

Marco Gambaro Perspective on Italian Creative Industries

BY FULVIA SANTOVITO

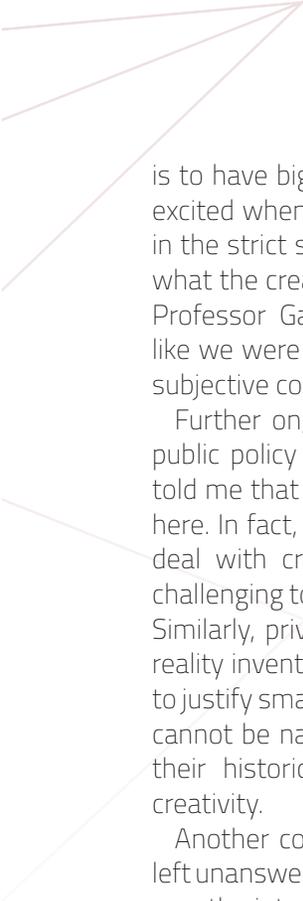


Marco Gambaro is a Professor of Communication and Society at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Milan. He has taught at the University of Trento and at the IULM University and has held courses in Sda Bocconi, Master Publitalia, IBM, Ifor Bocconi, Institute for Journalism Education, Reiss Romoli School. He is the president of the scientific committee of Simmaco, an economic analysis company specializing in media industries. He has worked as a management consultant with leading communication groups, regulators and large Italian and foreign companies on telecommunications, television, advertising, publishing, competition in the communications market, and multimedia convergence. He has published numerous scientific articles in Italian and international journals.

I am going to share the highlights from our phone conversation with Marco Gambaro, Professor of Communication and Society at University of Milan. This text is an attempt to present yet another outlook at the creative industries and highlight many issues around it that are still left unaddressed by academia and policy makers.

After reading E&Y's report on creative industries, I still had some doubts about some topics that, in my view, were not properly covered. From the phone talk with Professor Marco Gambaro, something more came out. First, the

most important thing is to try to define and analyze creative industries that in a broad sense include interior design, fashion, architecture and everything that can be called creative. In fact, as Professor Gambaro said, when putting all sectors together, there's a risk of having numbers that are much higher than reality. Statistics blow out of proportions because when one talks of architecture and design, one talks more about consolidated arts. Still, little attention is paid to the new arts, if one can call them "new". Data analysts usually tend to get everything covered, just because the goal



is to have big numbers (people are easily excited when there are big numbers). But in the strict sense no one knows for sure what the creative industry is. Speaking to Professor Gambaro about it, it seemed like we were speaking of an abstract and subjective concept.

Further on, our discussion went about public policy doubts. Professor Gambaro told me that they are two distinct worlds here. In fact, public policies in Italy do not deal with creative industries: it is very challenging to find a link between the two. Similarly, private organizations are a tiny reality invented by some common people to justify small, very useless activities that cannot be named if we are talking about their historical impact on our nation's creativity.

Another concern that, in my view, was left unanswered after reading E&Y's report was the internationalization of the Italian creative industry. Professor Gambaro had a clear view about it. Without any doubt, internationalization is common in areas like fashion and design. But then for all the rest there is no great knowledge of Italian arts abroad, such as cinema, television and music. The charts talk about American films at the top spots, then films of the country considered and, in the end, some European films that change every year: French arts in England a year, Italians in Spain the following year and so on. But the numbers are really low.

The last question I raised during the conversation with the Professor was about training and education in the field of creative culture. The university departments of literature and philosophy are the most developed in Italy. What have we got? Many, too many graduates and very few who at the end of the drill really do what they studied. There are too many courses in the arts, but employability

remains a problem.

Our country is certainly not among the first in terms of arts and creativity. There are lots of subjects involved in this industry but still there are not many opportunities in the post-studies life.

Indeed, there is more chance of working in the world of entertainment if you have a big passion without great preparation. In Italy, we say "Artisti si nasce, non lo si diventa" which can be translated as "You are born an artist, you cannot become one." So even if you want to try to pursue a career in the world of music, cinema or anything that has to do with art but you do not have creativity, you remain a subject full of theory, ideas of others and you will never be the one who will shape the future of art.

All the answers given here are of a qualitative nature and, therefore, are not entirely generalizable. Creative industry is more of a craft school, it is always expected that people have a complete idea of the entire subject but it is very difficult to be able to give a qualitative judgment to it, especially for those who come from a different and external academic path as me. What I tried to do in this report is to formulate more subjective than objective thoughts. One can assume for example that there is no great internationalization of Italian arts, but to have a realistic judgment of that one should analyze a huge amount of expert data.

To conclude, it is a challenge to evaluate the state of creative industries. One could try to analyze individual industries' paths, but to do so one should use a quantitative rather than qualitative approach or the combination of both. In a dynamic world, we live in, data, people, interviews are needed to try to come up with something more solid.