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**The Master's Programme Experience Economy: Hospitality and Tourism**

**Management, specialization in Event and Cultural Tourism (St.Petersburg campus)**

**Research Topic**

Role of Contemporary Art Institutions in Formation of Territory Tourist Brand

**Research Question**

Can Contemporary Art Institutions influence on or even create the tourist brand of the territory?

**Destination brand and branding**

Like products and services cities can also have their own brand which can maximize their value, cost and raise customer awareness about it. Nevertheless, destinations are quite complicated objects and cannot be treated simply as products or services.

Place branding goes beyond simple slogans or advertising campaigns; it involves more than placing of a territory on the map as an attractive tourist destination. It is more fascinating to consider a place brand as intellectual property, that is, the totality of the thoughts, feelings, associations and expectations that come to mind when a prospect or consumer is exposed to an entity's name, logo, products, services, events, or any design or symbol representing them.

**Contemporary art definition**

The term contemporary art is very controversial. Time frames of contemporary art can be defined as from 1945 till our days. Contemporary art is contemporary not only because it was made by our contemporaries but also because it states some new sense. Contemporary artists reflect and comment on modern-day society. Contemporary artists work within the postmodern movement, reject the concept of mainstream art and embrace the notion of "artistic pluralism", the acceptance of a variety of artistic intentions and styles.

**Foreign experience**

It is quite difficult to find articles and scientific works which will describe brand formation by the means of contemporary art step by step.

The first indicator which can signal the leadership in the sphere of contemporary art is the list of leaders in the market of contemporary art. These are the countries which are leaders in selling contemporary art masterpieces. The fact that the countries are the leaders in selling contemporary art gives evidence of effective art marketing and in particular marketing of art-galleries. It also shows that countries organize and participate in art fairs actively.

The second indicator is the existence of world known contemporary art museums, such as Guggenheim Museum, Centre Georges Pompidou, Tate Modern.

**Contemporary art in Russia**

The market of contemporary art in Russia is only developing and we are a step behind the rest of the countries.

The potential reasons for that are:

* The Soviet past, when there was a real struggle against contemporary art;
* The absence of contemporary art explanation and education and as a result misunderstanding of some contemporary pieces of art;
* Weak development of art-marketing strategies;
* Weak support of government and locals;
* Lack of marketing of contemporary art institutions as a whole, for instance low development of excursion routes.

In context of my research I am studying the institutions which present visual contemporary art. The institutions which present such genre of contemporary art in Russia can be divided in the following way:

* Museums:
  + Classical museums
  + Museums of contemporary art
* Art galleries
* Creative/art spaces, art centers, lofts.

**Methodology**

The hypotheses which I am going to prove or disapprove according to results of my research are:

* Contemporary art plays insignificant role in destination branding
* Contemporary art is of less interest for Russian tourists than for foreign tourists
* Large well-known museums pay more attention to contemporary art promotion and attraction of tourists.

In order to deal with these hypotheses I will use two research methods:

* Content analysis
* Expert survey

Content analysis will be divided into three parts.

Three types of sites will be analyzed: the sites of touristic agencies, the government portals and entertainment sites like kudago.com.

The second part of my research is survey and interviews with experts. Experts will be chosen from the list of contemporary art institutions. There are several criterions to choose the institutions surveyed. These are the following:

* Working with contemporary art
* Stable organization of exhibitions
* History and scale
* Creative approach towards organization of art spaces
* High level of publicity
* Focus both on locals and on tourists attention
* Cooperation with leading art experts and critics and leading museums of city or country
* Participation in the cultural and educational programs
* Vigorous activity in the framework of different art projects
* Focus on European art practice
* Activity on international level

The potential conclusions will depend on the results of content analysis and experts’ survey. I suppose that the entire hypotheses will be confirmed.

Content analysis could signal the confirmation or rejection of hypotheses. The role of contemporary art in city branding can be assessed with the help of local touristic agencies. If they have any offers connected with contemporary art excursions or routes, whether there any promotion of contemporary art institutions in city maps and prospects. Moreover, it is vital to analyze the sites of government since the process of branding involves government bodies a lot and for that reason if there are any connection with contemporary art in their programs it can be an evidence of brand creation, contemporary art promotion. And, of course, if there are links to contemporary art on entertainment sites it is an argument in favor of contemporary art market development in St. Petersburg.

The second hypothesis will be tested with the help of comparison of supply of touristic agencies in Russia and abroad. If the number of references to contemporary art in foreign agencies cites is bigger than on the Russian ones it is a good evidence of the fact that there is greater demand for Russian contemporary art abroad.

What is more, the potential results of the research could be assessed on the basis of pilot research which was already held. Number of experts was surveyed, in particular experts from art galleries and experts from some of creative art spaces and centers.

This can be proved by pilot research which was conducted in a form of interview with contemporary art galleries.

*Contemporary art plays insignificant role in destination branding*

I suppose that this hypothesis will be confirmed since almost all galleries told that they have no such goal like attracting of tourists. They carry on international business but the audience they attract presents a very narrow segment of market. These are collectors and devotees of contemporary art. Simple tourists cannot afford to buy a masterpiece of contemporary art.

“There is no such goal as attracting tourists to our gallery”

“Tourists are not the target audience of gallery since 2010. Gift shops are much more oriented on tourists than we are. Our clients are collectors, which are interested in this direction. Sometimes tourists visit the gallery but these are individuals”

“Our art is for serious collectors. If a person comes to the city and wants to buy a picture for 100 or 200 euro or dollars we cannot help him or her”.

*Contemporary art is of less interest for Russian tourists than for foreign tourists*

This hypothesis may be submitted, since a number of galleries told that Russian contemporary art market is not well developed. There is no understanding of contemporary art in Russia.

“All our activities are unusual and creative for an ordinary person, since people in our country are not accustomed to contemporary art” “Russia resists against contemporary art”.

“There is of understanding of contemporary art in Russia. People like or dislike something on intuitive level. In order to understand a person should know the history of 20th century art”. “Those who didn’t go abroad and has not been to the largest museums of contemporary art do not know what is it like”.

*Large well-known museums pay more attention to contemporary art promotion and attraction of tourists*

“We do everything what we can. Government should deal with promotion”.

«We are commercial gallery, we are not like NCCA. We have our own objectives. We open and show some names. The next step is sale. Our final goal for pictures to find their owners»

“Erarta is very touristic place, they have a lot of tourists”.

Taking everything into consideration, possible problems and difficulties of destination branding will be figured out as a result of the research.

**Limitations of research**

* Difficulties in access to some experts
* Difficulties of assessment of the market on a full scale
* Subjective approach in the assessment of market

**Future research**

* Extending the studied market segment :
  + Institutions
  + Geography
* Developing of more perfect research methods (survey, scripts for content analysis)
* Developing of city map or city excursion routes