



OPEN ACCESS

*CORRESPONDENCE

Elena Borin,
e.borin@unilink.itRECEIVED 06 November 2023
ACCEPTED 07 November 2023
PUBLISHED 06 December 2023

CITATION

Lidstone G, Cogliandro Beyens GL and
Borin E (2023), In Memoriam: Professor
Fabio Donato (1969–2023).
Eur. J. Cult. Manag. Polic. 13:12385.
doi: 10.3389/ejcmp.2023.12385

COPYRIGHT

© 2023 Lidstone, Cogliandro Beyens
and Borin. This is an open-access article
distributed under the terms of the
[Creative Commons Attribution License
\(CC BY\)](#). The use, distribution or
reproduction in other forums is
permitted, provided the original
author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are
credited and that the original
publication in this journal is cited, in
accordance with accepted academic
practice. No use, distribution or
reproduction is permitted which does
not comply with these terms.

In Memoriam: Professor Fabio Donato (1969–2023)

Gerald Lidstone¹, Gianna Lia Cogliandro Beyens² and
Elena Borin^{3*}¹ICCE—Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship, Goldsmiths University of London, London, United Kingdom, ²European Network on Cultural Management and Policy (ENCATC), Brussels, Belgium, ³Department of Health and Life Sciences and Health Professions, Università degli Studi Link Campus, Rome, Italy

KEYWORDS

Fabio Donato, cultural and creative ecosystems, models of governance and management in the cultural and creative sector, cultural heritage networks, cultural policy, cultural tourism, in memoriam

The communities of researchers and academics in cultural management and policy remain shocked and saddened by the recent passing of Professor Fabio Donato (26.07.1969–15.10.2023), a renowned academic and beloved colleague, friend, and father.

Professor Donato was an internationally recognized academic and researcher in arts and cultural management. Over the years, his commitment and dedication have significantly contributed to the theoretical and scientific discussion within the cultural and creative sector and to policy-making and decision-making on research and innovation at the European level.

Educated at the University of Pisa (Italy), Fabio Donato has worked since 2001 for the Department of Economics and Management of the University of Ferrara (Italy), where he became a full professor in 2007. Within the University of Ferrara, he held various roles, including Director of the Ferrara International School on Culture, Innovation, and Sustainable Development (2008–2011), Director of the Doctoral School in Humanities and Society at the University of Ferrara (2009–2013), Deputy-Director of the Department of Economics and Management and Director of the MuSeC—Master in Cultural Management together with Prof. Anna Maria Visser (2005–2017). During his career, he has authored around 100 scientific contributions. After an initial interest in the management of public services, Fabio focused mainly on studying the cultural and creative sectors. In Italy, he has been among the main advocates of the application of managerial approaches to cultural heritage, promoting and studying the introduction and evolution of performance measurement systems applied to cultural heritage organizations. His contribution to the theoretical and professional discussion in this field was instrumental in promoting the need for a collaborative, ecosystem, and holistic approach to the cultural and creative field, which could foster dialogue, civic participation, and collaboration between the various actors operating in the cultural and creative subsectors and beyond. These issues have become key themes in political and academic discussions in the following years and are still highly topical.

This e-book collects his contributions published in the EJCMP, which he co-founded in 2011, which represent the evolution of his thinking over the last decade. In his article “*The Financial Crisis and its Impact on the Current Models of Governance and Management of the Cultural Sector in Europe*” (published in 2011 in the first volume and issue of the journal and co-written with Prof. Lluís Bonet), he invites us to interpret

the 2008 financial and economic crisis as an opportunity to rethink the governance systems and management models of the cultural sector, in a “meso” (territorial) perspective, open to the various local stakeholders and based on the logic of collaboration and creation of territorial systems.

The “multiscale” approach, proposed in much of Fabio’s production, is visible in the concept of cultural ecosystem and his focus on cultural networks (as in the paper “*Developing local cultural networks: the case of Dante 2021 in Ravenna*,” co-written with Alessia Patuelli). His attention to the link between culture and territory is well represented in his studies on ecomuseums (“*Management perspectives for ecomuseums effectiveness: a holistic approach to sociocultural development of local areas*,” co-written with Francesco Badia). He studied participatory governance and was interested in an approach to heritage management also based on bottom-up stimuli from the communities and citizens, which could involve civil society in a transformative perspective (as visible in the paper “*Governance of cultural heritage: towards participatory approaches*”, co-authored with Sakarias Sokka, Francesco Badia, and Anita Kangas).

His interest in the evolution of European policies is well underlined in his scientific contributions published since 2018, including the reflection on the long-term impact of European initiatives such as the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (as in the paper “*What is the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage? A long way from cultural policies towards innovative cultural management models*,” co-authored with Elena Borin).

In deed, concurrently with his career in academia, Fabio had also played an active role in the development of the policy discussions concerning research and innovation at the European level, in line with his interest in the promotion of research and a strong belief in the key role of institutions. After having served as president of the technical-scientific committee “Museums and the Economy of Culture” of the Mibact (Italian

Ministry for Cultural Heritage, Environment and Tourism) and member of Italy’s Higher Council for Cultural and Landscape Heritage, since 2017 Fabio has taken up the position of Scientific Counsellor to the Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU. Fabio believed in the value of diplomacy and negotiation and in a vision of research and innovation that could benefit all European member states. Over the years, his commitment and dedication made a decisive contribution to policymaking and decision-making, enhancing innovation in research at the Italian and European levels.

We would also like to remember Fabio for his prominent role within ENCATC. Fabio has served in the ENCATC network with strong commitment and passion from 2005 till 2019. During that time, he made an invaluable contribution to the global academic and research community: as a Board Member from 2009 to 2015, he co-designed and launched the ENCATC European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy in 2011, and the Education and Research Sessions in 2013. In 2022, he was appointed by the ENCATC Board, Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy after his proposal to have it published by top academic publisher Frontiers, showing visionary commitment to open science and taking the publication to an unprecedented international dimension.

This e-book is intended to be a moment to remember his thoughts, thank him for his contribution, and emphasize how his legacy can stimulate the international scientific community to continue reflecting on the issues he held dear.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.