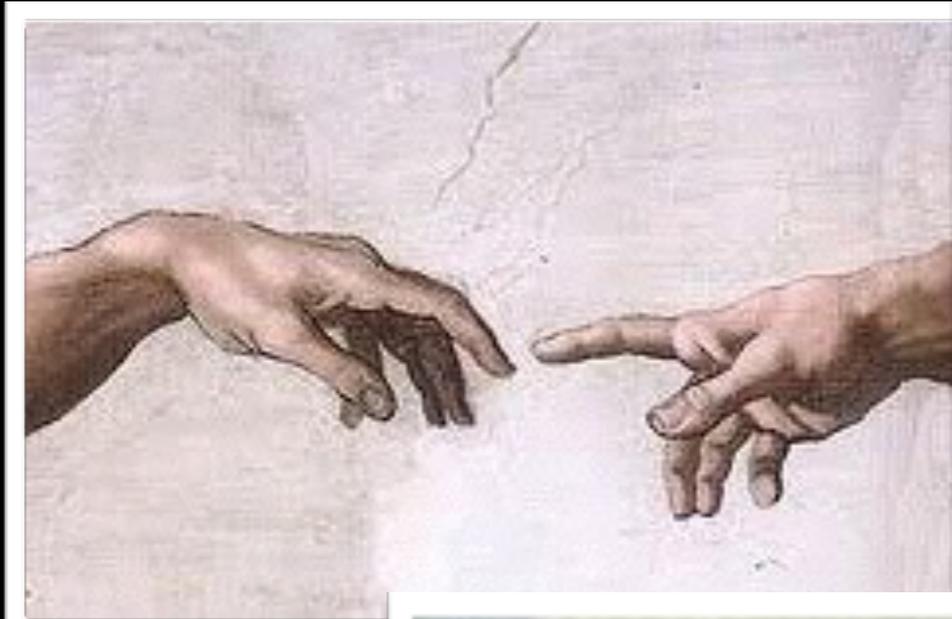


Michelangelo

and the Sistine Chapel Ceiling in Vatican

Kunstmuseum Gehrke-Remund



The Sistine Chapel

Data Sheet

The Sistine Chapel in San Peter's Church
in Vatican

5 million visitors per year,
20 000 visitors per day,
20 minutes max to see the ceiling;
20 US\$ admission price.

The Vatican is planning to restrict the number
of visitors
to preserve the artworks.

The ceiling is 20 mt high, the visitors can hardly see
anything, let alone the details; this is probably
the most famous art work of the Renaissance,
and by far
the most majestic work ever created.



At Your Reach

From the developers and curators of the Frida Kahlo complete works exhibition and collection, the Michelangelo Sistine Chapel Ceiling plans to show:

- * the frescos of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel
- * in real size: 14 mt x 40mt (600 sqm, or 6000 sqf),
- * in the right sequence,
- * 32 panels hanging vertically from the wall,

so that visitors can see the details of the frescos inches away from the artwork.



Today like this



Tomorrow like THIS:

Hand painted by master artists or printed on Canvas

The panels painted oil on canvas will have fresco finishing look.

The artists are hand picked, certified,
monitored by the curators of
The Complete Frida exhibition



The Vatican Report

In July 2013, the curators of the
Complete Frida revisited
the Sistine Chapel

H-J Gehrke & Dr. MC Remund



Introduction

The objective of this visit was to observe, document the changes occurred in the last five years, and to capture the experience from the visitors point of view.

In the past 40 years HJ Gehrke and I have visited the Sistine Chapel at regular intervals, even during its restoration works (1980 - 1989); our last visit was in 2008 because, due to the opening of the Museum with the Frida Kahlo exhibition, we concentrated our travels mainly to Mexico. Over the years we have seen as from 8,000 visitors, the number has increased to the 20,000+ visitors per day of today.



Increased Number of Visitors

“Every day at least 20,000 people, or even 25,000 in peak season, visit the Sistine Chapel - people of all origins, languages, cultures and religions or even people of no religion. The Sistine Chapel is an irresistible attraction, the object of desire for international museum-goers and for those generally interested in cultural tourism.” (1)

From previous visits we noted an increased number of visitors who wait three or four hours outside the ticket office.

The visitors who book a guided tour do not need to wait, but the tour costs 35 Euro (45 \$) per person in addition to the entry ticket of 22 Euro (29\$) for a total of 57 Euro (74\$) per person.



Who are the Visitors?

Visitors come from all continents probably due to the vacation time, the majority are from North America and South America followed by South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and India. From Europe we noted: Spanish, French and Germans.

Age group between 16 to 80; the Sistine Chapel visit, as it is currently organized, is not fit for children or young students.

This is a gap which we can definitely fill, and make the exhibition children and young students-friendly.



Preparation to the Chapel Visit

In the gardens before the entrance, the Vatican has put 3 printed displays (150 x 100 cm each) which illustrate the Chapel ceiling, the walls (painted by Raffaello, Botticelli, Perugino and others) and the frontal wall with the Last Judgement (also by Michelangelo).

This is the closest the visitors come to see the ceiling during the visit. Visitors and guided tours have to wait (up to 20 minutes) that one group is finished before they can watch the displays vertically and from a near distance.



Preparation to the Chapel Visit

Some guides have organized themselves and show their own material to their group...

while they all wait for the spot in front of the displays to be free. Even if the main interest of the majority of the visitors is to see the Sistine Chapel, the visitors have to go through several Vatican Museum rooms before entering the Chapel.

These rooms are beautiful corridors decorated with marble statues, ancient carpets, maps... but unless one is an art historian, we observed how the majority of the visitors just walked through these rooms without showing much interest. This “walk through” takes about one hour before the visitors reach the entrance of the Sistine Chapel.



Inside the Chapel

The flow of visitors is regulated, about 500 visitors are let in every 20 minutes.



The visit for the 40m long Chapel is regulated to be 20 minutes, the visitors are almost literally pushed through the length of the Chapel; the guides with their groups **MUST** leave after 20 minutes otherwise they risk of having their tourist guide license revoked.

The visitors are briefed before entering the Chapel: no photos, no films and silence.

The inside of the Chapel is dark (to preserve the paintings).

No photos are allowed, but the guards have a hard time to keep the crowd under control.

Every couple of minutes the guards shout: "No photos please!", "Silenzio!", "Silence!", this is mission impossible!

Inside the Chapel

It is a messy situation, also increased by the fact that it is physically impossible to keep the head tilted backwards for more than 20 seconds. Due to the dark and the head position, it is easy to lose the balance.

There are wooden banks along the walls and it is a race to get a free spot to sit down. Many read their tourist guide: do not watch the ceiling, they just read the description in the book.

The highlight is the central panel showing the Creation of Adam, this is where the visitors gather to watch and then they leave, they don't even realize the beauty of the other figures, the Sibyl of Delphi for example

There is an immense potential to stage the exhibition with scenography, lights, decoration, rooms with comfortable seating, music, and to give the "Chapel-feeling" back to the Ceiling.

HJ and I have already developed concepts and concrete designs.

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Merchandising Opportunities

The works of Michelangelo are free from copyright protection, they can be reproduced, copied, printed, used for merchandising.

Here some example of existing items:



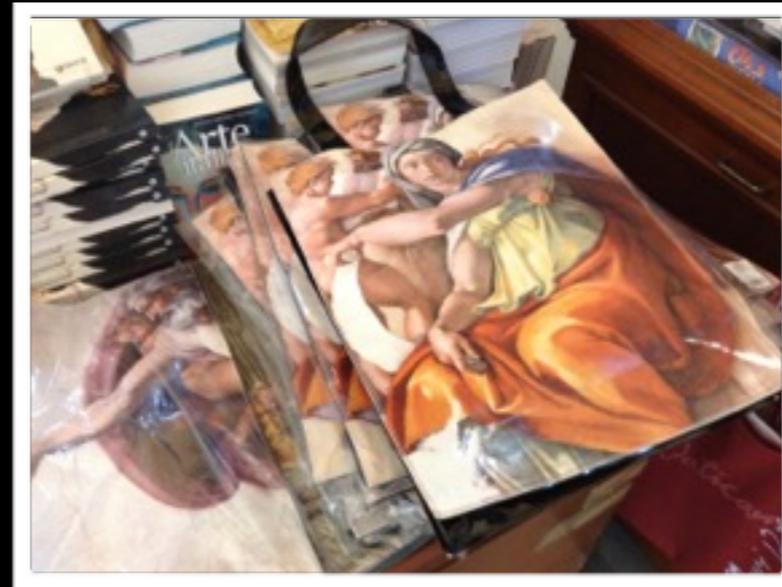
Great opportunity to sell reproduction of Italian Renaissance jewelry and dolls:



Merchandising

The numerous shops before and after the Chapel offer the same articles: mainly books, postcards, biz cards holders, ugly T-shirts and many religious items (figures of the Madonna, rosaries).

The stars of the imagery in merchandising are: the Creation of Adam (the iconic fingers) and the Sibyl of Delphi; the visitors hardly remember seeing her on the ceiling, but she is depicted everywhere in the shops.



There are even bigger opportunities to create several merchandising lines of products that WOMEN actually want to buy: jewelry, shawls in the colours of the Sibyls dresses, head decorations, blouses in the style of the Italian renaissance, just to name a few. All the above items are free from licensing right.

Reflection

The anticipation of the visitors is huge and they are willing to wait hours to enter.

The visitors who can afford a guided tour are better taken care of, the rest are on their own all through the visit.

As much as the paintings are spectacular, the environment is such that there is no emotional engagement once the visitors are under the Ceiling.

The exit from the Chapel is forced, and there is hardly anything to buy in the shops to capture the visit.

In the evening we heard Japanese visitors commenting their visit, and all they could remember was how looking up hurt their neck!



Simulation of exhibition lay out.

October 30 2013
Bibliography

• Paolucci, A., The Sistine Chapel, 2010, Edizioni Musei Vaticani, Vatican.

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