

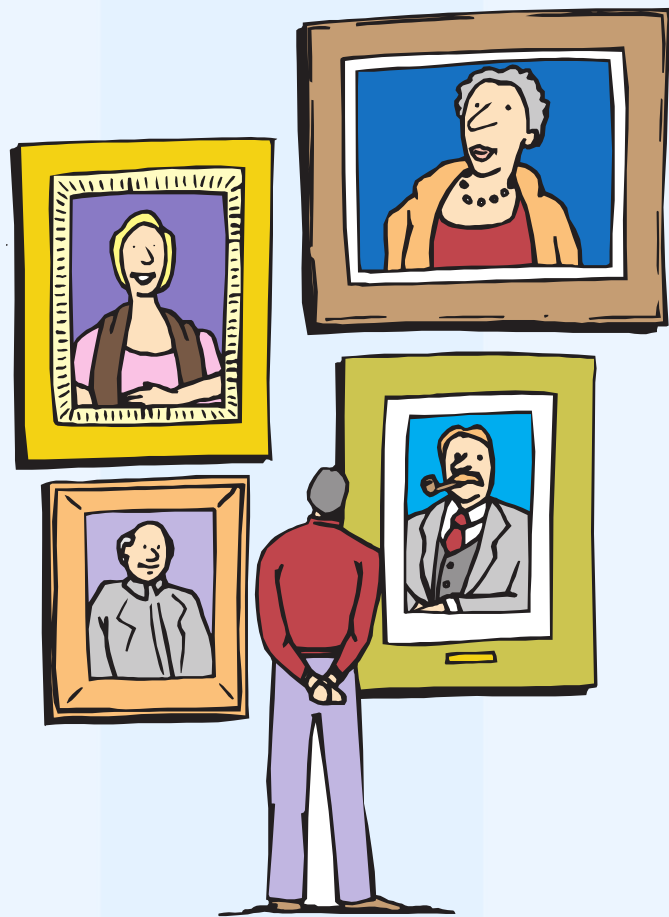
Fortezza Firmafede, April 15, 2026

✦ Education on the Local Cultural Heritage ✦

Some examples

Virginia Galli

Head of Educational Services, Coop. Earth
AIEM Italian Association of Museum Educators
Art teacher



associazione italiana
EDUCATORI MUSEALI



Introducing myself

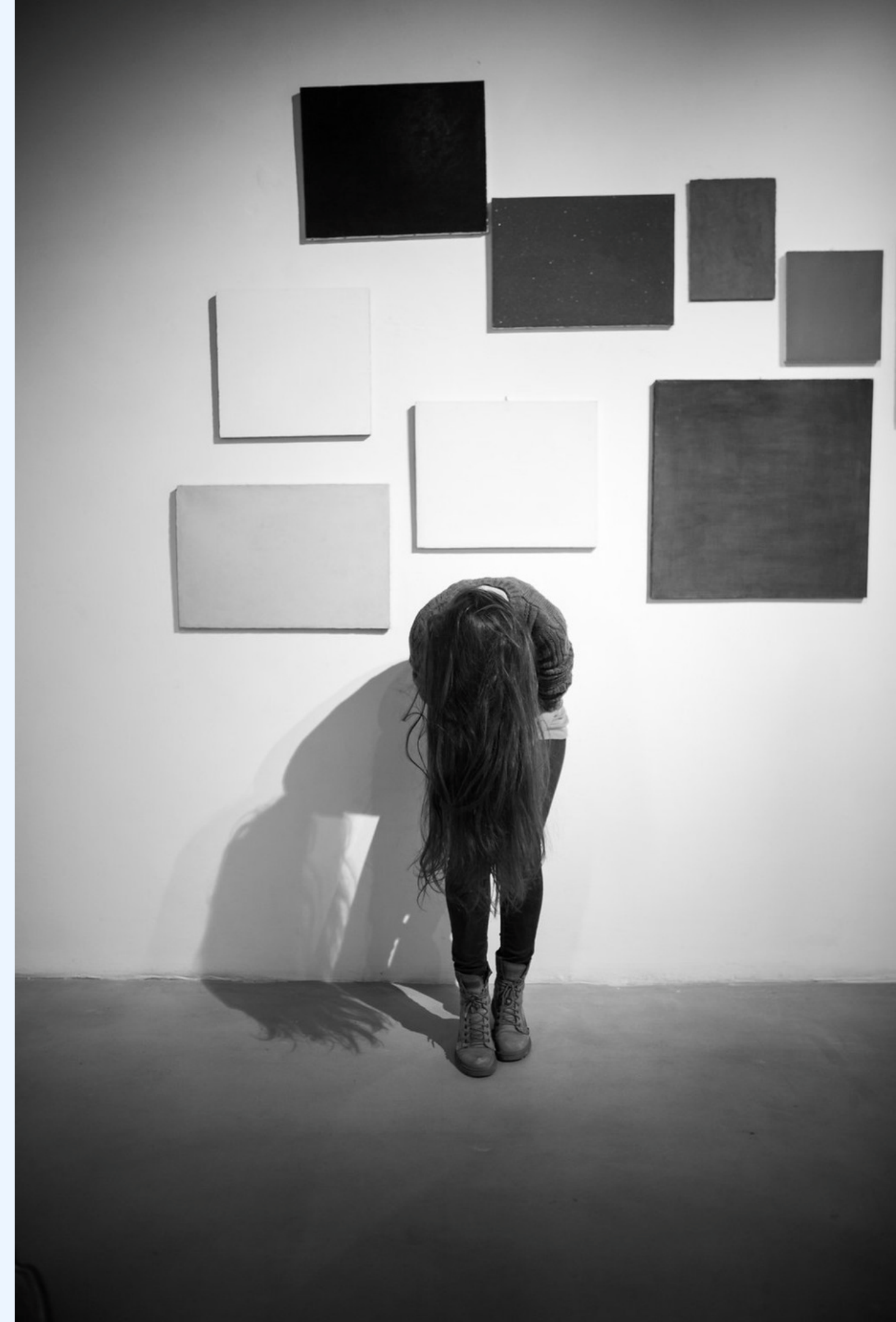
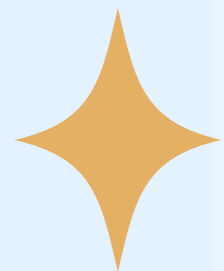
- I am a museum and heritage educator, Art teacher, actress and performer;
- I studied Cultural Heritage Studies, Art History and Cultural Heritage Education;
- I have collaborated with Italian and European theater groups and museums;
- I am Head of Educational Services at Coop Earth, operating between Liguria and Tuscany;
- I am a founding member of AIEM, the first Italian Association of Museum Educators.

I am interested in exploring connections between cultural heritage education and theatrical and performative languages.



What we're going to talk about

- Cultural heritage education and the role of the educator;
- The work of educational services;
- Cooperativa Earth and its work;
- Programs and activities;
- The *parallelaMente* experience;
- Projects for Sarzana's candidacy for Italian Capital of Culture 2028.





✦ MUSEUM ✦

“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that **researches, collects, conserves, interprets** and **exhibits** tangible and intangible heritage.

Open to the public, **accessible** and **inclusive**, museums **foster diversity and sustainability**.

They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with **the participation of communities**, offering varied experiences for **education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.**”

26th ICOM General Conference - Prague 2022

Features of the museum

INCLUSIVE

ACCESSIBLE

**PARTICIPATORY
COMMUNITY
PARTICIPATION**

**SHARE
KNOWLEDGE**

**PROMOTES
DIVERSITY and
SUSTAINABILITY**

**OFFERS
DIVERSIFIED
EXPERIENCES**



None of these
aspects exist
without
education

✦ CULTURAL HERITAGE

“Cultural heritage consists of the resources inherited from the past, in all forms and aspects - tangible, intangible, and digital - including **monuments, sites, landscapes, skills, practices, knowledge and expressions of human creativity**, as well as collections conserved and managed by public and private bodies such as museums, libraries, and archives.

It originates from the interaction between people and places through time and **it is constantly evolving**”.

The European Council , 2014

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING. RESEARCH, CONTINUOUS STUDY AND CONTINUOUS RE-EVALUATION ARE NECESSARY.



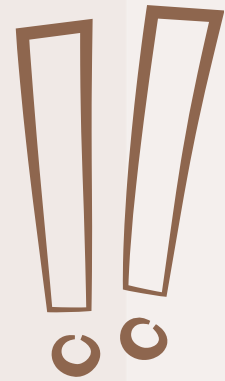
THE MUSEUM IS CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ITSELF, NOT ONLY FOR ITS COLLECTIONS BUT ALSO FOR THE PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK THERE.

✦ EDUCATION ✦

The term education derives from the Latin “*educere*”, “to draw out”, “to lead”.

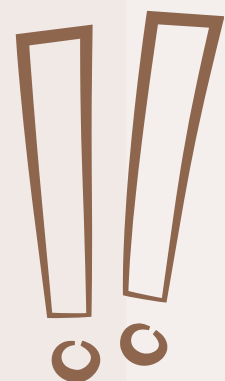
“Museum education can be defined as a set of values, concepts, knowledge, and practices aimed at visitor development”.

A. Desvallées F. Mairesse, Key Concepts of Museology, 2016



Cultural dissemination and mediation are primarily concerned with the transmission and interpretation of content.

Education, understood in this way, aims to engage more broadly with learning the emotional dimension and the individual abilities of the visitor.



**THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF EDUCATION:
FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL.**

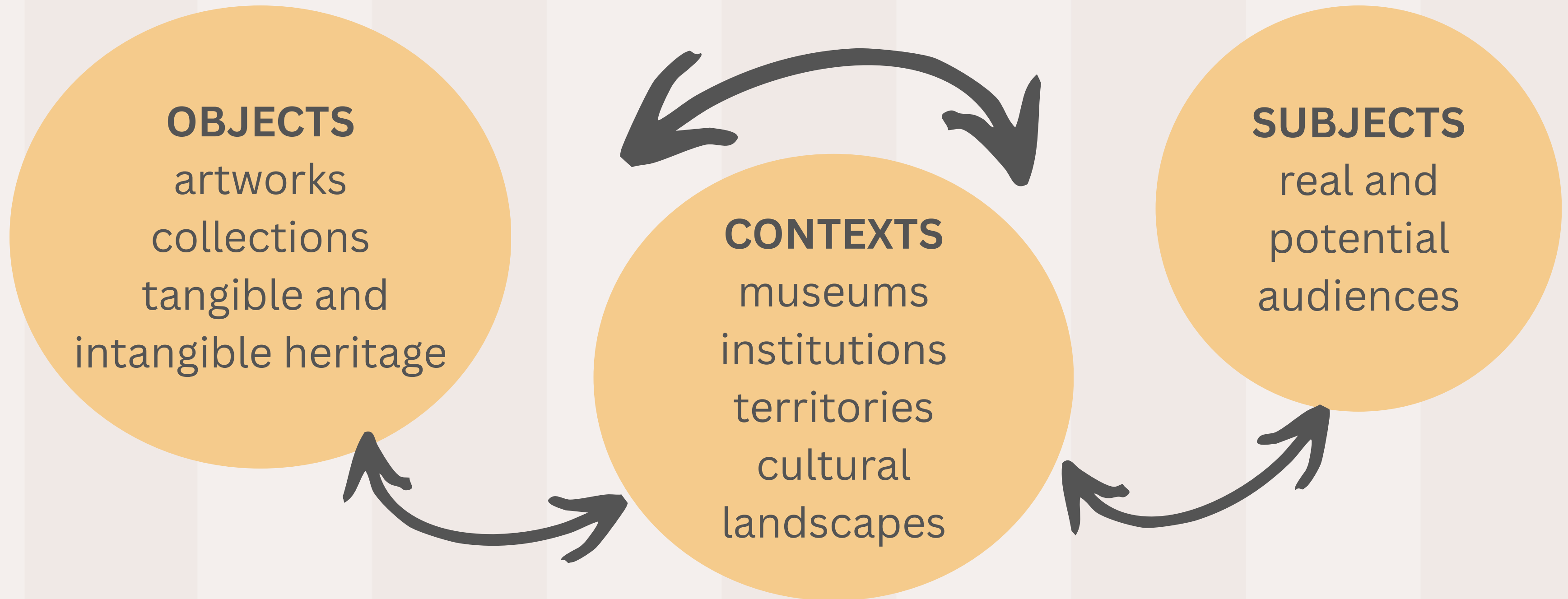
**THE MUSEUM IS THE IDEAL PLACE FOR INFORMAL EDUCATION,
A LIFELONG LEARNING PROCESS.**



Luis Camnitzer, The museum is a school, 2009

✦ Education is
not a service,
but a purpose
of the museum. ✦

✦ CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION ✦





Education ABOUT cultural heritage

to the knowledge of its
specificity, its characteristics,
its stratifications, its meanings
and its values.

Education FOR cultural heritage

to protect it and pass it on
to future generations.

Education THROUGH cultural heritage

The formative power of the heritage favors the
holistic development of the person,
the acquisition of specific transversal skills,
the discovery of respect for diversity and
multiculturalism.



THE CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATORS

What do they do? - What skills should they have?

They contribute to the enhancement of cultural institutions and sites by designing and delivering educational activities tailored to different audiences.

They identify effective ways to communicate and mediate, using appropriate tools for different audiences.

They design educational activities that promote the physical, sensory and social inclusion of audiences with different needs.

They work in collaboration with other professionals involved in the enhancement of cultural heritage.

They design and deliver educational activities aimed at promoting the institution, building relationships with the community, encouraging public participation, and fostering dialogue with other cultures.

Skills

1. Disciplinary and cultural skills

Knowledge of heritage and its contexts

2. Pedagogical and teaching skills

Essentials for planning and managing educational activities

3. Mediation and communication skills

The relationship with audiences

4. Planning and organizational skills

Management of educational projects

5. Social and inclusive skills

MUSEUM AUDIENCES

The actual or potential recipients of the museum's educational activities: a plurality of subjects with different characteristics and needs. Educational planning is based on the analysis of the different typologies of audiences.

schools

**young
people**

**people with
specific needs**

**potential
audience**

families

accessibility

**local
communities**

**people from
other
cultures**

adults

EARTH COOPERATIVE AND ITS COMMITMENT

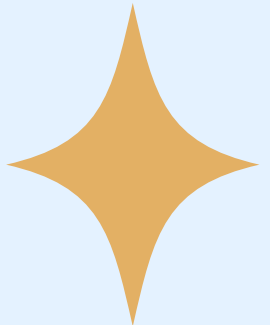
EARTH is a cooperative that has been working in the fields of **culture and the environment** for over twenty-five years.

Over the years, **EARTH** has managed various cultural sites across **Liguria and Tuscany**. Today, it manages the **Sarzanello Fortress**, the **Firmafedede Fortress** with the **MUdeF – Fortresses Museum** in Sarzana, and **San Terenzo Castle** in Lerici.

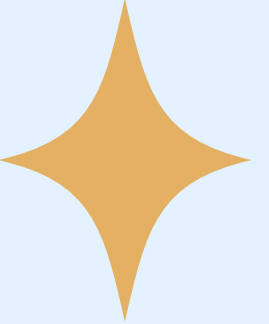
The cooperative also offers **guided tours and workshops** at the **Luni Museum and Archaeological Area**, the **Luni amphitheatre**, and the **Roman Villa of Varignano** in Porto Venere.



THE ROLE OF EARTH COOPERATIVE'S CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION SERVICES



Over the years, EARTH has developed **educational programmes** aimed at **different audiences**, with the **objectives** of:

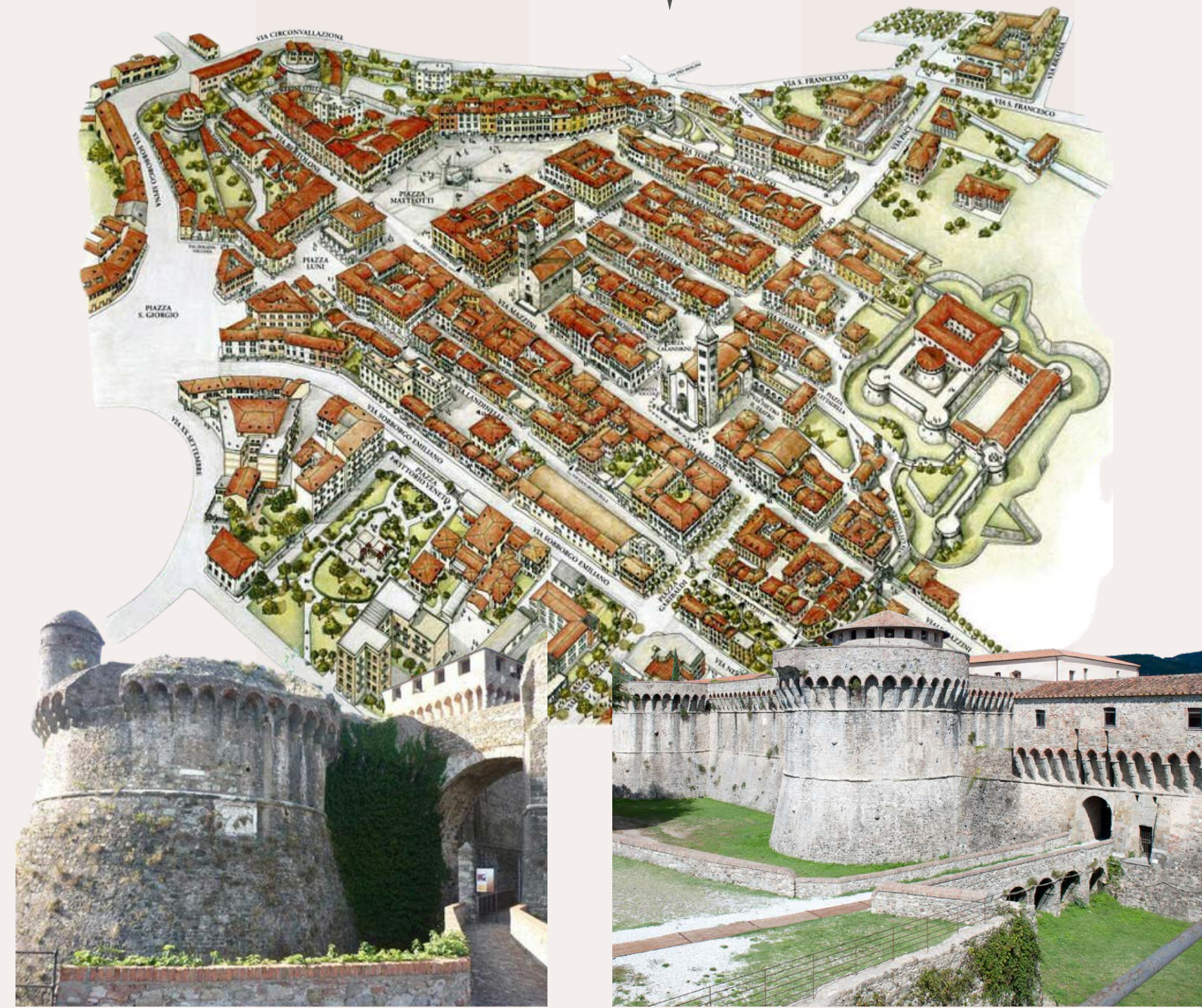
- enhancing and promoting the **historical and artistic heritage** of the area;
 - strengthening the **dialogue between community and heritage**;
 - making cultural heritage known to all generations;
 - including minorities in the **social fabric**;
 - helping to develop **aware citizens** and **respectful of their past** and its **testimonies**.
- 

✦ SARZANA AND ITS FORTRESSES ✦

Sarzana is a **city rich in art and history**. Over the centuries, it has been contested by various powers, each leaving visible traces.

Like an **open-air museum**, the historic centre preserves a rich heritage of **artworks, historic buildings** and **artisanal traditions**, along with stories of **pilgrims, merchants, popes** and **rulers**.

Starting from this perspective, educational programmes aim to highlight the city's historical, artistic and cultural layers, using the iconic fortresses as a starting point and extending beyond the city walls into the wider urban fabric.



- **school programmes**
- **family and adult activities**
- **accessibility programme**

LUNI MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA ✨

ROMAN VILLA OF VARIGNANO ✨

Luni was an **ancient Roman colony** and an important **commercial and port centre**. The site preserves a rich set of archaeological remains alongside museum collections, which document daily life, economic activities and trade relations.

The **Roman Villa of Varignano** is a **Roman seaside residence** set within a landscape of great historical and natural value. It preserves significant remains that illustrate the organization and functioning of a large Roman estate.

Educational programmes highlight the key archaeological features of the sites, guiding students in discovering the **organization of the Roman city**, the **distinction between public and private life**, and **construction and artistic techniques at Luni**, as well as **exploring daily life and economic activities at the Roman Villa of Varignano**.

school programmes - family activities - accessibility programme





SAN TERENCE CASTLE



San Terenzo Castle stands on a low rocky spur west of the village, in a charming setting.

Educational programmes focus on maritime legends, the history of the village, and the figures — poets, writers and painters — who stayed there.

- **school programmes**
- **family activities**



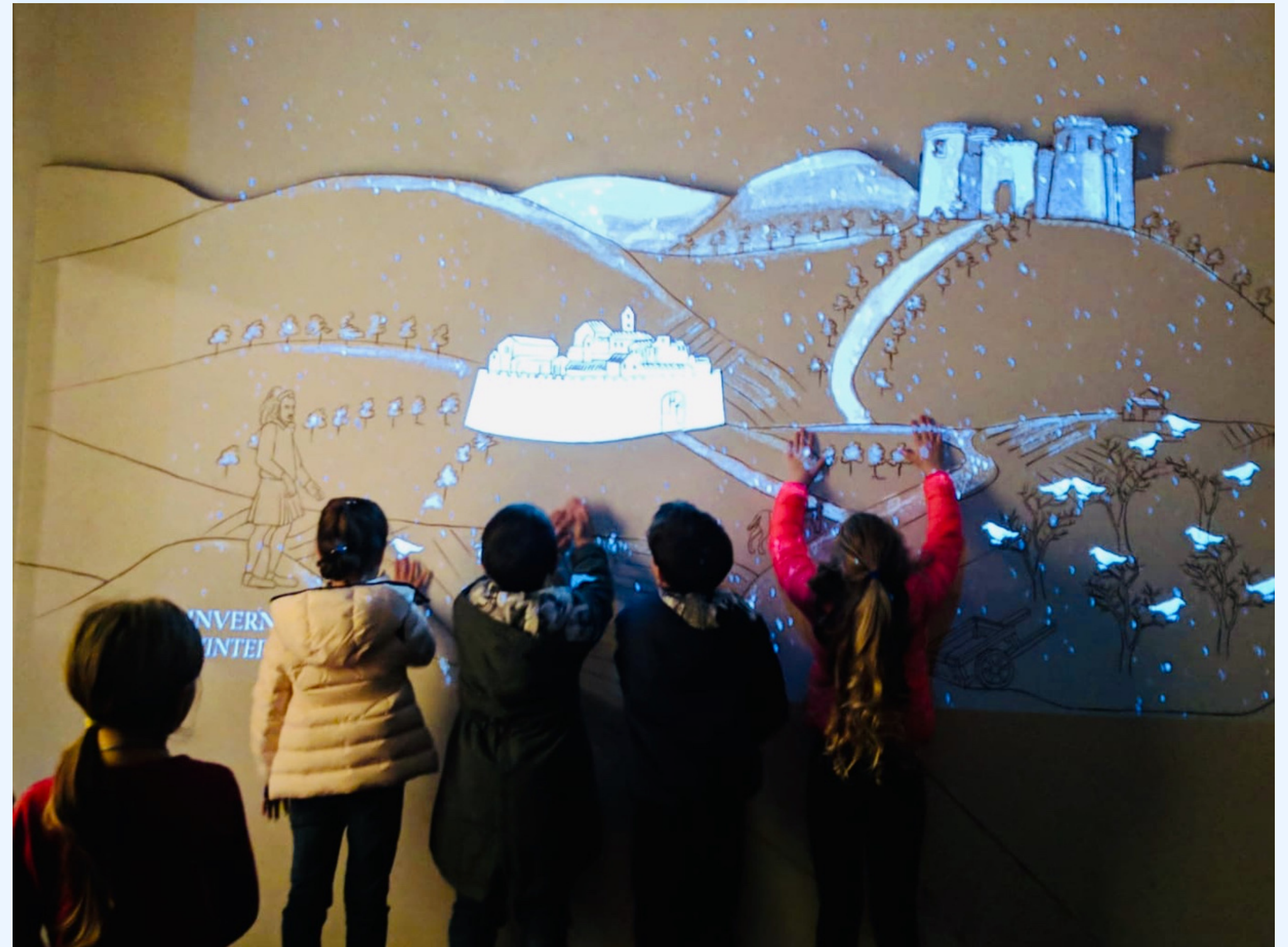
✦ SCHOOL PROGRAMMES ✦

A comprehensive programme of educational activities, structured by thematic areas and covering different subject areas.

Collaboration with some local organizations and associations.

Goal:

Bring students closer to the area's diverse heritage, engaging them in a creative and stimulating way.



THEMES



TOOLS



**dialogical
guided
tours**

**educational
kits**



**hands-on and
manipulative
activities**



**digital and
multimedia
devices**



**observation
and activity
sheets**

**narrative,
theatrical and
performance
activities**

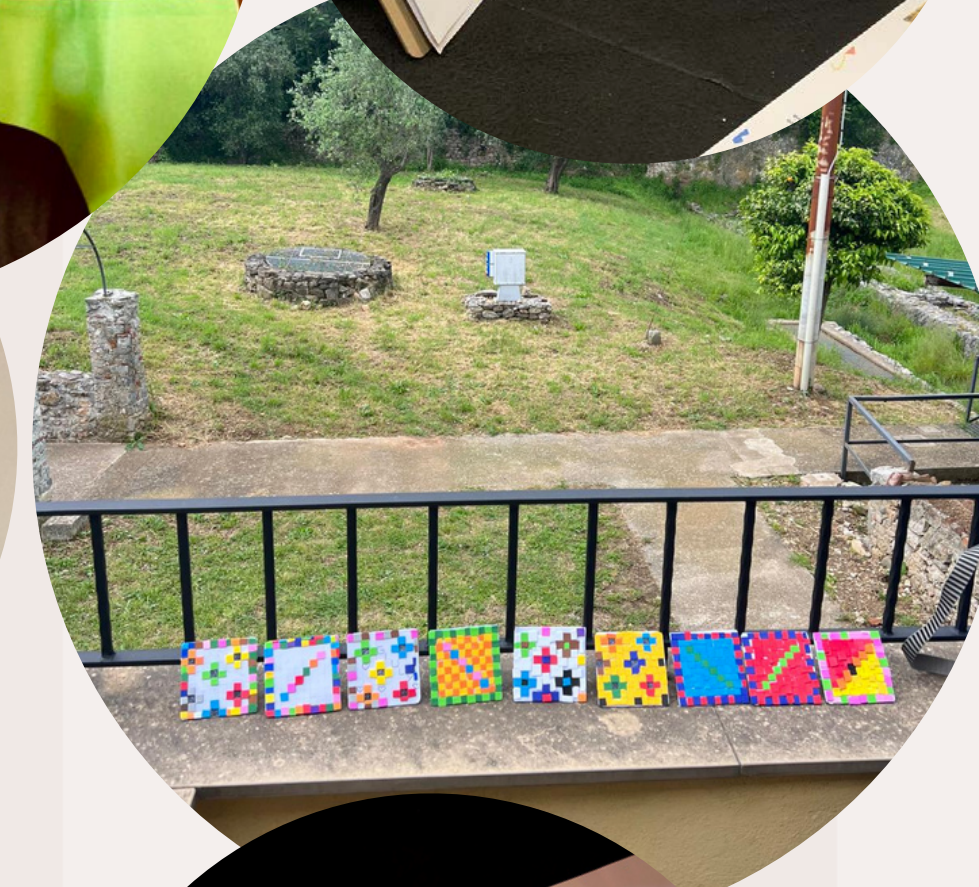
**embodiment
activities**

**animated
visits and
adventures
in costume**

**role-playing
games**







✦ FIASELLA AND GESTURE IN ART ✦

A programme exploring gesture in the paintings of **Domenico Fiasella** (1589–1669), developed in collaboration with the **Diocesan Museum of Sarzana**, focusing on the **relationship between scenic space and pictorial space**. A **performative activity** developed from elements found within the paintings.

Goals:

- **dialogue with artworks and create the compositions;**
- **interpret an image starting from the relationships that exist between the characters.**



SARZANA AND THE 7 WONDERS ✨

The guided tour of the fortresses gradually transforms into an **active and participatory experience**. After an introductory phase, participants are given maps of the town and simple directions to help them find their way. The tour then continues in the historic centre, where **students follow clues, reconstruct an itinerary and guide the group in discovering the city's main monuments**. In this way, the visit becomes an opportunity to observe, navigate and experience Sarzana in a more direct and conscious way.



✦ FAMILY ACTIVITIES ✦

Family activities are designed to **engage both adults and children in a shared experience**. These programmes either adapt educational paths originally developed for schools or are created in response to the key themes of temporary exhibitions. Through workshops and interactive guided visits, **participants are guided through experiences that combine learning and creativity**.

Goals:

- encourage active participation;
- create moments of connection, turning the visit into an opportunity to spend meaningful time together.



ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAMME - “WITHOUT BORDERS”

An educational programme for people with autism and/or cognitive disabilities, based on activities related to emotional, bodily and sensory experiences, and using specific methodologies such as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and sensory strategies.

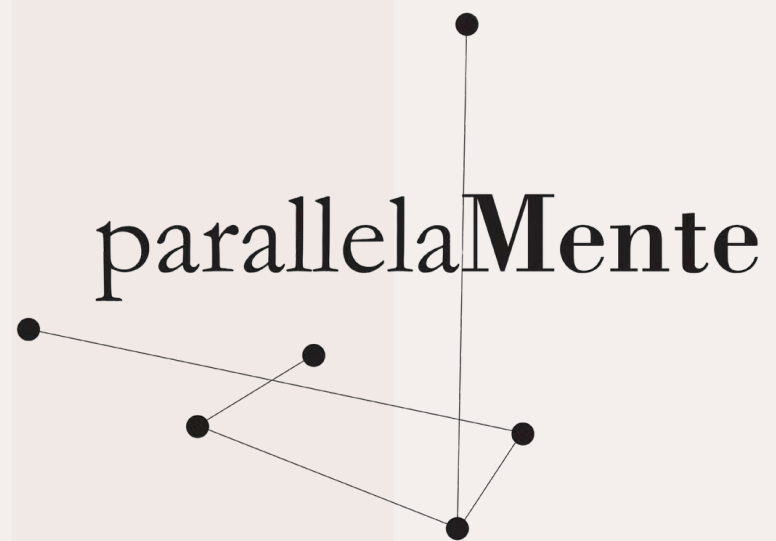
Goals:

- encourage participation;
- experience the exhibition space as social interaction, well-being and relationships.



designed by
specialized
museum
educators and
in collaboration
with local
organizations
and
associations.





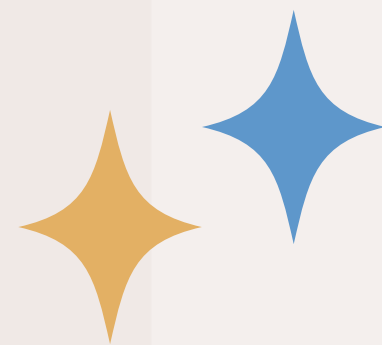
INTERCULTURAL PROGRAMME - “SGUARDI PARALLELI”

Intercultural guided tours of the city

Sarzana's historical and artistic heritage is shaped by the diverse cultures of the people who live there, and is continuously enriched by the experiences of new communities and generations.

Goals:

- discover city places through the gaze of those who live them today;
- weave narratives and cultures;
- offer new ways of interpreting the city.





A shared project was launched on the occasion of Sarzana's candidacy for **Capital of Culture 2028**.

I have developed two programmes that summarize the work done over the years and which I hope can still be realized.

“Tell me Sarzana”

An urban trekking experience that presents the city through the eyes of children: adults are guided to discover lesser-known artistic details, in a reversal of roles that becomes an exercise in active participation.

“The dancing city”

A project created in collaboration with Virgilio Sieni to enhance cultural heritage through body language. The symbolic places of Sarzana become spaces open to participation, where the community is involved in workshops and collective performances. The program is aimed at young people with disabilities or addiction backgrounds.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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