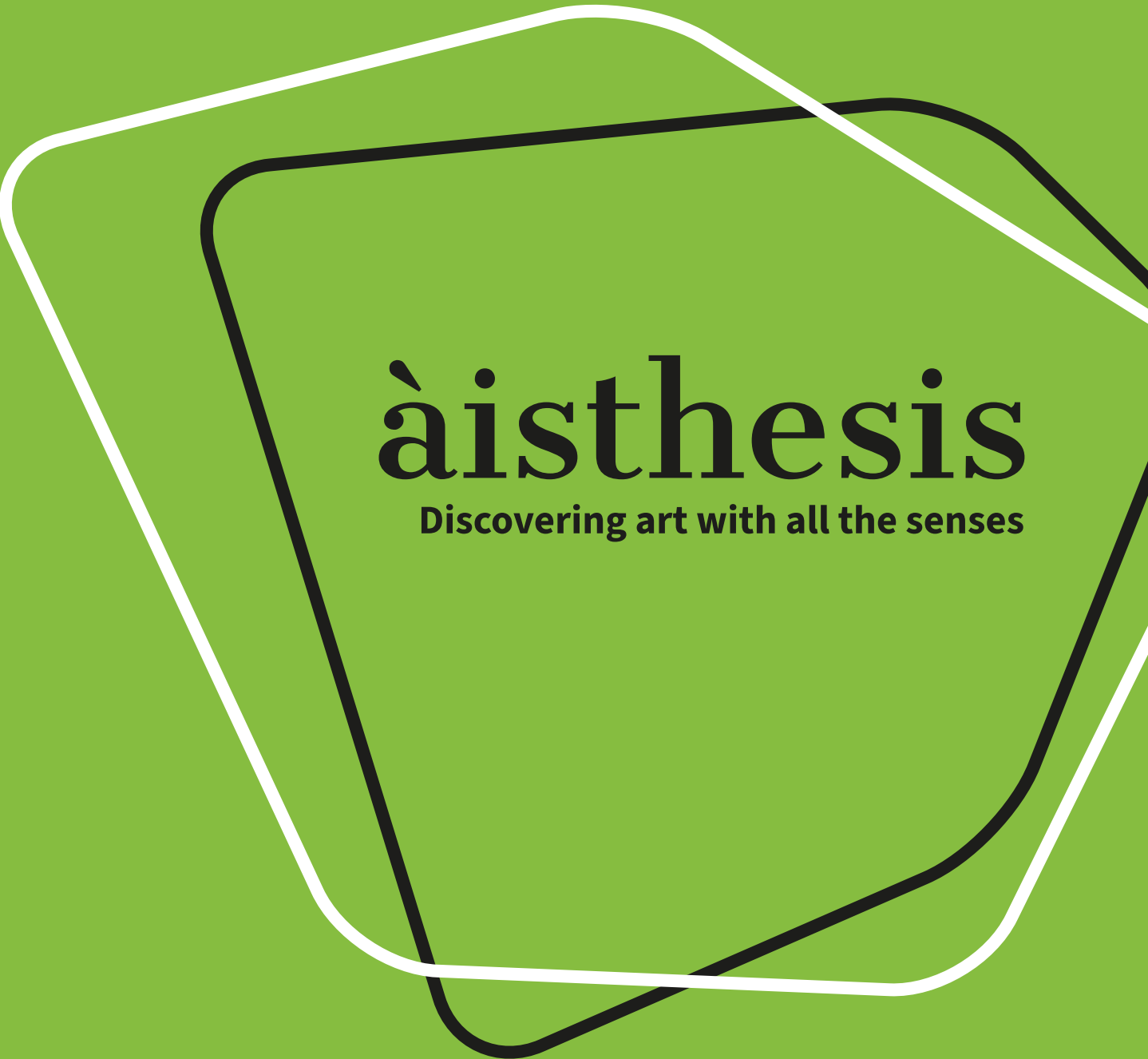




àisthesis

Discovering art with all the senses

Recorded online journal

www.museoomero.it

Issue 34 – Year 13 – August 2026



MUSEO
OMERO

Contents

A tale of flowers, wind, and poetry

The Garden on the Hill of “Infinito” 3

by Monica Bernacchia

The Museum, a space of cultural excellence.

Where barriers turn into experiences 9

by Costantino D’Orazio

“Super Pignotti”: A Century of Words and Images

at the Mole Vanvitelliana 12

by Giulio Segato

Body to body

Emotion and knowledge 15

by Manuela Alessandrini

Credits 18

A tale of flowers, wind, and poetry

The Garden on the Hill of “Infinito”

by Monica Bernacchia

Today, **the Garden on the Hill of “Infinito”** of Recanati is a FAI property and is a place full of scents, colors, and inspiration, where poetry, history, and nature intertwine in an **oasis of serenity**. As its name suggests, it is in an elevated position in a medieval village which owes much of its popularity to a young poet of 19th-century named Giacomo Leopardi.

Even before being the setting for Leopardi’s “*Infinito*”, it was the garden orchard of the Monastery of Santo Stefano: the convent with the *hortus conclusus* was built in the sixteenth century on this hill, at that time called Mount Tabor.

In 1810, the garden and its monastery were abandoned due to Napoleon’s suppression of religious orders. Great history burst into the life of **young Giacomo**. Due to circumstances and temperament, and like many twenty-year-olds seeking a place of his own to isolate himself and indulge his passions, he found free access to this abandoned garden, adjacent to his home. On this *ermo colle* (lonely hill), in the spring or autumn of 1819, he set a poem that still resonates powerfully in the hearts of so many young people who yearn to go beyond, to think beyond: *l’Infinito* (The infinity). At that time, perhaps the *nota siepe* (known hedge) was there, or perhaps, as today, it consisted of the high perimeter walls surrounding the garden blocking the poet’s gaze from *l’ultimo orizzonte* (the last horizon). And those walls led him to imagine the silence and quiet down there, far away, where the mountains dominate, and to be almost frightened, and then return to the rustling of the garden plants and, in this movement of thoughts, to intuit, to perceive infinity. Today, that *infinito* gives its name to this hill, the place where the poet had an epiphany.

Then, history tells us that the religious orders were re-established and the monastery reopened in the mid-19th century as a home for novices and a boarding school, then as an orphanage and a girls’ boarding school for the daughters of

emigrants from Recanati until its closure in 1992. After years of abandonment, the hill was opened to the public in 2002 and, following an important project of recovery and restoration, inaugurated in 2019 as the first FAI property in the Marche.

The Path of Discovery

There is a well-defined path of discovery.

To enter the FAI Garden, we must journey through Leopardi's words and life, passing through the *Piazzetta del Sabato del Villaggio*, where Silvia's house overlooks, reminding the famous poem dedicated to her, as Casa Leopardi still inhabited by his heirs.

After a short climb, via a grand staircase and a white travertine doorway, we enter a three-story red brick building - built between 1940 and 1962- venue of the National Center for Leopardi Studies, which gives access to the Garden on the *Collina dell'Infinito* (Hill of Infinity). We immediately sense the austere elegance of its rigorous style, with walnut furniture, marble floors, and antique Murano glass chandeliers. All this is tempered by the colorful and valuable selection of the FAI ticket office and bookshop, where you can find not only books on poetry and plants, but also a selection of seeds, unique papers, pens, and much more.

In the close **library room**, three multimedia tables allow visitors to reconstruct the history of the site through images, photographs, and historical documents - mostly drawn from the archives of the National Center for Leopardi Studies - representing the history of the building, the institution, and the scientific activity conducted there. These documents also include glimpses, plans, and views of the ancient village of Recanati and the Garden with the Monastery of Santo Stefano. Here, much of the Study Center's collection is already visible, housed in nine walnut cabinets: over **30,000 bibliographical items**, also housed in other rooms and on the upper floors, including essays, undergraduate and graduate theses, monographs, periodicals, newspaper articles, and musical compositions, as well as approximately 500 manuscripts, mostly dating back to the 18th century, plus audiovisual material from the 1980s onward.

The path continues on the lower floor: through five rooms separated by sound-absorbing curtains, visitors are immersed **in the poem “L’infinito”** (The Infinity) through a succession of images and the voices of Lella Costa and Massimo Popolizio. The narrative retraces the verses, attempting to explain the poet’s experience, which is then recounted in the poem, to bring us closer to his thought and sensibility. Finally, in a small room, visitors can record their own version of “L’infinito” and upload it to the website www.fainfinito.it.

Returning to the library room, you enter the exterior where, after a short path, you reach the perimeter of the **garden orchard**, shaped almost like a trapezium, surrounded by walls. Here, the architectural complex of the ancient monastery still stands: today, it houses a civic music school, an auditorium, the headquarters of the World Poetry Center, and a vocational school.

Strolling, touching, smelling, gazing, listening: multisensory experiences are inherent in this space, inhabited not only by visitors, fans, scholars, and writers, but also by gardeners who daily tend the garden, restored thanks to a project by landscape architect Paolo Pejrone. An ecosystem of cypress trees, fruit trees, vegetables, flowers, and rows of vines intertwined with pergolas, paths of white gravel pavement, and two 100-square-meter plots cultivated according to tradition, with ancient seeds, vegetables, and flowers. A place suspended between poetry and nature, between words and the earth.

Appointment in the Garden

The Garden on the Hill of Infinity, the National Center for Leopardi Studies, and the Omero State Tactile Museum jointly participated in the “Appointment in the Garden” initiative, organized on June 6 and 7, 2026, by APGI - Association of Parks and Gardens of Italy, with the theme “Sight.”

This successful collaboration resulted **in a multisensory visit, “Beyond Sight,”** enjoyed on a sunny, windy, and pleasant morning. Among the participants were blind and visually impaired people from the UICI of Macerata, led by the lively President Bruna Giampieri.

The tour began in the Study Center's library. Sitting around a table, we introduced the initiative and the resources available, **including the tactile audio guide** that the Omero Museum has already created for the FAI Garden. This is a pocket-sized booklet, A5 size, to be carried along with the audiopen in a cotton bag during the visit consulting it at strategic points. The booklet contains embossed drawings, braille titles, and stickers on which to place the audiopen to listen to the content. Like this article, it is designed to better describe the FAI property to a visually impaired audience. The guide distributed in multiple copies around the table clarified, through the embossed drawings, some interesting and curious elements such as the map of the garden, the structure of the poem, and the poet's handwriting thanks to embossed signature and title "*L'Infinito*".

I also brought with me **two life-size tactile versions of Leopardi's profile**, taken from Biagio Martini's 1825 painting, created by the Museum staff. The first version, also featured in a smaller version in the tactile audio guide, is the relief drawing printed on a sheet of paper with heat-sensitive microcapsules. When slid into an infrared oven, the heat swells the microcapsules into the black ink lines, creating the relief. The second is an intaglio drawing: with artisanal skill and a precision cutter, the outlines of the figures to be removed from the surface are carved into the cardboard; the remaining space is filled with special textures, such as in this case, fabrics to differentiate the jacket, shirt, and neck scarf.

The narration continued with a talk by **Gioele Marozzi** of the National Center for Leopardi Studies, who conveyed to the audience his sincere passion for his work. While nineteenth-century editions passed from hand to hand, Gioele meticulously illustrated not only the value of their content, but also their material characteristics, from the paper to the type of binding. We learned, for example, that Leopardi, together with the Milanese publisher Stella, created the first "modern" anthology, that is, the collection of parts of literary works, now common in our schools.

We were fascinated by a **handwritten letter sent by Giacomo to his father** while he was in Bologna, which was found in the home of the daughter of the writer Paolo Volponi and later donated to the Study Center. **The letter was embossed** to

allow blind people to appreciate its handwriting, which revealed Leopardi's long, sharply drawn cursive.

Then, Silvia Del Vicario of FAI took the stage introducing us to the garden. We walked the white gravel pavement, felt the warmth of the sun-warmed walls, and lingered before aromatic plants like helichrysum and santolina, inhaling their scent and feeling the texture of their leaves. We listened to their benefits in phytotherapy. For example, helichrysum flowers—with their small, round, golden flower heads—are used to treat flu, while the cooked leaves release a scent of curry. Santolina, also known as crespolina, has thin, woody stems covered with small, closely spaced leaves that are downy to the touch and an excellent repellent against mosquitoes, flies, and parasites.

Then we stopped at the point that faces the **“optical cone” of Infinity**: here, the trunk of a historic cypress tree stands perhaps the same one Leopardi cited in one of his writings, now flanked by a younger cypress. We listened to *“L’infinito”* read by Vittorio Gassman on the audiopen. Using a ladder, we looked over the wall to discover a landscape made not only of sky and clouds but also of the green and brown of the hills with the clusters of villages at the tops of the curves and in the distance the profile of the Apennines, including the Monti Azzurri, as Leopardi called them now the Monti Sibillini. A moment of peace, quiet, and respite. The only child present, the grandson of a teacher who has lost his sight accepted the proposal to blindfold himself and enjoy the trail for a while through touch, smell, and hearing alone. Even today, there is no shortage of birdsong or the buzz of bumblebees at work.

During the walk, we discovered many other plants with all our senses, including the rare Pelargonium (a member of the geranium family), and shared impressions and memories: among the participants was also a lady who had frequented this place when it was still a boarding school.

We then returned to the initial library room, which also houses **Ester Pasqualoni’s “L’infinito” in Braille**. Those who wished could finally go down to the multimedia rooms.

In conclusion, the **thanks** of the participants in the “Beyond sight” path were profound and sincere and my thanks also go to the FAI represented by Alessandra Troilo and Silvia Del Vicario, and to the Centro Nazionale di Studi Leopardi represented by its president Fabio Corvatta and Gioele Marozzi. I also extend my thanks to my colleagues at the Omero Museum, with whom I shared the adventure of creating the audio-tactile guide: Manuela Alessandrini, Patrizia Calderone, Jimena Sterlacchini, and Massimo Gatto.

Postscript: As part of the same initiative, the following day, Sunday, June 7th, we hosted FAI staff at the Omero Museum to bring into dialogue aromatic plants and ancient seeds with the sea that surrounds us and our artworks. The story was further enriched by listening to “Music of Nature” thanks to “The Music of the Plants”: an instrument that translates the sap movements of plants into sound.

The Museum, a space of cultural excellence. Where barriers turn into experiences

by Costantino D'Orazio

Director General for Contemporary Creativity at the Ministry of Culture
(formerly Director of the National Museums of Perugia and the Regional
Directorate of Museums of Umbria)

In its etymology, the term *inclusion* carries with itself the act of welcoming: a vitally important meaning for cultural institutions.

In 1992, Adalgisa Lugli wrote that the *threshold one crosses [in the museum] is a border. What lies beyond is a particular kind of world*. Foucault had already intuited that the museum, together places like the library or the theater, can be understood as a *different space* where timeless rules and credentials are in force, a typical *heterotopia* of 19th-century Western culture. For this reason, the museum requires a transition.

Over the years, there have been numerous reflections on accessibility in and of cultural institutions: too often, the focus has been on people with disabilities, forgetting that a truly accessible museum is one that does not have distinctive plans, but rather inclusive ones.

Furthermore, it has always been thought that to share art it was necessary to make the language of professionals understandable without ever considering that viewers are, first and foremost, human beings.

The focus on the humanity of the visitor fits well with the added value of art history, particularly contemporary art: its ability to evoke an emotional and experiential reading.

In my 2020 book (Art in Six Emotions), I invited readers to discover how artists represented emotions.

On the contrary, during my tenure as Director of the National Museums of Perugia – Regional Directorate of the National Museums of Umbria, I invited visitors to tell art how they felt after crossing the threshold of the museum.

The collection of the Galleria Nazionale dell’Umbria was the perfect setting for experimenting with this idea: the exhibition begins between the 13th and 14th centuries, amidst the magnificence of Benedetto Bonfigli’s frescoes in the Cappella dei Priori and Duccio di Buoninsegna’s *Madonna and Child*. It continues with the late Gothic art of Perugia by Gentile da Fabriano and advances to masterpieces by Renaissance artists such as Fra Angelico, Benozzo Gozzoli, and Piero della Francesca. The rooms and loggias narrate the spaces and stories that have shaped Perugia’s reputation as a benchmark for Italian artistic heritage. The enchanting monographic rooms dedicated to Pinturicchio and the master Perugino are a main example.

The final section of the collection showcases the finest art in Umbria between the 17th and 20th centuries: among others, artists such as Orazio Gentileschi, Valentin de Boulogne, Pietro da Cortona, Sassoferrato, Francesco Trevisani, Gerardo Dottori, Alberto Burri, and Enzo Rossi speak here.

A treasure chest within the museum called the *Camera Oscura* explores, through monographic exhibitions dedicated to photography, the common thread linking the art of the past to our present in a continuum of diverse languages and techniques.

This multifaceted nature of the museum, therefore, allowed for the design and creation of an inclusive tool that takes into account first and foremost visitors’ emotions.

AlfeelGNU, a progressive web app designed to transform the museum experience into a personalized journey, was born thanks to the PNRR funding “Removal of physical and cognitive barriers in museums, libraries and archives”, implemented by the National Museums of Umbria, coordinated by the structure delegated to implement the investment within the General Directorate of Museums of the Ministry of Culture, within the framework of the communication, use, valorization,

accessibility and participation project for improving the quality of the offerings and services of the National Gallery of Umbria,.

Starting from the emotional mapping of the museum's exhibits and using generative artificial intelligence, AlfeelGNU creates tailored made tour itineraries that take into account the visitor's age, available time, and, above all, the emotional state. Once the visitors log in to the app on their mobile phone, they are greeted by the question "How are you?" and led through an emotional journey created by AI, featuring faces, characters, landscapes, colors, stories, and details of the museum's artworks. Continuous interaction is planned between the visitor and their virtual guide, Pietro, who answers questions and prompts. The language used and the selected content enhance the visitor's emotional experience, even changing their initial state of mind. AlfeelGNU, accessible on smartphones, offers visitors a unique tour experience, focused on the emotional aspects of artworks, with accessible and engaging content.

The App was developed by the TuoMuseo team in collaboration with the staff of the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria. The tool was developed following a co-design process with local trade associations, which, through technical discussions, expressed the needs of stakeholders. Particularly, a specific attention was paid to patients at the Santa Maria della Misericordia hospital in Perugia, who were able to test the app in advance. The initiative aims to provide interactive and participatory access to the Gallery's collection for those unable to physically visit it.

The resulting impact was surprising, since when visitors started to interact with the artworks and their details through positive emotions and curiosity. This revealed a potential that had not initially been considered. Beyond the presentation of the GNU collection, the app becomes a window to the outside world for people whose interaction with the outside world is limited, shifting the concept of threshold and passage to elsewhere.

“Super Pignotti”: A Century of Words and Images at the Mole Vanvitelliana

by Giulio Segato

As part of the 2026 *La Punta della Lingua* poetry festival at the Mole Vanvitelliana in Ancona, the exhibition “Super Pignotti” (27 June – 7 July 2026) cast a spotlight on Lamberto Pignotti, a leading figure of the Italian *neoavanguardia* and a pivotal presence in international visual poetry. The exhibition showed eighty years of the poet’s research, offering the public the work of an author who turned the intersection of word and image into one of the most fertile situations for artistic experimentation in the second half of the twentieth century.

The exhibition collected together 33 works shown in chronological order from his early surrealist-tinged drawings of the late 1940s to the *Iper-rebus* (Hyper-rebuses) of the 2000s. What emerged was a trajectory at once coherent and mutable, able of crossing seasons, idioms, and mediums without ever losing its critical core: questioning the codes of communication and dismantling the mechanisms of visual persuasion.

The exhibition opened with three youthful drawings showing the influence of the historical avant-gardes, particularly Surrealism and Dadaism. Though they are early works, they are already oriented towards that experimental tension that, in the following years, would lead Pignotti to develop a practice grounded in the dynamic relationship between writing, imagery, and a critique of contemporary society.

The core of the exhibition itinerary was dedicated to the 1960s, a decisive era for the artist. In this context, Pignotti, together with Eugenio Miccini, Lucia Marcucci, and other key figures of the Florentine scene, contributed to the birth of *Gruppo 70* a pivotal movement for the development of so-called technological poetry or visual poetry. In the verbo-visual collages of this period, advertising slogans, newspaper headlines, and glossy images are stolen from their original contexts and unsettlingly recombined almost always with an ironic subtext. The result is a

semantic short-circuit that compels the viewers to disrupt their passive enjoyment of the message and to become aware of its hidden mechanisms.

Here, one of the central aspects of Pignotti's work comes to light: irony. Not a mere light-hearted tone or a rhetorical device, but a critical stance, a way of inhabiting language without succumbing to it. In his work, irony acts as an antidote to any dogmatic reading and any claim to definitive meaning. It dismantles messages, cracks them open, and exposes them in their ambiguity. In this sense, Pignotti's work never asks the viewer for passive reception: rather, it asks the viewer for questioning what and how he is seeing.

A second crucial juncture concerns the artist's personal definition of poetic language. Very early, Pignotti questioned the notion that poetry must stay inner a lofty lexicon or a separate syntax. For him, poetic quality does not reside in words *per sé* but in the purpose and effect of the artistic operation. This shift allows poetry to open up to the idioms of modernity: newspapers, advertisements, comic strips, slogans, and photographs. Thus, poetry is not impoverished by the contact with the codes of the present and rather it finds a new possibility for critical existence within that contamination.

While at first glance some works may seem to echo American Pop Art, the direction pursued by Pignotti and *Gruppo 70* appears distinct, and far more political and polemical. In Pignotti's visual poetry, the goal is not to celebrate or iconize the imagery of consumerism, but to problematize and fracture it from within. The word, rendered as image, is thus transformed into an instrument of critical resistance capable of challenging the language of mass communication.

Another important transition in the exhibition regarded the evolution of Pignotti's work between the second half of the 1970s and the subsequent decades. While the logic of accumulation and stratification (of newspaper clippings, photographs, etc.) prevailed in his earlier works, in this phase the artist proceeds instead by subtraction. In the *DeComposizioni* (DeCompositions) and the *Visibile/Invisibile* (Visible/Invisible) series, images and surfaces are abraded, erased, hollowed out, and crossed by marks and interventions introducing ambiguity, irony, and fade-outs. It is a methodological shift that marks the transition from the "full" to the

“empty” yet it does not break the continuity of his reflection: the form changes but the drive to reveal what the visible tends to conceal remains intact.

The path closed with works from the 1990s and 2000s confirming the enduring relevance of a practice that continues speaking to the present. In an era dominated by the overproduction of images, the manipulation of messages, and the blurring of the boundary between the real and the constructed, Pignotti’s work proves surprisingly close to the core issues of our time.

“Super Pignotti” was undoubtedly a celebratory exhibition for the poet, Pignotti has just turned 100, but it was also an opportunity to re-evaluate an author who anticipated many of the questions now at the center of cultural debate. At the Mole Vanvitelliana, the exhibition restored the power of a language that continues to interrogate the gaze and to demand, once again, that we do not consume images in a distracted and passive manner.

Body to body Emotion and knowledge

by Manuela Alessandrini

The “Body to Body” journey stems from the idea that the body is much more than a physical reality: it is memory, experience, identity, and connection. Through a dialogue with the sculpture, the participants were invited to focus on a part of their body that they felt was particularly meaningful, choosing it not for its aesthetics, but for the personal connection it evoked.

The body was thought in its broadest sense: not just what it appears to be, but also what it contains within: bones, muscles, organs. Then there is the skin, “a cover” - recalling Didier Anzieu’s concept of the Skin-ego - containing and protecting our inner world and, at the same time, connecting us with the outside world through touch. From this perspective, the body becomes not only an object of representation but an instrument of knowledge, awareness, and connection.

The educational project was conceived by the Education Department of the Omero Museum and implemented between October 2025 and February 2026, involving the city’s day care and residential centers, thanks to the collaboration with the Municipality of Ancona – Disability Services, active since 2015.

The protagonists and the journey

Now let’s break down the numbers: 6 day centers - Laboratori e Mestieri, Il Sole, Centro Papa Giovanni XXII, Il Samaritano, Il Cigno - 30 participants, 8 Center staff, 4 Museum staff, 10 meetings, 10 sculptures, 4 months.

The questions that accompanied these activities were: What’s my favorite part of my body and why? Which one don’t I like at all and why? What emotions does it hold?

Surrounded by the sculptures and bodies that inhabit our contemporary art section of the Omero Museum, we created a space for listening, fostering bodily awareness and the ability to recognize emotions, memories, and sensations that are often difficult to express.

For someone, this dialogue took place through words, for others through a gesture, a graphic sign, a short text, or silence: each expressive modality was welcomed as authentic and meaningful. The encounter with the sculpture thus became an encounter with one's own history.

In the second session, instant photography captured a moment of recognition and connection between the participant and the artwork. The amazement of seeing the image appear and being able to immediately hold it in their hands made the moment of taking the shot a unique experience, capable of triggering an immediate connection between themselves, the artwork, and their own body. Each participant freely chose whether to photograph a part of the sculpture's body or their own body in contact with it, constructing a personal and meaningful image. In the workshop, instant photography became a new creative space: the ability to freely modify their photographs with words, colors, marks, and short phrases transformed each image into an intimate and expressive narrative.

In the third session, the experience continued with clay modeling. Reproducing the chosen body part with one's hands required observation, attention, and time, transforming perception into matter. The choices fell on hands, legs, necks, breasts, and hearts, favorite body parts because they were perfect and beautiful, and parts almost hated because they caused pain or didn't function as desired. Handwork fostered concentration, independence, and confidence in one's abilities, allowing them to give concrete form to what initially began as a thought or reflection.

The fourth session focused on the creation of multi-material collages. Paper, fabric, wood, plastic, and various surfaces expanded the expressive possibilities, allowing participants to construct a personal language capable of expressing their own body part and identity.

The final phase was dedicated to assembling the works and planning an exhibition which took place in the day centers: the Museum staff moved in and entered with the artifacts and the work they had completed, sharing their spaces with other members and staff.

This moment represented not only the presentation of the completed works, but also the restitution of a shared journey. Exhibiting means recognizing the value of one's own experience, feeling part of a group, and offering others an authentic glimpse into one's own way of perceiving themselves and the World.

From an educational perspective, the project promoted self-knowledge, body awareness, emotional education, self-determination, and the ability to communicate through different languages. The small contemporary art section of the Omero Museum confirms itself as an inclusive space where sculpture is not simply to be observed, but to be experienced, touched, interpreted, and transformed into an opportunity for personal growth.

Publication

This project created a small internal publication, a collection of drawings, words, and stories that emerged from the first meeting, that is, from the initial encounter with the works and the theme of the body that we would shortly address.

The publication, titled *Body to body (Corpo a Corpo)*, is on display in the Museum bookshop and is donated to the protagonists of the project: the workers and coordinators of the day and residential centers in Ancona (Anna Palermo for Laboratori e Mestieri, Rosa di Stasio for Il Sole, Giorgia Sordoni for the Papa Giovanni XXII Center, Alice Paladini for Il Samaritano, Loredana Dottori for Il Cigno) and to the people of the Municipality of Ancona who made this project possible: Maria Rita Venturini and Laura, and the Councilor for Social Services, Manuela Caucci.

I would like to thank my colleagues from the Education Department with whom I shared this project: Cristina Giuliani, Maria Giulia Mengarelli, and Francesca Santi.

Credits

Aisthesis

Discovering art with all the senses

Supports and publishes studies and research on sensory perception and the accessibility of the cultural heritage.

Recorded online journal – www.museoomero.it

Issue 34 – Year 13 – August 2026

Editorial and management offices:

Museo Tattile Statale Omero – Mole Vanvitelliana

Banchina da Chio 28 – Ancona

website: www.museoomero.it

Publisher: Associazione Per il Museo Tattile Statale Omero ODV-ETS.

Per il



Museum Director: Aldo Grassini.

Aisthesis Editor: Gabriella Papini.

Editorial staff: Monica Bernacchia, Andrea Sòcrati, Annalisa Trasatti, Massimiliano Trubbiani, Alessia Varricchio.

Graphic design and layout: Massimo Gatto.

Translation: Lorenzo Bontempi.

Recording and mastering by Matteo Schiaroli.

Voice: Luca Violini.



www.museoomero.it