

When Shipowners meet Museum - Anna Dentoni, Genova
Wedn Sept. 9, 2019 ICOM MPR

Anna Dentoni
Secretary General
Promotori Musei del Mare

This paper presents the Promotori Musei del Mare, the Maritime Museums Promoters of Genoa and one of its major projects realized lately

The Promotori Musei del Mare is a non profit association which has been supporting the maritime heritage and Galata Maritime museum for more than 20 years.

The goal has been accomplished through conference, educational activities, publications and exhibitions.

With my paper, I'll present one of our major projects realized thanks to sponsors: The gallery of Shipowners – Sala Armatori. I'll show you how the shipping cluster can help a Museum and how the promotion of the maritime culture can keep the commitment and the interests of the Supporters alive.

My story is about a museum and a community in Genoa, a city with one of the ancient and largest historical centers of Europe

Genova is located in the north of Italy

It is a beautiful city on the Mediterranean seashore, mostly known for giving birth to Cristoforo Colombo, even if he did not actually leave from Genova with the *Caravelles*.

Genoa is a very important port with an ancient and large community of entrepreneurs linked to the port and maritime activities.

The port is where everything started, where the first group of sponsors were located and worked.

An enlightened entrepreneurs understood that art and maritime heritage could be the way to have different companies -even competitors- work together with this common goal.

In nineteen ninety-three (1993) he convinced a small group of maritime enthusiasts to fund an exhibit named from Mediterraneo to Atlantic.

Twelve shipping companies that can be considered the founders of the PROMOTORI

The first group grows fast and from the 12 founders, the promoters soon became 35. Companies such as shipowners, shipping companies, insurance brokers. They all had a dream in common: realize something that did not exist in Genoa, a Maritime Museum that would promote the extraordinary maritime heritage of our City, *and its relationship with the sea*.

Not an ordinary museum, more a cultural centre, a meeting place to do business, the place to be part of. A museum where companies could feel a sense of belonging.

A few years later, and a lot of lobbying in 1999 the City of Genoa decided to build the maritime museum that could present the history of our townmits port and the relationship between men (and women) and the sea.

And we were there.

On July two thousand four, Galata Maritime Museum opened to the public.

Galata Maritime Museum is the largest maritime museum in Italy, and it is located in the old arsenal of the Republic of Genoa

With an average of 200/250,000 (two hundred / two hundred and fifty thousand) visitors it is the most visited museum in Genoa.

It has an area of 12,000 square meters (approx. 130.000 square feet) and the museum path develops in thirty galleries to exhibit more than 4300 (four thousand and three hundred) artifacts and objects, in an involving and interactive exhibit, both for big ones and younger visitors

Galata has an open air museum, with a Submarine moored in the old Dock area. The renovation of the building is based on a project by Catalan architect Guillermo Vazquez Consuegra.

It is a large museum, but above all it has an innovative attitude and approach: rather than collections, it focuses on fittings, multimedia and interactivity to engage the public.

When Shipowners meet Museum - Anna Dentoni, Genova
Wedn Sept. 9, 2019 ICOM MPR

We participate, share and support this approach.

Since the opening of Galata Maritime Museum in 2004 up to today, 15 years have passed. and the Promoters have grown and count more than 120 supporters, but most of all we raised over 3 million euros that has been invested in the promotion and the communication of the Galata Maritime Museum and the Maritime heritage.

However, although we have always economically supported the museum, what was missing was the history of the town of Genoa, as lived by the men and women of shipping.

With the Shipowners Gallery, shipping companies were finally able to present their story, a story strongly connected to the town and starts from the 1861, when the port was an important crossroads and was full of merchant and passengers' ships.

The challenge was to present the history to our general public, through its protagonists, the shipowners.

As you can imagine the first patrons were somehow "reluctant" to participate actively, but with a little of convincing then they came to play, opening the doors of their companies, giving not just their money but also their time with conversations, and models, photos, stories, videos.

Eighteen months of research, many interviews and workshops between scholars, shipping workers and shipowners, a well fundraising grew by word-of-mouth, made it possible to realize a specific thematic exhibition:

from the history of Genoese navy to the story of its protagonists, the shipowners.

In the end everybody wanted to participate to tell the story of their company through an immersive and engaging setup.

And more Companies decided to join in and become Patrons of the initiative.

Another challenge was to pass on the enthusiasm to the young generation.

Because to promote the maritime heritage, young people must be involved as well.

Special projects dedicated to young *Nautical* students, were activated, with

When Shipowners meet Museum - Anna Dentoni, Genova
Wedn Sept. 9, 2019 ICOM MPR

the goal of educate on these themes and passionate young people to the beautiful job that is going to the sea.

What are the results that we have achieved with this Gallery?

Involvement: the involvement of shipowners as protagonists of a story to pass to the younger generations

Commitment: we have made the sponsors committed: the patrons increased their participation and increased the funds to the Museum.

Continuity: Through loyalty and commitment the Promoters ensure a continuity in safeguarding and enhancing this heritage.

And some 20 years after the initial idea, the shipowners also have their history represented