long-standing commitment by the non-profit Packard Humanities Institute foundation. More in general, the international experience views corporations revolving toward *high-visibility partnerships* (or even “*adoptions*”) involving in the long period the most well-known museums and cultural *attractions* worldwide(12), rather than to the forms of pure patronage or sponsorship which appear nowadays so popular and near to saturation in Italy.

Beyond doubt, culture can represent nowadays a great opportunity for private companies not interested in easy “charitable” advertising, but in qualifying relations with their community by means of a real value restitution. And they are not to be considered the “new barbarians”, as their needed efforts can give concrete positivity back to the territory and finally accelerate, perhaps, the discovery of a winning *Italian way* against decline.

Notes

(1) Among the first memorable experiences, it is possible to mention two cycles of

classical concerts (352 in total), which Martini and Rossi sponsored on the radio in the period 1936-1943 and later, after the World War, 1945-1964 (Gatti & Affenita, 2000). (2) Law 342/2000 introduced in Italy the principle (already well-established abroad) of allowing private donations to cultural heritage and activities to be fully deductible from taxable income (Osservatorio Impresa e Cultura, 2002; Civita, 2009); this regulation flanks the one regarding sponsorships, considered advertising and propaganda costs and then wholly deductible from the corporate income account (Law 917/1986). On the one hand, after several years since their introduction both these opportunities continue to be known and applied less than expected, especially by medium and small companies (Bertani, 2009); on the other hand, further measures facilitate their use, such as the recently launched “Art Bonus” decree (converted in Law 106/2014) allowing the deduction from corporate tax of a relevant part of the donations to museums, archaeological sites, archives, libraries, theatres, and lyric foundations.

(3) Differently from sponsorship, in fact, patronage doesn't represent a commercial agreement, but a free donation to a cultural cause or institution: of course, even if there have never been “unknown patrons”, in this kind of relation the beneficiary is not obliged to guarantee a return of visibility to the donor (De Giorgi, 1988).

(4) Vatican City represents one of the most aspired symbol ever for multinational sponsors such as Eni, whose long-term commitment has assured further restorations to St. Peter's Basilica and, until August 2016, a three-year period agreement as main partner of Vatican Museums. In the past, an important conservative intervention was also due to Nippon Television Network Corporation of Japan, investing in 1981-1994 18 billion Lira in the restoration of Sistine Chapel's frescos in exchange for filming rights.

(5) In June 2014, for some days the Florence Baptistery has been entirely packaged by a garish installation promoted by Emilio Pucci (owned, since 2000, by LVMH Group), which was hardly criticized by citizens and international observers.

(6) In Florence, some well-known fashion brands have concentrated their efforts financing the restoration of the major city monuments: among them the Uffizi Gallery, to which for example Salvatore Ferragamo has decided in June 2014 the donation of 600 thousand Euros in order to modernize and reopen eight halls.

(7) In December 2013, the Only The Brave fashion holding won the call for an economic sponsor investing 5 million Euros in the restoration project.

(8) The agreement establishes that Fendi will annually pay 2.8 million Euros in order to use the building for the next 15 years at least, at the same time granting the ground floor as location for city exhibitions and events.

(9) Among the other “minor” projects involving Roman monuments, it is possible to

mention the restoration of Marforio Fountain on Capitoline Hill, which the Austrian brand Swarovski entirely financed in 2012-2013 with a thousand Euros donation; other commercial agreements also involved Triton Fountain in piazza Barberini and Fountain of the Old Boat in piazza di Spagna, in the frame of a wider project preserving Rome's monumental fountains.

(10) On the evolution of "post" and "late" modern city, see also Amendola, 2010.

(11) The recurring degeneration of cultural exhibitions in pure communication events (or even "sponsors bins") represents nowadays a recurring phenomenon, whose marketing orientation has been often denounced. It is the case of ICOM Italy (the Italian Committee inside the International Council of Museums), in 2008 expressing its rebuke against an unequal "Darwinian" economic competition between permanent museums and the increasing number of temporary exhibits, inspired by a marketing rather than a cultural approach and nowadays attracting a growing part of private and public funding in the name of commercial success (ICOM Italia, 2008).

(12) For example, Tate Modern and London Eye in London, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, as well as the several Guggenheim museums worldwide.

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