Abstract

Different fields define artistic mediation, but it is possible to explain that at the heart of these definitions are different ways of accompanying the educational and social processes linked to artistic practices. In the Ibero-American context, two conceptions of artistic mediation currently coexist. One refers to professional support through artistic interventions for people and groups in situations of vulnerability and/or exclusion. The aim is to improve their psychosocial condition, promoting well-being, fostering creativity and participation, enabling an improvement in individual, group and community situations, leveraging social inclusion and community development processes and fostering a culture of peace. The other conception is to bring art closer to the public in cultural or museological contexts, promoting new ways of thinking about the relationship between art, society, and the public. This research reviews both perspectives. To better understand each concept’s scope, it draws on how the scientific publications identified below refer to the concept of artistic mediation in their content.

Keywords

artistic mediation, art, audiences, social improvement
promovendo novas formas de pensar a relação entre arte, sociedade e público. Nesta pesquisa, ambas as perspetivas são revistas, com apoio na forma como as publicações científicas especificadas a seguir quando e como apresentam o conceito de mediação artística no seu conteúdo, com o fim de ganhar uma maior compreensão do alcance de cada conceito.

**Palavras-chave**
mediação artística, arte, públicos, melhoria social

1. **Introduction**

We present the results of the theoretical research in scientific publications in Spanish on the concept of artistic mediation based on Google Scholar. We considered articles whose title includes the concept of artistic mediation, both theoretical works and those stemming from one-off projects or interventions. We analysed how they define the concept to discern how they understand artistic mediation, and if it is not specified, we examined into which of the two conceptions they fall. We also included conference papers available on the internet. We excluded graduation projects but considered doctoral theses and books. Furthermore, we did not include presentations or publications unavailable on Google Scholar. We believe that this systematisation is important to clarify how this new concept is taking shape since it has different definitions in the current literature, and it does not always refer to the same type of intervention. In this article, we analysed only the publications which include the concept under research in the title. There are, however, other publications where the concept is used in the text of the articles as a synonym for other educational, cultural and research practices. The clarification of the concept helps discern the different types of intervention.

This paper’s study of the artistic mediation concept aims to further the knowledge on the topic based on the current knowledge. Identifying the commonalities between published work reinforces the concept, facilitating the assimilation of knowledge generated in academia and sharing it, improving its reach and implementation.

2. **Purpose**

Since 2010, multiple scientific texts on artistic mediation projects have been published, and there have been conferences and presentations at congresses on the topic. These publications offer two approaches to this concept. One refers to support through projects in different artistic languages for people and groups in vulnerable situations, aiming at social inclusion, health improvement or community coexistence. The other is described as the work undertaken in museological contexts to bring art closer to the public, the legacy of the previous educational or pedagogical departments of museums and cultural centres.
This research aims to discern how the concept of artistic mediation in Spanish is currently understood from scientific publications, with no specific initial date, to December 2022.

3. Research Design

We draw from Bunge's (1999) position, for whom a theory is a system of hypothetical propositions from which valid arguments are constructed from the deduction. According to Barahona Quesada (2013): “in general terms, we can conceive of theoretical research as the systematic activity of elaborating, constructing, reconstructing, exploring and critically analysing the conceptual (that is, theoretical) bodies into which the different areas of knowledge fall” (p. 7). Accordingly, we designed a theoretical investigation based on Google Scholar.

We identified the articles published in this database that include “artistic mediation” in the title. We analysed how the authors define the concept based on Moreno González (2016b) argument, which highlights how two concepts of artistic mediation currently coexist: one as a form of social intervention through art and the other as a bridge between art exhibited in museums and cultural centres, and the public:

in Spanish, we currently identify two approaches to Artistic Mediation. The first, as a model of art education for social intervention through art (Moreno, 2010), and the second as the intervention that takes place in museological contexts between the works and the public, referred to in publications of the National Council of Culture and Arts of the Government of Chile (Governo do Chile, 2015). In the first case, we refer to a form of intervention that addresses the needs of socially excluded groups to promote processes of transformation, inclusion and community development. The second refers to the work undertaken by museums and cultural centres to bring art closer to the public. This book builds on the first concept of Artistic Mediation, and we will focus on its development. (Moreno González, 2016b, p. 17)

We analysed the relevant publications, discerning how they define the stated concept and checking whether they fit into the two categories proposed above. Moreover, we reviewed in what contexts the projects are developed and what issues are addressed.

In this research, we did not consider publications that do not include the studied concept in the title, even though they may refer to artistic mediation at some point in the text.

4. Research Development

From the Google Scholar search, we identified 35 publications that include “artistic mediation” in the title: one book and one book chapter (stemming from a congress), 22 journal articles, one doctoral thesis, five masters’ dissertations and five conference papers.
In Table 1, we arranged the publications in chronological order, except for the graduation projects, including the year of publication, the title of the text and the title of the publication (in the case of journals, we included volume, number and pages). The last column is the output of the analysis of how “artistic” mediation is defined in each text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Concept</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A. Moreno González (2016a)</td>
<td>“La Mediación Artística (The Artistic Mediation)</td>
<td>Book (Editora Octaedro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A. Moreno González (2016b)</td>
<td>“Inclusión Social por el Arte: Mediaciòn Artística” (Social Inclusion Through Art: Artistic Mediation)</td>
<td>La Sociedad Académica, 47, 41–47</td>
</tr>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A. Moltó Borreguero (2017)</td>
<td>El Departamento de Mediaciòn Artística en los Espacios Expositivos, Culturales y Artísticos Dentro del Ambito Universitario. Caso de Estudio: CulturaLAB (The Department of Artistic Mediation in Exhibition, Cultural and Artistic Spaces Within the University Framework. Case Study: CulturalLAB)</td>
<td>Dissertation, Miguel Hernández University of Elche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>A. Palacios (2018a)</td>
<td>“¿Debemos Explicar el Significado de las Obras de Arte? La Mediación Artística Como Experiencia Formativa en la Universidad” (Should we explain the meaning of a work of art? Art mediation as a learning experience in College)</td>
<td>Observar: Revista Electrónica de Didáctica de las Artes, 12, 71–91</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>F. Palma (2020)</td>
<td>“Mediación Artística en Concepción: Aproximación a una Práctica Cultural de Vinculación con los Publicos” (Artistic Mediation in Concepción: Approach to a Cultural Practice of Linking With the Public)</td>
<td>Revista Actos, 1(2), 54–70</td>
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The Concept of Artistic Mediation in the Ibero-American Context

Ascensión Moreno González & Marina Clauzet Ferraz de Mello

Table 1. Scientific publications on artistic mediation

<table>
<thead>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Support through artistic processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R. Nicolás Ortuño (2022b)</td>
<td>“Todos Somos Arte: Proyecto de Mediación Artística con Jóvenes con Trastorno del Espectro Autista” (We All Are Art: Art Mediation Project With Young People Suffering From an Autism Spectrum Disorder)</td>
<td>Arteterapia. Papeles de Arteterapia y Educación, 17, 131-142</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support through artistic processes</td>
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Once we identified the published articles on Google Scholar, we proceeded to analyse how they define the concept of artistic mediation.
5. Development and Research

Based on Moreno González’ (2016b) approach, we found in all the texts one of the two conceptions of artistic mediation explained before (the museums or as support through artistic processes) clearly described: 10 texts perceive the concept as the work undertaken by museums and art centres to bring art closer to the public, including educational centres; 24 texts conceive it as the support of groups in vulnerable situations through workshops and artistic activities; and one discusses the relationship between art and education.

Based on the articles identified, we can state that artistic mediation has been in scientific publications for 20 years. The first article was published in 2002, and the latest in 2022. The first article on artistic mediation, in Spanish, was published in 2002 by the Austrian Michael Wimmer, executive director of the Austrian Department of Culture, professor at the University of Vienna, expert of the Council of Europe and founding member of the European Artsandeducation network. Although this article is not from the Ibero-American context, we have included it because it is the first time the concept has been mentioned in scientific publications. In this article, Wimmer (2002) reflects on new approaches between art and education so that a “new culture of teaching and learning” is created, integrating learning processes based on interdisciplinary projects, emphasising the experience of pupils, where they have the opportunity to be productive, letting themselves be guided by their own experiences to discover themselves. Art education would play a crucial role in this kind of “self-discovery”, guiding the way towards spontaneity, imagination and tolerance.

Eight years have elapsed from the first publication to the second. The second article is by the Spanish Ascensión Moreno González (2010), a professor at the University of Barcelona, director of the master’s degree in artistic mediation and president of the Professional Association of Artistic Mediation. In the article, the author states:

artistic activity acts as a mediator; that is, the underlying goal is not that the people who participate in it learn art but that the activity is an educational tool that allows educators to focus on other objectives, mainly aimed at promoting people’s autonomy and social inclusion processes. (Moreno González, 2010, p. 2)

We identified five publications by the author, three articles (Moreno González, 2010, 2016a, 2022), one book (Moreno González, 2016b), and one co-authored article (Moreno González et al., 2013); becoming the author who has written the most on the subject. They all describe the concept as a form of intervention through the arts to promote processes of biopsychosocial improvement of people participating in the projects and, also, to promote social transformation.

The line of artistic mediation as a form of supporting creative processes has the most publications: two refer to projects in prisons (Fernández-Cedena, 2018; Ruiz Carrera & Vidal Arbonés, 2015), and two to interventions with people with autism, both by Rocío Nicolás Ortuño (2022a, 2022b). As for other contexts, there is a text for each
of the following: addictions (Moreno González et al., 2013), women in situations of vulnerability (Huerta & Vicari, 2017), special education (Moreno Pérez, 2020), functional diversity and ageing (Guerrero & Alonso, 2021), older people at large (Ranilla, 2022), young migrants (Tarragó, 2021), citizens’ rights (Mesías-Lema et al., 2022), support in bereavement processes (Castro Pacheco & Brito Cárdenas, 2019), contexts of vulnerability (Paczkowski Reloba, 2021) and university context (Moltó Borreguero, 2017); finally, we highlight an article exploring the difference between artistic mediation and art therapy (Moreno González, 2022).

The publications mentioned above include topics of interest, such as the concept of “artmediation”, which we only found in one of the publications (Sanchez-Ruiz & Chacón, 2012); the remaining ones opt for “artistic mediation”. Another aspect highlighting this discussion for the first time is the distinction between artistic mediation and art therapy. In 2022, Moreno González wrote an article specifically addressing this issue.

Analysing in which aspects of support through the arts the articles have an impact, we identified references to the purpose of improving personal and social well-being (Cano, 2022; Moreno González, 2010; Nicolás Ortuño, 2022a, 2022b; Paczkowski Reloba, 2021; Tarragó, 2021) in settings where they work with people in situations of vulnerability. According to Nicolás Ortuño (2022b), the artistic practice developed in contexts of functional diversity is an increasingly accepted and integrated activity in different institutions, given the benefits it brings to subjects, promoting their development at both individual and collective levels. We note that since the first publication, where artistic mediation is first conceptualised as a form of intervention through the arts with social objectives (Moreno González, 2010), this perspective has been widely developed both in Latin America and in Spain.

For Peters (2019), artistic mediation is part of cultural mediation: “artistic mediation is construed as a specific space within a general field, which is cultural mediation” (p. 8). This author outlines the difference between these two conceptions of mediation:

"cultural mediation seeks to build bridges between people and communities through communicative, cultural, emotional and sensitive exchanges - where the parties share their biographical, historical and relational resources. Artistic mediation seeks, instead, to build dialogic bridges between an artistic proposal and the biographical questions of an audience-observer vis a vis their social and cultural context. Reflecting on the condition in the observer’s world is one of the principles of artistic mediation. (Peters, 2019, p. 19)"

Some other publications use artistic and cultural mediation as a synonym: “we would speak of cultural mediation as that space of social and educational intervention generated through artistic and cultural projects, with groups that need certain social and cultural help” (Ranilla, 2022, p. 206).

On the meaning of artistic mediation as a bridge between art and the public, Peters (2019) sees it as a critical experience-generating device:
artistic mediation is not simply a tool to generate and/or attract communities or new audiences. It is, first and foremost, a critical device that seeks to design, think and transform the ways of thinking about the common space in and with art. And it does so by generating various novel experiences between the observer, the artistic work and the other participants. (pp. 11–12)

For Rodrigo (2015), “the word artistic mediation offers an endless range of possibilities and educational, communication and approach strategies to the various sectors that form the official and unofficial public of the art discourse in a variety of institutions” (p. 376). Besides developing the mediation perspective of art institutions, Rodrigo also explores the potential to cause social change through the development of visual perception, creative imagination, the development of flexibility in the creative solution of all kinds of problems and the formation of aesthetic values that impact on the human and urban environment and artistic expressions. In his approach, the methodological aspects of mediation are not explained to produce the potential he proposes.

In his master’s thesis, Adaros (2020) explores the development of artistic mediation in Chile and highlights that “a few years ago, the cultural and artistic field in Chile started to use the concept of mediation to refer to dynamics of connection between different spaces and their visitors” (p. 45). The author speaks of artistic and cultural mediation without any distinction, proposing that “artistic and cultural mediation will be understood as a device of social intervention that seeks to establish new ways of thinking about the relationship between art, society, the public and cultural institution” (Adaros, 2020, p. 45).

Palma (2020) also situates his research in Chile, specifically in Concepción, as his “mediation in this context keeps a distance from the formation of spectators and/or audiences, as it does not seek mere cultural consumption, but – also – tries to provoke critical reflection” (p. 55). For the author, artistic mediation is a cultural practice.

Palacios (2018a) describes the experience developed in the Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros, specifically in the subject of art education didactics of the teaching course, working on the design and application of didactic workshops for students who visit the centre’s exhibit.

Analysing the aspects discussed in the perspective of artistic mediation as a bridge between art and the public, we note that besides situating the concept, the author questions how to conduct these mediations. Palacios (2018b) points out:

about the role we should play when the visit takes place, what we ask ourselves is how to mediate: what kind of activities would be the most suitable, how to guide the dialogue, what kind of questions we should ask, in which aspects we should influence the meaning, etc. (p. 481)

6. Conclusions

Google Scholar helped us identify the scientific publications. However, we identified some unusual situations: some articles in indexed journals did not appear in our searches.
On the other hand, we found publications in non-indexed journals. Furthermore, there is no unified criterion regarding publications: some end-of-course projects appear, but not all. We found some papers in congresses, and we know of others that are not available, and we found some masters’ dissertations.

Artistic mediation has a 20-year history in the Ibero-American context. The professional and scientific community has clearly opted for the concept of artistic mediation and not for that of artemediation. The concept is being developed in two different contexts: groups and communities in situations of vulnerability and cultural centres and museums.

We verified that there are two perspectives on artistic mediation. According to one, workshops are held where the participants are those making art and expressing themselves through different artistic languages, with the support of a mediator. These workshops aim to improve the situation of their participants by developing resilience, empowerment, well-being, health and social inclusion, which is the line of work introduced by Ascensión Moreno González at the University of Barcelona. In the second, participants visit artists’ exhibitions, and the mediator proposes a tour of their works. The goal is not always explicitly stated; special reference is made to fostering the visitors’ critical thinking, reflection on art and cultural exchange. This perspective includes the work done by museums and cultural centres’ former educational or pedagogical departments.

Although both conceptions coincide insofar as people who relate to art are concerned, there are major differences between the two: regarding the artistic experience, the extent to which participants are involved in artistic mediation, the objectives of professional interventions and how the activities take place. In the case of mediation in museums and cultural centres, it mainly refers to guided tours. In contrast, socio-educational projects are workshops where participants have a monitored experience of artistic creation.

On the other hand, artistic and cultural mediation are sometimes used as synonyms, with no distinction between them. Some authors use both concepts interchangeably.

The author with the most articles on artistic mediation is Ascensión Moreno González, from the University of Barcelona, with four articles. Following are Jorge Fernández-Cedena, from the Complutense University of Madrid; Ricardo González García from the University of Cantabria; Rocío Nicolás Ortuño from the University of Murcia; and Alfredo Palacios, from the Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros, with two articles each. We identified only one publication in a book focusing on the topic, *La Mediación Artística* (The Artistic Mediation), published in 2016 by Octaedro publishing house.

Since 2002, when the first publication was made, there was a period without publications until 2010. From 2010 up to 2022, we identified publications in every year except 2011. There are two publications in 2015, two in 2016, three in 2017, five in 2018, three in 2019, five in 2020, three in 2021, and seven in 2022. Artistic mediation is growing rapidly, both in developing initiatives and projects and in research and scientific production. In the case of museums, the former educational services are now mostly called “mediation”. Moreover, as far as artistic mediation in social, educational, health and community
contexts is concerned, it provides intervention methodologies that favour the development of social improvement and transformation goals.

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Ascensión Moreno González & Marina Clauzet Ferraz de Mello


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