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# ICOM SERBIA AND ITS WAY THROUGH 2021

By NIKOLA KRSTOVIĆ



*The only certainties in the last three years were its ups and downs. However, the downs were not an acceptable option for ICOM Serbia – we initiated necessary transformations to improve accountability, transparency, diversity of our actions and upgraded the spirit of communication. Regardless of global obstacles and new social and psychological boundaries, there was the genuine will to make the additional effort to improve Serbia's museum scene. The new Museum Act was adopted by the Parliament and the team behind it consisted mainly of ICOM members. For the first time ICOM and its principles and values were officially recognized within the legal framework. Following the Act's article to establish a Museum Council, three (of five) members were appointed from the ICOM Serbia Executive Board. It cannot get better than this, for ICOM.*

These improvements came after several structural changes that influenced ICOM Serbia's philosophy, operation, and public outreach. The cornerstones of ICOM Serbia's network of stability and communication are its Magazine and Annual Award. Their transformation into popular, yet professionally driven endeavors, were executed by the dedicated teams that we like to call the Perfect Triangle. The first team, Editorial Board, consists of five energetic and professionally driven women who transformed the Magazine shifting it to an entirely new level, recognized and supported by state funding for the first time ever. By creating an extensive network and improving its design they produced reputable editions to which professionals (and outsiders) wanted to contribute. Issues No.11 (The Museum and the Challenge of the Pandemic), No.12 (Museums and Equity), No.13 (To Whom Belongs Our Future?) and No.14 (New: Museums and Changes) are masterful and reflective publications. The Editorial Board is also responsible for December's Overview of projects realized in Serbia during the previous year, following the criteria of international and regional achievements, authorship, and permanent collections.

This overview was of great help to the second team of the Perfect Triangle: The Annual Award Panel (or Award Jury). Up until December 2021 this team consisted of three women, who were joined in 2022 by two more members, one of them the head of Creative Europe Serbia. This was a logical change considering that the 2021 Award was an absolute game changer in comparison to previous years – forty-seven submissions in four categories (best Museum, Project, Curator, and Publication). In 2022 there were even more – forty-eight accepted contenders. This came as the aftermath of new Award Regulations: the Award Panel was in charge of nominating five of the best in each category followed by an extensive Report on the Jury's work. In the second phase all active members, individual and institutional, were eligible to vote for Award winners who were announced at an awards ceremony. In 2022, new online application forms were launched in collaboration with the Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Science

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and Art making the whole process fairer and more manageable.

Finally, the task of creating a virtual presence for all candidates and nominees fell upon the third team, also led by women: the Communication Board of ICOM Serbia. They manage and edit three websites and ICOM's social media, primarily Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The social media reach skyrocketed, engaging not only museum professionals, but the general public as well. ICOM Serbia's social media became the most reliable source of information of current state of Serbia's museum scene, and a relevant information hotspot for museum professionals, as well as an excellent resource for potential cooperation.

The results empowered members to contribute to the National Committee and the profession itself. The SEE Red List four-member team created an extensive list of endangered artifacts through the participatory work of almost all Serbian museums. Having published a regular and e-edition, most of the "rest of the collection" is now ready to be distributed to relevant authorities. Also, the Serbian translation of the SEE Red List is completed thanks to the generous support of the ICOM Secretariat. Also, cooperation with the Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies and Customs Administration of the Republic of Serbia was established and resulted in an interesting exhibition about the SEE Red List.

The state also co-supported three ICOM Serbia projects. *Museums in Their Contemporary Surroundings*, which addressed possible individual and institutional improvements, as well as the general position of ICOM Serbia, thus generating valuable information for the improvement of the Committee and the profession at large. The project *MUSE OUT of the BOX* focused on the dialogue between contemporary art and museum interpretation, young people and their vision of the museum scene enabling young professionals to express their opinions in the expanding generation gap with regards to knowledge transfer. The project *Call M for...* focused on what students and young people can teach museum professionals in their field of work

and centered on communication. The project *Museums for 10* is a platform that gathers many museums in Serbia and one through which they join to celebrate museum week with diverse new projects and initiatives.

Finally, in December 2021, members of ICOM Serbia expressed their desire to organize themselves through more distinctive professional networks on the local level, modelled after ICOM's International Committees. Thus, several informal expert groups were formed: ICOM Serbia – Glass, – CIDOC, – CAMOC and – CECA. ICOM Glass Serbia already officially started its activities by creating a network of almost ten museums and thirty professionals in order to celebrate the International Year of Glass 2022 and is supported by both state funding and ICOM Serbia. The activities of these professional sub-groups create new opportunities in ICOM Serbia's overall approach. There are high hopes that this structural rebalancing will shift the focus of ICOM Serbia from generic issues to more professional debates and challenges. 





The Communication Board of ICOM Serbia

Winners of ICOM Awards 2021







# CONSERVATION OF *THE CORONATION OF EMPEROR DUŠAN* BY PAJA JOVANOVIĆ

**The Collection of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
Serbian Painting, National Museum of Serbia**

By NATAŠA ILIĆ

*The conservation of atypically large cultural property is a professional challenge, and one that often tests former expert knowledge and experiences. It also exacts solutions for a set of demands – from safe handling and transportation to interventions on the work itself, the aim of which is long-term protection and restoration. In 2019 the conservation team of the National Museum of Serbia started and, two years later, successfully completed one such challenging project, thanks to which the monumental painting The Coronation of Emperor Dušan by Paja Jovanović, with all its authentic compositional and artistic values, was once again presented to the public.*



Jovanović painted his largest work dealing with the theme of coronation in 1900. It was commissioned by the Kingdom of Serbia for the World Exhibition in Paris, where it won a gold medal. The responsibility and privilege to contribute to the preservation of a work of extraordinary cultural, historical and artistic value within both the national and European framework fell upon conservators and restorers Aleksandar Cvijetinović, Ivana Ivanović, Nataša Ilić, Nenad Nikitović, Jovan Petronijević, Tijana Knežević and Magdalena Drobnjaković.

Although, the technique, painting process and artistic and compositional values of the artist are guiding principles that determine the decisions made by restorers, interventions on *The Coronation* were mostly contingent to a single, not particularly common trait – the extremely large dimensions of the work itself reaching almost 24 m<sup>2</sup> (390 x 589 cm).

Coming up with specific conservation solutions, adapted in an original way to the issues and technological features of Jovanović's grandiose painting, was preceded by analytical research of the artist's technique and materials, as well as time consuming tests, for which the conservators received the multidisciplinary support of researchers from the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy, and mechanical engineers.

Paja Jovanović was a pedantic academic technologist and this guaranteed stable duration, without immanent structural problems to his works. *The Coronation* is an exemplar of such an approach. The most important conservation intervention was making sure that such a large painting received optimal and least volatile canvas tension. Also, it was necessary to ensure lasting canvas stabilisation and with it also, that of its layers of substrate and colour.

Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a new system of creating canvas tension has been in use within conservation practice. This system was first applied for stretching paintings on canvases whose dimensions corresponded those found on altar partitions, walls and ceilings of monumental public spaces in Rome. Pointed stretching using nails that rip the margins of the canvas and which cannot support long-term adequate tension, especially in the central part of

*For the first time, not solely within the framework of national art-historical practice, but also within given European painting manuals, the analysis revealed the use of slaked lime. The unusual and exceptional approach to preparing the painting canvas made it possible for the artist to create a specific pastel colour, similar in value to the kind found on wall paintings. The analysis revealed new, surprising arguments supporting our knowledge of Jovanović's mastery over certain materials with which he wanted to achieve certain artistic values, and technologically it clarified the most impressive feature of his unique breakthrough from academic realism, which he nurtured and within which he dominantly created.*

fabric-supported sections that support the painting, were replaced by the so-called elastic or floating system. Due to its size and importance *The Coronation of Emperor Dušan* was the first grandiose piece of Serbian art exacting a new system which involved the creative application of necessary modifications, aligned with the technological peculiarities of the painting and methods of presentation.

A functional and firm blind frame was the first requirement for the effective stretching of a canvas painting. The wooden frame on paintings with atypical surfaces loses its functionality in part due to the nature of the material that is prone to drying, twisting and cracking, and when the corners





are opened in order to correct and adjust tension. This additionally degrades the effect it has on large surfaces. Therefore, *The Coronation of Emperor Dušan* sought the projection and construction of an aluminum frame with the adequate arrangement of central elements that ensured torsional strength and, at the same time, reduced the weight of the painting. So called, tensioners were arranged along the edges of the frame. Their elasticity provides optimal, even and permanent tension, that is, lasting stability and prevents painting deformation and damages to its edges caused by standard nails. The results of previous analyses, measurements and calculation of the surface mass of the artist's canvas, as well as testing the construction by stretching a control canvas, was the basis for designing 64 tensioners, each with 9 parts and adequate tension values (2 N/cm). To test the functionality of the

tension system, the conservators prepared a painting canvas with the same surface (24m<sup>2</sup>), raw material composition and texture like the original one chosen by Jovanović for his award-winning work.

Contemporary conservation uses forensic methods to identify the materials used by the artist in their composition building painting process. In search of such information, valuable to the restoration process and the art-historical research of Jovanović's painting in general, restorers analyzed micrometric samples of the canvas and color of his largest composition dealing with the coronation theme. For the first time, not solely within the framework of national art-historical practice, but also within given European painting manuals, the analysis revealed the use of slaked lime. The unusual and exceptional approach to preparing the painting canvas made it possible for the artist to create



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Exhibiting the work as part of the permanent exhibition of the National Museum of Serbia required, like almost all stages of conservation, an unconventional solution. A statically designed steel structure in which the painting was placed without contact points along the edges so that the elastic tensioning system maintains its functionality.

Conservation interventions on monumental paintings are extremely rare and require, in addition

to expert knowledge, skills, experience, creativity and a multidisciplinary approach, specific technical conditions – a vast workspace, one several times larger than the dimensions of the work itself, the construction of scaffolding and large diameter and length rollers, the organization of transportation and specific ways of manipulating the painting, and finally, teamwork among different museum services. At every stage, the conservators received support and essential help from advisor Petar Petrović, curator of the Collection of 18th and 19th Century Serbian Painting, their colleagues from the Department for Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, staff of the National Museum of Serbia technical service, and many external associates. ♡

# GREAT POTENTIAL VS SMALL SPACE/LIMITED BUDGET

## The New Permanent Exhibition of the Homeland Museum in Knjaževac

By MILENA MILOŠEVIĆ MICIĆ & Olivera Nikolić

*Very often, small towns are places of secret treasures.  
The hidden beauty of local architecture, preserved  
landscape, and lush nature are various elements of  
cultural heritage presented in local museums.  
And there lies their power.*

Cities are *made of* people. They arise and disappear; they develop and change exclusively because of people. Intertwined networks of streets, colorful facades, wide alleys, green parks, rivers, shores, bridges as places of meeting and parting... This complex relationship, a continuous process of mutual influence, is preserved in the collective consciousness, fragments of collective memory, and personal memories. A kind of debt to the homeland is perpetuated by the results of human creativity in the fields of culture, art, and science.

The town of Knjaževac is a place of specific geographical position, preserved nature, tradition, and cultural heritage. A town of cordial people, good and hospitable hosts, the birthplace and homeland of many intellectuals, scientists, artists, politicians, and athletes. As such, it remained part of the genetic record of the generations that grew up with it

and presents a legacy for many and great potential for the future.

The Homeland Museum in Knjaževac is a complex museum, founded forty-one years ago by the Municipality of Knjaževac. It has over a thousand square meters of exhibition space within three buildings protected by state law as historical-cultural monuments. These are: the main building with a permanent exhibition at 15, Karadordeva Street, the City Museum in the House of Aca Stanojević, the Archaeo-Ethno Park in Ravna, close to the nearby archaeological site, Roman Fort Timacum Minus. All museum buildings have been revitalized for the purposes of the museum. As cultural monuments, due to the preservation of their characteristics and monumental values, no intervention could be made. Given this situation, the intention was to create new exhibition spaces and increase the use of available





facilities for the presentation and preservation of museum collections and content. But also to increase accessibility to people with disabilities.

The Homeland Museum in Knjaževac is one of the best examples in Serbia of how local museums can serve as promoters, initiators, generators, and creators of sustainable development of the local community. But it took more than 30 years of constant, dedicated work to reach the goals and to accomplish the once defined mission – Museum as ID card of the Knjaževac region, a hub for cultural tourism, education, and social cohesion. Finally, this effort was recognized and rewarded with two prestigious awards: the Award *Mihailo Valtrović* of the Serbian Museum Association for the best museum in 2021, together with the Gallery of Matica Srpska from Novi Sad, and the May Award, the highest recognition of the Municipality of Knjaževac.

Celebrating forty years of the Museum as an independent cultural institution, the Homeland Museum of Knjaževac realized several important projects and exhibitions in 2020/2021. One of the most important was certainly the new exhibition space project for the applied art, ethnology, and art history collections on the lower floor of the Town Museum, the House of Aca Stanojević. The main topic of this project was to present elements of the private life history through a review of urban life presented through elements of visual culture. The exhibition is created for the widest audience, but is also accessible to people with disabilities.

The historical house, built in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was a private house of an important historical and political person, the Serbian diplomat Aca Stanojević. The house was presented as a gift to the town of Knjaževac by Stanojević's heir and has







been declared a cultural monument with architectural elements of the Secession. The house consists of the ground floor, first floor, and attic. On the first floor, the exhibition that reconstructs the interior of the city villa from the period of late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with original pieces of furniture and personal belongings of the former owner was arranged in 1987. The ground floor of the House, with a total surface of 100 square meters, was used as an exhibition space, the first town gallery, and wedding hall. This space has never been changed as far as the exhibition is concerned. But the building itself has been renovated in several phases under the supervision of the competent Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments from Niš.

After the revitalization of the Homeland Museum building, conditions were created for the existing exhibition to be changed and expanded due to the needs of the public and the exhibiting of a larger part of the collections, enriched and enlarged

through donations and new acquisitions. The space of the new exhibition setting on the lower floor is in connection with the existing exhibition on the first floor. The new installation is designed on the principle of an open storage. Related subjects are exhibited as thematic units, with optimal use of space and the use of visual and didactic material. The exhibition includes objects from ethnological collections of applied and fine arts. It illustrates the private life of the town of Knjaževac from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chronological units tell the story of the city, people, development of crafts, economy, health, and social life. It has an educational interactive corner and is accessible to PWSs. The exhibition was conceived by Milena Milošević Micić, awarded the NC ICOM Serbia Award as a curator of the year 2021. Consultant associates were Jelena Kurtić, curator/ethnologist, and Dragoslav Živković, artist. Architect Olivera Nikolić, created the exhibition design. Visual solutions were





designed and illustrated by Sanja Mladenović, the artist. Didactic tools and educational elements were made by members of the local craft association, the Ethno Centre, Knjaževac. Space for a museum storage was also created.

The main goal of the project was to provide optimal use of space and improve the conditions for the presentation, storage, and exhibition of museum collections through the preparation of a new permanent exhibition on the lower floor of the Museum of Knjaževac in the House of Aca Stanojević. Another goal was to increase the number of visitors and the degree of museum collections accessibility, i.e. the protection of the cultural heritage of the Knjaževac region.

The process, which was implemented in several phases during the past five years, included necessary restoration, decorative and electrical works, and the creation of exhibition settings on the lower floor of the museum. In order to arrange the ground floor as a specific exhibition space based on the concept of open museum storage – an open storage with several thematic units was designed. Every single part of this small space was used to support the main idea of the concept. The staircase and transit corridor space were transformed into a photo gallery of Knjaževac and its people, and the access corridor has become an educational-tactile corner. The main exhibition space shows the entire Oriental Salon (*Balkan Room*) from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the dining room and living room from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century equipped with the furniture and decorative mobiliary, the maiden's room, a part of the medical doctor's cabinet, and post-Second World War bedroom room. Each part of the exhibition has bilingual interpretative panels supported with QR codes, tactile and educational elements handmade in traditional crafts, and techniques, designed to engage and entertain visitors.

The main problem in the realization of the project, in addition to the limited space of the rooms and their dimensions, was primarily the extremely limited budget. With 42EUR/m<sup>2</sup> it was necessary to perform all the construction works and provide the exhibition furniture and equipment. The funds

were so limited that it was not possible to think about replacing the inadequate floor coverings. The budget also influenced the choice to use only tailored plywood boards instead of pedestals for furniture display, creating a visual, and only to a limited extent, physical barrier between communication and display. The existing wall lighting was used. Small items have been displayed in the display cases. The exhibition panels were created from Forex PVC foam board and covered with printed PVC foil. In certain sections, the walls are covered in period wallpaper complementing the recreation of a specific historical time. Draperies were used to separate thematic units. The exhibition is imbued with modern visual and didactic material. A special corner for the youngest visitors has been created with a lot of educational content, as well as an accessible interactive e-info point for visitors.

The permanent exhibition on the lower floor of the Homeland Museum is a particularly interesting project for several reasons. An interesting *time capsule* about Knjaževac's city culture was created in the space of almost 100 square meters. This setting is an outstanding example of reflection and planning, and proof that any space can become a successful museum space. The Homeland Museum of Knjaževac once again has proven that it is a museum of good practice, great ideas, and even greater realizations. 🍷





# APPLIED MUSIC FOR MUSEUMS: THE CASE OF THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN BELGRADE

## A New Model of Museum Audience Development and Presentation of Museum Content

By ALEKSANDAR VL. MARKOVIĆ & BILJANA JOKIĆ

*An increasing number of museum experts state that sound and music are becoming important elements in the planning and design of museum exhibitions. There are numerous articles and studies in which it is suggested that sound and music should become an organic element of museum exhibitions because they encourage the involvement of the consumers/visitors and their receptivity to the information designed to attract them.*

Applied music as a genre is highly developed in theater and film music in Serbia and the world, while its use in galleries and museums is an almost absent and unexplored area. The effects of applied music in museums on the experience of visitors have been insufficiently researched, as well as how much applied music in that context can contribute to audience development, by attracting the so-called potential museum audiences (people who have positive attitudes towards, but not the habits of visiting museums).



Several studies have been conducted on the impact of permanent music in museums so far. The results showed that the music contributed to visitors spending more time in the museum, and it also had a positive effect on their emotional and cognitive experience. It is especially important to point out that the mentioned research was conducted during the broadcasting of popular and classical, previously composed music for other occasions, all day long through the museum audio system.

The art-research project *Applied Music for Museums: The Case of the Museum of Science and Technology in Belgrade* was designed and implemented by the Center for Applied Music-Belgrade, from May to December 2021, with the support of the Museum of Science and Technology (MST) – Belgrade and the Institute for Cultural Development Research, and under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia. The artistic dimension of the project examined the sub-genre of applied music for museums by composing three

original permanently applied musical compositions for the permanent exhibition of the MST, integrating original musical compositions with the space and exhibits of the museum. The research dimension of the project dealt with measuring the effects of original applied music on the experience of museum visitors and audience development.

The original music for the three permanent MST exhibitions was composed by Aleksandar VI. Markovic (Synomusic for the permanent exhibition *Man and Science*, 54'), art historian and author of



applied music for numerous exhibitions, composer Miša Cvijović (Synomusic for the permanent exhibition *Toy Gallery*, 14'43"), and young composer Dušan Đorđević (Synomusic for the permanent exhibition *Scientific Workshop*, 15'44"). The research was conducted by psychologists Biljana Jokić and Ivana Luković with the support of the Institute for Cultural Development Research. Sound production (mixing and mastering), as well as the preparation of the museum audio system, was done by sound designer Dobrivoje Milijanović.

The artistic part of the project was conducted in several phases: 1. examination of the collection and exhibits of the MST – observation and musical inspiration; 2. examination of the space and audio system of the MST; 3. composing music and preparing audio segments of the exhibits of the MST; 4. studio recording, 5. music production, 6. music implementation and synchronization of the final composition in the museum space via audio system, 7. monitoring.

Original permanent music for MST is composed according to a specific composition methodology for the sub-genre of applied music (applied music for museums – synomusics). The style and length of the composition are determined by the unique parameters of each museum exhibition, where the content and documentary material of the exhibits and the time point of their creation as well as the exhibition space affect the form of the final musical composition. The music is essentially defined by the museum exhibits, while the length



of the composition is conditioned by the size of the exhibition space; i.e., the average time it takes for the visitor to visit the exhibition space. Applied music for museums is composed in such a way that there is no beginning or end, and it is played in a loop, constantly from the opening to the closing of the museum. The purpose of the music is to create a more beautiful and pleasant atmosphere for the visitor, as well as *to animate* the exhibits to start communicating with the visitors. Applied music should create an ambience in which the museum exhibit, the observer/consumer, and the museum space are connected into one integrated whole.<sup>1</sup>

Research on the effects of applied music on museum visitors is designed as a pilot project on the effects of applied music for museums on the development of museum audiences. It contributes to creating a sustainable model of development of

museum audiences in general. The project at MST in Belgrade is unique in that for the first time, original permanent music was composed for a complete museum exhibition, and it was broadcast continuously for two months when research on its impact on museum audiences was conducted.

The research study aimed to examine attitudes about visits and experiences during a tour of the exhibition in MST – both before and after including music. A total of three hundred and ten MST visitors were surveyed. In addition, twenty-two



in-depth interviews were conducted after the music was introduced, in order to deepen our knowledge of music effects. Members of different age groups, as well as the expert public (composers, art historians, and curators), were considered. Blind and partially sighted persons were also observed (four respondents aged thirteen to sixteen and three adults). In summary, the results of the research showed that the general impressions about the effects of music in the museum are similar for all groups of visitors: music completes the museum experience; it is perceived as part of the whole and, in arrangement with exhibits and space, enhances visitors' impressions. The effects of music are reflected emotionally (improving mood), cognitively (enhanced memory, awakening curiosity, spreading knowledge), and behaviorally (moving to play and action).

The results of the project were presented at the final panel of the project, and Radovan Jokić, Assistant Minister of Culture and Information of the

<sup>1</sup> Aleksandar Vl. Marković, music for the exhibition *Dislocations: Utopian Space(s)*, Mara Prohaska, Maida Gruden (2005)



Republic of Serbia in the Sector for contemporary creativity and creative industries, and Zoran Lević, director of the MST, also addressed the audience. Besides the representatives of the project team, Aleksandra Vl. Markovic and Biljana Jokić, Nikola Krstović, President of ICOM Serbia, also spoke at the panel; Dušan Đorđević, composer; with a video address by Miša Cvijović, composer, and Alcina Cortez from the NOVA University of Lisbon (Portugal), with whom the Center for Applied Music is actively collaborating.

Composing and integrating applied music into the permanent exhibitions of the Museum of Science and Technology, as well as pioneering research, intrigued domestic and foreign experts and artists, open to examining a new model of audience development and presentation of museum content that suits the current digital age for the consumption of art and museum exhibits. Like applied music for film or theater, applied music in a museum has a role to play in influencing visitors' moods – but the main focus is on presenting the museum's artistic content by connecting space, exhibits, and visitors into a single synesthesia.

Applied music in museums, in addition to its presentation role, and being a role model for better communication with the public and its development, can also serve as engaging original content on social networks and other museum communication digital platforms for a particular exhibition (web presentation, three hundred and sixty photos, 3D, VR, AR, and AI).<sup>2</sup> It can be used for promotional and communication purposes of digital and analog content of the museum. At the same time, it can attract people to come to the museum and fulfill the live exhibition experience. 🍷

Applied music for the  
Museum of Science and Technology, Belgrade

(Scan Q codes to activate the audio video for each setting)



CAM - "Vibroskien"

Synomusics for the  
permanent exhibition  
*Man and Science*  
Aleksandar Vl. Marković  
(54')



CAM - "Music box"

Synomusics for the  
permanent exhibition  
*Toy Gallery*  
Miša Cvijović  
(14'43")



CAM - "Quo vadis"

Synomusics for the  
permanent exhibition  
*Science Workshop*  
Dušan Đorđević  
(15'44")

<sup>2</sup> Jelena Jovanović Simić, Aleksandar Vl. Marković, Exhibition "Development and application of X-ray technology among Serbs from Tesla and Pupin to the present day", Museum of Science and Technology, Belgrade, (2021)

# YOUNG PHILOSOPHERS AND SPEAKERS AT THE MUSEUM

By OLIVERA SKOKO

*Responding to the topic of the special issue of the NC ICOM Serbia magazine, which focuses on the Power of Museums, one of the three offered aspects implies a comparative and indispensable link between the museum and educational activities that contribute to the development and progress of the community. As an example, one of the accompanying programs of the exhibition Merak mi je... (National Museum Zrenjanin, December 23, 2021 March 15, 2022) stands out.*



The exhibition *Merak mi je...* dealt with the topic of hedonism from different fields: art, literature, music, Christianity, and philosophy. And it was the latter that encouraged two professors of philosophy at the Zrenjanin High School, Aleksandra Maksić and Gordana Dunai, to become active participants in the programs they initiated and created with their students. They found inspiration in the mentioned exhibition, and specifically a part which deals with the philosophical view of hedonism, from the ancient philosophers Democritus and Epicurus, and especially Aristippus, to the contemporary French thinker Michel Onfray. The segment that considers the relationship between hedonism and Christianity, with the eternal question of whether love for God excludes the enjoyment of life, aroused the same interest among the professors. The mentioned topics guided conversations and consultations between the professors and the curator who conceived the exhibition. The interaction took place during exhibition preparation and while writing the texts for the accompanying catalog. Also, during project implementation, both sides recognised the need to organize philosophy lessons. Finally, just a few days after the opening, the first organized lessons took place within the exhibition space, as well as the so-called museum cafe and in the workshop section.

According to professor Gordana Dunai, the students were especially impressed by the notion of the ancient theorist Aristippus, Socrates' student and the founder of the Cyrenian school, which reads: *Pleasure is the in present, one should live and enjoy only in the present moment*. At the philosophy lessons held in the Zrenjanin museum, quotations like this opened many questions and discussions with the students and provided personal access to the universal problems on which every philosophical research is based. Also, the segment that deals with the relationship between hedonism and Christianity, as professor Dunai pointed out, was inspiring for the students and professors because it encourages thinking that goes beyond stereotypes and examines the fundamental ideas of Christianity.

Within the exhibition itself, the professors also decided to organize an oratory competition on the topic *Carpe diem*, in which the students of the second and third grades of Zrenjanin High School took part:

Anastasija Vanja Romanov, Dragana Milenković, Aleksandar Radanov, and Una Pejić. This topic was especially interesting to young speakers because, by perceiving this well-known Latin sentence, they actually gave their vision of the transience of life, appealing to use it every day, every moment, in a good way. Aleksandra Damjanac, a first-year student at the Faculty of Law in Novi Sad, thought similarly, asking her former professor Aleksandra Maksić to help her find a topic for her speech in order to participate in the oratory competition at her faculty. After the professor suggested that she visit the exhibition *Merak mi je...* at the National Museum in Zrenjanin and find inspiration in the exhibition, Aleksandra Damjanac has prepared an interesting speech, also about the *Carpe diem* topic. Mentioning that *we live in a time when a person fights for his own bare life, without that wind in his hair, hedonism in his soul and freedom of enjoyment*, student Damjanac told the audience as a participant in the competition: *Wars, political uprisings, financial problems and even those of love can wait a moment. And you take life into your own hands for that moment and create some memories that you will remember. Don't come to the moment when you will regret your own life, because time will not wait for you*. With her speech, Aleksandra Damjanac entered the finals and joined eight other contestants for best speaker at her university, thus qualifying for the conference held on Zlatibor (at the time this text was being written).

On March 15, the exhibition *Merak mi je...* was closed when, among other things, the success of the young student was mentioned, as well as the organized lessons in philosophy and oratory. Such participatory events in museums are of mutual importance, both for heritage institutions and educational institutions. First of all, they have a stimulating effect on the participants, especially if the initiative itself came from professors and students. In such situations, museums show all their POWER because they step out of an exclusively protection-oriented, representation, and educational role, creating a motivational pattern for both young members of the local community and their pedagogues. Communities with such individuals and groups – ready to think and present, to debate and talk – create societies ready for every kind of challenge. ■





# ON FACTORIES AND WORKERS, SERBIA'S INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Exhibition of the Museum of Science and Technology  
and the Museum of Yugoslavia

By ADA VLAJIĆ & RADOVAN CUKIĆ





*On Factories and Workers is a joint project and exhibition of the Museum of Yugoslavia and the Museum of Science and Technology.*

*Based on select examples of industrial heritage it aims to offer an overview of the many perspectives dealing with the complex theme of industrial production. Curators from the Museum of Science and Technology focused on the processes of technological production, while curators from the Museum of Yugoslavia approached industrial production as a complex form of social gathering. Therefore, this exhibition consisted of two complementary sections in the form of two exhibition set-ups in both museum spaces.*



The thematic framework of the exhibitions are industrialization processes on the territory of present-day Serbia since the early days of industrial production in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, across its evolution within different states and social systems during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and in conclusion with the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which reveal the closure of most industrial companies that were once the nucleus of work and life of individuals and social groups. Material and immaterial traces of these processes are the mainstay of historical, technological and architectural values that can be recognized in the history of production, engineering, as well as construction and architecture. They are also the pillars of social and cultural values stemming from social relations shaped under the influence of industrial production, and are reflected in testimonies by the people whose experiences in industrial work and life, organized within

its framework, represent an important part of their personal and collective identities.

The importance of the project is mirrored firstly in the particular collaboration model involving two institutions (each the parent institution for a specific heritage field) dealing with the complex subject of industrialization and showing their results through two complementary exhibitions, displayed to the public simultaneously. This allowed the presentation and understanding of industrialization as a process of production and complex form of social gathering.

The exhibitions disclosed five industrial locations on the territory of present-day Serbia – the mines in Bor and Majdanpek, the Military and Technical Institute in Kragujevac, the Textile Industry in Leskovac, the *Servo Mihalj* Agricultural Combine (Enterprise) in Zrenjanin and Electronic Industry in Niš. All these production giants were



extremely important to the community in which they developed, to such an extent that they became the basis on which the local community built its identity (*Bor the city of copper, Niš the city of electronics, Leskovac, Serbian Manchester*). The choice was primarily based not with the aim of disclosing the history of each factory (even though this would have been entirely justifiable), but in order to demonstrate the many phenomena linked to the process of industrialization through the specific nature of their respective evolution: the role of capital (private/market, state, foreign), the status of the

from the Museum of Yugoslavia. Breda Bizjak was exhibition architect and Saša Pančić its graphic designer. The exhibition was enhanced with additional objects and visual documents from many cultural institutions and individuals. Preparatory activities involved fieldwork, i.e., visiting each location and developing cooperation with local cultural institutions and individuals whose research focus is related to these specific industrial sites. Fieldwork included photographing and talking with associates about potential exhibiting materials. Cooperation was established with the Museum of Mining and



working class, workers' standards and forced labor, the natural conditioning of industrial production and transformations of the natural environment that occurred as a result of industrial action, as well as the link between industrial production and science, etc. The five chosen case studies were the basis for showcasing Serbia's overall industrial production, its development and operating in different historical periods, political and social systems, and in different states. Taking into consideration that in the processes of privatization (and de-industrialization) these factory giants have ceased to exist, or have survived in fundamentally different forms, this project aimed to increase awareness of the need to protect industrial heritage.

The exhibition was the conceptual work of a curatorial team which included Ada Vlajić and Rifat Kulenović from the Museum of Science and Technology, and Jovana Nedeljković and Radovan Cukić

Metallurgy in Bor, the Library in Bor, the National Museum in Leskovac, the Old Foundry Museum in Kragujevac, the Faculty of Mining and Geology in Belgrade, as well as activists such as Stevan Golubović, who is engaged in researching the Electronics Industry of Niš, and Branislav Markuš, who investigates the *Servo Mihalj* Agricultural Plant in Zrenjanin. Exhibits were loaned from the mentioned institutions and private collections, as well as the Museum of Science and Technology and the Museum of Yugoslavia. The research of archival, photo and video materials was carried out primarily at the Archives of Yugoslavia, the *Filmske novosti* film centre, RTS (Radio-Television of Serbia) Programme Archive, besides the above-mentioned institutions.

Part of the promotional campaign, imminent before the opening of the two exhibitions, and in collaboration with the company *Prosound*,

consisted of five short videos showing the recent state of industrial heritage on the five locations, including short statements by individuals *from the field*: Stevan Golubović from Niš, Mira Ninošević from Leskovac, Branislav Markuš from Zrenjanin, Marija Milošević from Kragujevac and Dragan Stojmenović from Bor. The videos were posted on museum social media outputs and YouTube channels, and were also made available to visitors of the exhibition at the Museum of Yugoslavia. Part of the same activity included live streaming the exhibition setup at the Museum of Science and Technology, and this was also made available to viewers at the Museum of Yugoslavia within the timeframe between the opening of the two exhibitions (December 1 and 7, 2021).

The Museum of Yugoslavia exhibition, besides presenting the selected locations, also divulged the many phenomena that are linked to the process of industrialization, with special focus on industrial production as the point of intersection of complex, primarily social and political relations, such as the role of capital, the status of the working class, workers' standards and links between industrial production and science. Exhibits included industrial goods, models and machines, artworks, photographs and videos. A special part of the exhibition consisted of a multichannel installation by artist Deana Petrović, presenting the vast archival video and photographic materials on these five industrial sites. The same five themes, that is, industrial locations, were also presented at the Museum of Science and Technology, with the difference that the Museum of Science and Technology focused on the evolution of industrial production illustrated through the development of mechanics, technology and production, and the impact of industrial production on the environment, primarily the growth of cities, and the surrounding landscape. Exhibits included different machines, samples of different goods and products from the five factories, mineral samples from Bor and Majdanpek, as well as photographs. Each site was also accompanied with a video by artist Deana Petrović, displayed at the Museum of Yugoslavia as a multichannel installation. In September, the Exhibition







will be presented to the public in Kragujevac, at the *October 21* Museum.

Over the course of the exhibition at the Museum of Science and Technology and the Museum of Yugoslavia, many guided tours through the exhibitions were organized, some of them offering an overall presentation of the exhibition concept, and others specifically dealing with each location. These latter tours involved associates from Bor, Leskovac, Zrenjanin and Niš, who presented the sites which were the core of the research itself. The Museum of Yugoslavia hosted a workshop for amateur poets born in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and this workshop was conceived and moderated by the poet Maša Senčić. The Museum of Science and Technology organized a panel discussion on the coupling of industry and urban planning led by Ada Vlajić and Rifat Kulenović (part of the lead curatorial team from the Museum of Science and Technology), accompanied by urban planner Žaklina Gligorijević, and architect Snežana Ristić and art historian Radonja Leposavić who were talk moderators.

The supplementary publication titled *On Factories and Workers, Serbia's Industrial Heritage* included six original articles by different researchers and introductory texts by exhibition curators and directors of the two museums. Introductions were written by Neda Knežević, director of the Museum of Yugoslavia, and acting director of the Museum of Science and Technology Zoran Lević. Both emphasised the importance of inter-institutional collaboration and the significance of preserving industrial heritage. The text *On Factories and Workers* is a reflection on the exhibition, its theme, concept and structure. Original articles were written by PhDs: Jelena Rafailović, Tanja Petrović, Dragomir Bondžić, Saša Mihajlov, Magister Rifat Kulenović and MA Ada Vlajić. The authors offered a historical overview of the evolution of industrial production and presented different phenomena tied to industrial production and industrial heritage in general, and specifically the links between industrial production and education, the local community, urbanization, de-industrialization, culture of remembrance and industrial archaeology. 📖



MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

IN AN INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

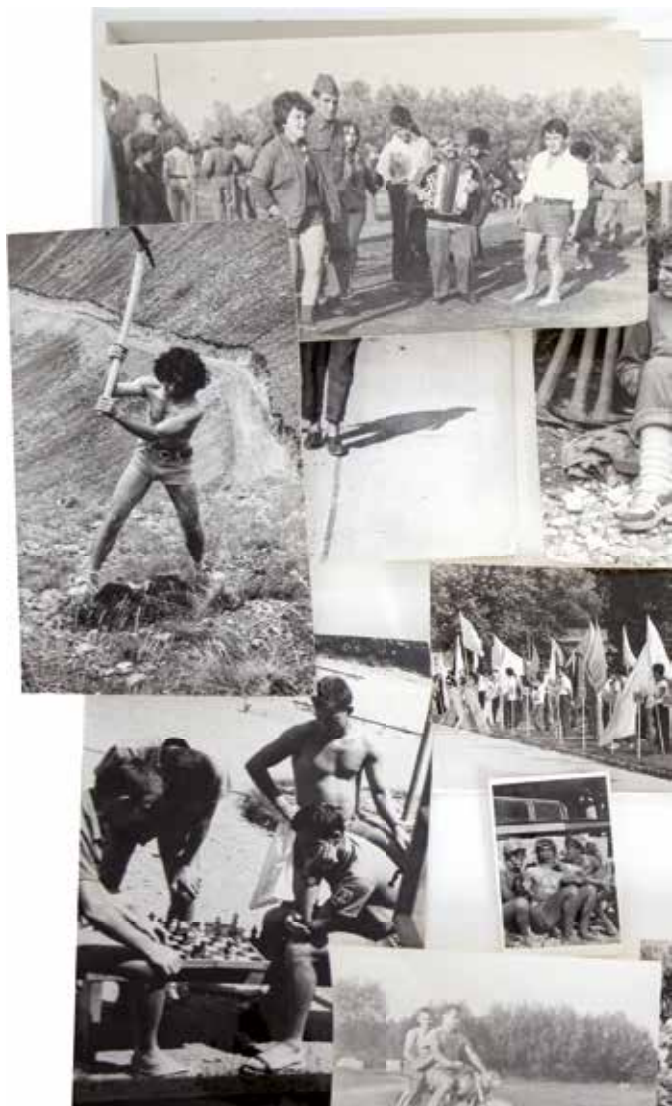
# YOUTH WORK ACTIONS AS A SPARK FOR INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH TO MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

By MARIJA ĐORGOVIĆ,  
ALEKSANDRA MOMČILOVIĆ JOVANOVIĆ &  
ALEKSANDRA NIKOLIĆ

Photographs by MARKO PETROVIĆ



*ICCROM's Our COLLECTIONS MATTER project is aimed at supporting collections-based institutions to mobilize their collections for fulfilling their role in sustainable development. Within this framework, three museum programs were carried out in Serbia between the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, with the aim of developing an intergenerational approach to museum collections' use and initiating the transformation of museums into intergenerational contact zones. These programs were especially focused on providing target audience groups with an opportunity to add significance and meanings to museum collections and thus contribute to their preservation.*



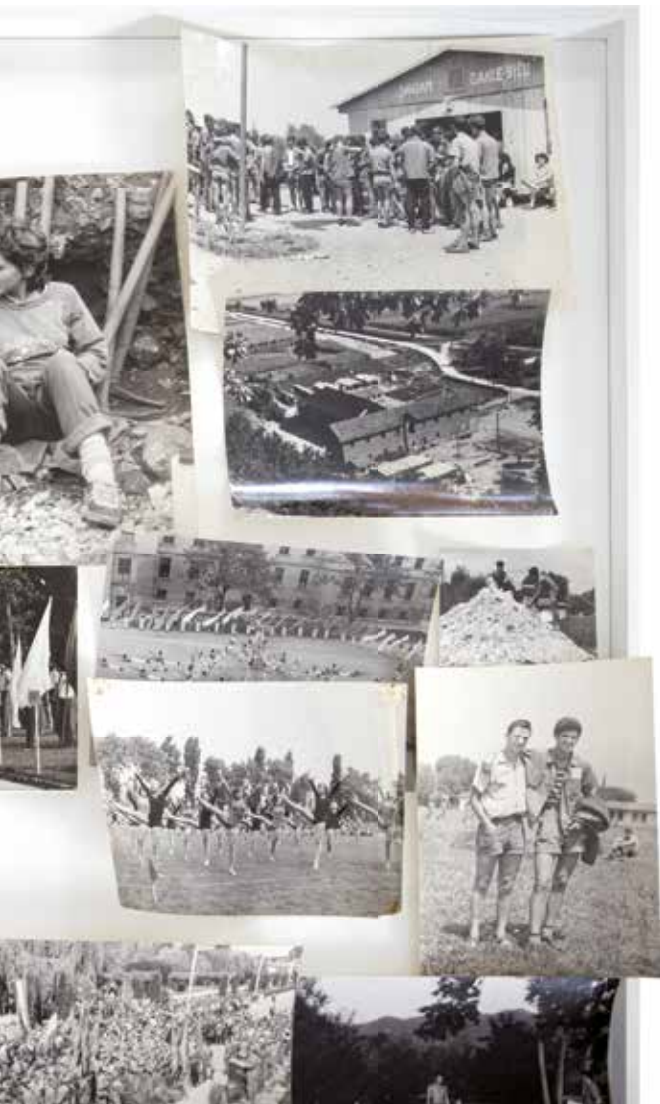
#### ABOUT THE 'OUR COLLECTIONS MATTER' PROJECT

There are numerous reasons supporting intergenerational participatory approach to museum collections. The UN Agenda 2030 recognizes elderly citizens as a particularly vulnerable group, at risk of neglect and exclusion from social processes. Intergenerational relations are an important element of cultural transmission which is at the core of museum work. Multiple experiences and research show that intergenerational transmission works in both directions (Cortellesi, Harpley, and Kernan 2018), being beneficial not only for senior citizens, but also for young people, who tend to show enhanced civic engagement and skills when coupled with older individuals (Milbourn et al. 2019). Intergenerational

dialogue is a powerful instrument of social cohesion, and one way to provide for this kind of dialogue is by establishing intergenerational contact zones. The starting point for developing intergenerational activities in museums is the question of what it takes for museums to become key intergenerational contact zones for their local communities.

The three programs in Serbia were conceived as field studies for intergenerational access to collections based on the initially proposed communication approach. These programs were held in the form of workshops, at the National Museum of Kikinda, Homeland Museum in Knjaževac and the Museum of Yugoslavia. The approach-testing part of the project resulted in INTER-COLLECT – Intergenerational Toolkit for Museum Collections.





#### YOUTH WORK ACTIONS AT THE MUSEUM OF YUGOSLAVIA

Challenges that museums have faced in the new century have articulated certain issues that have been accumulating over the years. For example, profusion and self-sufficiency were recognized among the most striking, so specific steps were taken to strengthen the trend of focusing on a few creatively approached and functional objects rather than thousands of dusty silent ones in the storages. Bearing in mind that museum collections are unique cultural, educational and social resources, regardless of collecting policies, preservation circumstances and types of use, mediating the potential of museum objects remains temporally and spatially unlimited. In this sense, the Our

Collections Matter initiative examines the relevance of museum collections for social sustainability and their role in connecting different, distant, often marginalized, and even conflicted social groups.

Users provide a certain kind of hidden knowledge about the objects, and such historical information that museums and academically oriented researchers otherwise cannot uncover.

Youth work actions were a state project implemented in Socialist Yugoslavia after the Second World War which engaged thousands of youth brigades in building infrastructure for the cities, factories and landscaping throughout the whole of the country. It had an organizational structure based on the military order so, after winning WWII, the new generations would be strategically engaged in (re)-building the new space for a new society. In the collections of the Museum of Yugoslavia there are dozens of artifacts testifying this: flags, uniforms, badges, emblems, tools, documents, diaries from the brigadier camps, etc. and a large number of photos from the construction sites documenting that millions of teenagers, as well as people in their early twenties, took part in rebuilding the country. However, they are not enough to show that the experiences of the participants were so strong and transformative that many of them are still friends and that they gather occasionally and travel to places to commemorate times when they worked together. Senior citizens, former brigadiers are even nowadays, decades later, very emotional about their experience binded with strong feelings of belonging, friendship and solidarity. None of these affective aspects, emotional and more subtle cognitive potentials are self-explanatory from the museum objects or from the buildings and roads we pass by, which young people had built decades ago. Especially, today's youth are not aware of this.

As a museum we deal with recent history, objects from the Yugoslav era that are both topics and subjects of our research and interpretation. Thus, we are aware that we are also dealing with notions that constitute a large portion of the private lives of many people. In that sense, the museum tends to develop sustainable cooperation with different core communities. The Museum and Youth Work Action participants have been mutually recognized





and had many contacts in the past decade, but the opportunity to take a step further occurred with the Our Collections Matter project. We developed a two-day workshop testing an intergenerational toolkit for museum collections that gained not only some material results but encouraged mutual trust between the community and the museum.

#### YOUTH WORK ACTORS IN THE MUSEUM

Intergenerational programs, including those related to museum collections, are based on three communication approaches – storytelling, mentoring and co-creation. This type of program is usually a combination of these three elements, where the dominant approach depends on general and specific objectives, topics and age groups involved.

A participatory event held at the Museum of Yugoslavia engaged two age groups (youth and seniors). The workshop gathered together former Youth Work Action (YWA) participants and students from the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Philosophy (Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy) and Teacher Education Faculty. As part of the preparation process, former participants of the YWA were asked to choose and bring to the Museum ten objects which they thought were the most important for understanding the phenomenon of Youth Work Action (or some particular aspect of it).

The workshop *From the Object to the Text* relied on variations of Speed dating and the World Café methodologies. At the beginning of the workshop, young andragogists and teachers chose the

objects they wanted to talk about and initiated conversation. Both groups of participants (youth and seniors) were divided into groups of four (each group consisted of two students and two former YWA participants). Students moved from one place to another initiating a conversation with new partners. The process repeated until every person had the chance to talk to everyone else in the group, which allowed former participants of YWA to share their knowledge and experience about the topic and particular objects, and also to share their personal stories. After the speed dating rounds were done, as part of the plenary debriefing session, moderators started a discussion about what students learned about the topic and how the objects contributed to that new understanding.

The workshop *From the Text to the Object*, held on the second day, started with an analysis of the Museum Laboratory exhibition, more precisely a part of the exhibition dedicated to the Youth Work Actions. Participants of the workshop were encouraged to express their thoughts and impressions about the setting and curators' interpretation. Using the knowledge they gained on the previous day, they were invited to share their opinion about what is missing or should be presented in a different way. As part of the final considerations, museum curators chose the most abstract concepts (terms) mentioned in the previous session: emotions, solidarity, physical work and Brotherhood and Unity to start the final session. Using co-creation as a tool, participants, divided again into generationally mixed groups, were tasked with proposing which objects would be chosen for the interpretation of specific concepts, and with which communication means (tools).

The workshop had a two-way impact: from the youth and seniors to curators and vice versa. On the one hand, both generations of participants had a practical role in building the core museum exhibition which not only influenced their assumptions about museums and concrete historical phenomena, but also educated each group about the implicit knowledge generated from their authentic experience. On the other hand, curators were faced with new participatory and collaborative challenges, which impose higher sensitivity to affective aspects and require new skills in transposing empirical experience to approaching the collection. ■

CONTEMPORARY ART

OF AFRICA

# REFLECT #2: FRAGMENTS, FRAGILITIES, MEMORIES

The Museum of African Art, Belgrade

A curatorial perspective  
ANA KNEŽEVIĆ & EMILIA EPŠTAJN



*Reflect #2 – Fragments, Fragilities, Memories<sup>1</sup> is an exhibition of contemporary art from Angola set up in April 2022 at the Museum of African Art in Belgrade (hereinafter, MAU). It was conceived as part of the Reflect platform (initiated in 2020) which focuses on presenting the works of contemporary artists from Africa and of African heritage. The exhibition opened at a very exciting time for the MAU – an institution founded 45 years ago, during the historical pinnacle of the non-aligned movement. Namely, conceived as an anticolonial museum, this institution has been attempting for many years (sometimes with more, sometimes less success) to fulfill the requirements of a thus conceived potential and place, aiming for a different attitude of Europe towards Africa.*

In January-February 2022, the MAU's curatorial team visited Luanda, Angola, gaining a unique glimpse into this African city's thriving and vibrant contemporary art production. By joining forces with THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE, the idea was to bring contemporary Angolan art to Serbia. Leading this gallery are Sónia Ribeiro, Graça Rodrigues, and Ngoi Salucombo who decided to expand the range of this gallery's activities beyond its main offices (in Luanda and Lisbon), commencing, thus, a productive "postcolonial" collaboration by "inviting curators and artists in an occasional collaboration which provided enriching visions and dialogues". Ultimately, the collaboration between the MAU and THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE on setting up an exhibition in Belgrade, even though it offers a very specific and partial view of the dynamics of the art world in question, nevertheless figures as an important event in the local (Serbian) art scene. At the same time, it was a pioneering opportunity for both emerging and already career-formed artists to venture into a new field, both in an art and market sense.

*Reflect* places contemporary African artists in the forefront, bearing in mind that repeatedly, over the course of a long period of time, within the

museum space, they have been omitted as a source of creation, robbed of their own authenticity and poetics, and have been represented as "nameless" – anonymous African artists.

From the curatorial perspective of working from within the position of a specific museum, holding such unique museal heritage, the *Reflect* platform is valuable because it creates a space for the direct dialogue and creative encounters between curators, artists, and the wider public; it reflects on the complex contemporary art world system within the museum context; and finally, disrupts the MAU's permanent and other exhibition spaces by perpetually questioning its implied and possibly undetected narratives and discourses.

REFLECT #2:  
FRAGMENTS, FRAGILITIES, MEMORIES –  
EXHIBITION CONCEPT

*Reflect #2* has caught us at a moment of global pandemic abatement, with a war thundering not so far away, fears of (fuel) shortages, while we are obsessively doomscrolling, overwhelmed by the overall feeling that there is no salvation – that we will never learn anything because it is obvious that revision and learning through reflection, looking back,

<sup>1</sup> Curated by Emilia Epštajn, Ana Knežević, Graça Rodrigues, Sónia Ribeiro.





*Reflect #2 - Fragments, Fragilities,  
Memories at MAU (Photo: Marija Piroški)*

Meeting at THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE Gallery  
(Luanda, Angola, January 2022).

From left to right: Ngoi Salucombo, photographer/  
curator, Marija Aleksić, MAU director,  
and Ana Knežević, MAU curator  
Photo by © Emilia Epštajn



correcting and admitting mistakes must always be reaffirmed. Learning from one's mistakes rarely becomes a way of thinking and a widely accepted attitude towards the world by which we recognize and accept that we are many.

This is a polyphonic exhibition showcasing the works of eight male and two female artists from Angola: Pedro Pires, Luís Damião, Francisco Vidal, Nelo Teixeira, Januário Jano, Cristiano Mangovo, Osvaldo Ferreira, Ery Claver, Alida Rodrigues and Ana Silva. Following hyperlink logic, as a sign of permanent and continual accumulation, the exhibition tells the story of the (dis)placement of power and powerlessness among many human subjects. It is reflective of wanted and unwanted memories, calm and restless objects; our views of others and of ourselves. In the exhibited works, the line between great upheavals and micro injustices has merged in the everyday hustle and bustle of the urban landscape. One of the prevailing themes is the out-of-control urban chaos of demolition and dehumanized construction, which in its final form produces architectural ghosts with empty floors (empty high-rise buildings), while most people don't even have a roof over their heads. In these same landscapes of heat, concrete, fuel, and cinder there are countless people passing by whose figures disappear under the weight of hyper-consumerist materialism. There is no protection either in (cultural) institutions whose systemic mistakes (glitches) are only able to produce a delayed search for a response to burning topics of representation and owning *the other*.

The exhibition captures all of the moments of vulnerability that disrupt us and displace us from the ordinary, which can be caused by different *states of emergencies*: diseases, wars, political changes, or decades-long absence thereof. There are also many smaller disruptions manifested as vibrating hunches. Such are the micro-earthquakes caused by encounters, eye contact, the discovery of old photographs, through thinking of one's singular and collective past, ancestry, and the way we will be *situated* in the world accordingly. ♡

## *Reflect #2: Fragments, Fragilities, Memories – exhibition scope*

- *Visiting artists who provided guided tours, explaining in their own words the origins and ideas behind their art and work*
- *Talks with gallery curators and gallery managers, as well as artists, which are open to the widest public*
- *An accompanying trilingual catalogue (Serbian/Portuguese/English) with reproductions by original artist works*
- *The exhibition is a sale exhibition; works of very current and active artists are offered to local (and regional) art connoisseurs, collectors, and buyers*
- *Each Reflect exhibition results in several of the works being acquired for the MAU contemporary African art collection*

In the artist's studio, Hotel Globo art hub  
(Luanda, Angola, February 2022).

From left to right: Thó Simões, Hélió Bruno Buite  
and Emilia Epštajn, MAU curator  
Photo: © Ana Knežević

*Reflect #2* exhibition opening.

From left to right: Emilia Epštajn, MAU curator,  
Ana Knežević, MAU curator, Osvaldo Ferreira, artist,  
Cristiano Mangovo, artist, Graça Rodrigues, curator,  
Ngoi Salucombo, photographer/curator,  
Milica Josimov, MAU conservator, Sónia Ribeiro,  
THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE Gallery director, and  
H. E. Alcino dos Prazeres Izata Francisco da Conceição,  
Ambassador of the Republic of Angola in Belgrade  
(Photo: Marija Piroški)





## Reflect #2

FRAGMENTS,  
FRAGILIDADES,  
MEMÓRIAS

FRAGMENTOS,  
FRAGILIDADES,  
MEMÓRIAS

FRAGMENTS,  
FRAGILITIES,  
MEMORIES





# BETWEEN SOLIDARITY AND RESILIENCE: FOLK COSTUMES OF THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN KULA, SERBIA

By STEFAN ŽARIĆ

*The project Rituals of Resilience: Ukrainian Folk Costumes from Kula, Serbia took place in March 2022 at the Ukrainian Folklore Society Ivan Senyuk in Kula, Serbia, under the supervision of the Society's president, Mr. Filip Pronek. The city of Kula, located in the West Bačka District of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in Serbia, serves as the center of the Ukrainian ethnic minority in the country. The aim of the project was to bond with the community through the narrative power of clothes and observe how a costume tells stories of sociocultural, aesthetic, and political integration as well as resilience. Moreover, it tells how the costume itself becomes a ritual of resilience.*



The costume collection at the Ukrainian Folklore Society *Ivan Senyuk* in Kula, Serbia (© Stefan Žarić)

In the wake of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, as an ICOM Costume Committee and ICOM Serbia member, I have reached out to the local Ukrainian community in the city of Kula where I am based. I plan to conduct research and present a project displaying their folk costumes on a voluntary basis. The project *Rituals of Resilience: Ukrainian Folk Costumes from Kula, Serbia* took place in March 2022 at the Ukrainian Folklore Society *Ivan Senyuk* in Kula, Serbia, under the supervision of the Society's president, Mr. Filip Pronek. The city of Kula, located in the West Bačka District of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in Serbia, serves as the center of the Ukrainian ethnic minority in the country. As initial migrations of Ukrainians and other Slavic nations from the territory of Ukraine to the Bačka region occurred in 1745, the first organized resettlement in Serbia in fact took place in Kula. Despite combining ethnography, folklore items, oral history, and costume history, the aim of the project was not to solely catalogize costumes in museography standards nor to structure their demographic and ethnographic nomenclature. The aim was to bond with the community through the narrative power of clothes and observe how a costume tells stories of

sociocultural, aesthetic, and political integration as well as resilience. Moreover, it tells how the costume itself becomes a ritual of resilience.

As such, Ukrainian folk costumes and customs have almost a three-century-long presence in Serbia and Kula in particular. While many other ethnic minorities in Serbia did create more hybrid expressions of their folk costumes through local variations by merging East or Central European and Balkan influences, Ukrainian costumes remained true to their origins. This is not to say that Ukrainians were neither segregated by the domestic population nor that they refused or were refused integration. On the contrary, keeping their costumes intact while allowing themselves to visually differentiate yet socially integrate has been an ongoing ritual of resilience for the community. However, it is important to stress that throughout its historical development, Ukrainian folk costumes were designed with certain stylistic characteristics of Polish-Lithuanian and Russian influences, among others. In that regard, costumes in the collection of the Folklore Society *Ivan Senyuk* in Kula could serve as narratives of both Ukrainian sociopolitical and sociocultural geography and history.







Detail of jacket facing and embroidery  
on a men's caftan (župan) from Central Ukraine,  
The costume collection of the Folklore Society  
*Ivan Senyuk*, Kula, Serbia. (© Stefan Žarić)

Sheepskin vest (keptar) from Carpathian region  
decorated with braiding and tassels.  
The costume collection of the Folklore Society  
*Ivan Senyuk*, Kula, Serbia. (© Stefan Žarić)



As in the rest of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, folk costumes were popular and usually the only available form of clothing both in Ukraine and Serbia (especially rural areas) until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when they started to lose appeal in favor of Westernized culture of clothing and 'European' bourgeois dress. Until then, folk costumes, especially in an environment like the Serbian, which has historically been considered a crossroad between East and West, served as signifiers of belonging, recognition, and resilience. They were a semiotic tool for communicating one's identity, culture, feelings, and emotions – not just the notions of ethnicity and patriotism – through various social rituals.

Nowadays, the Folklore Society *Ivan Senyuk* and Ukrainian folk-dance festivals remain the only spaces and occasions in which the local Ukrainian community in Kula (same as other ethnic minorities, respectively) dress up in their folk costumes.

Occasionally, certain women wear modernized versions of Ukrainian embroidered folk blouses, creating a versatile garment that, to an eye unaware of different folklore and fashion traditions, might seem *ethnic* in a globalized world. Children, on the other hand, do not wear them out of fear of being picked on at school for not being dressed in contemporary clothes. When a folk event occurs, the community knows who originates from which region of Ukraine depending on the ornaments, whether floral or geometric, designs on the sleeves; the dominant colors, types of embroidery and needlework, and many other features of the folk costume. Folk costumes have once again become both personal and collective storytellers, uniting the community in its diversity. The fact that after almost three centuries there are still people who wear these garments, even if just for the sake of a folk-dance event, attests that the ritual of resilience never ceases, whether we are dressed in a folk costume or modern attire. ♡

# MIGRATIONS IN ART – THE ART OF MIGRATIONS

## Exhibition in the Gallery of Matica Srpska, Novi Sad

By DANILO VUKSANOVIĆ,  
LUKA KULIĆ & JELENA OGNJANOVIĆ

*Does a museum have the power to bring change to society? This was a question we, three curators Danilo Vukasnović, Luka Kulić and Jelena Ognjanović from the Gallery of Matica Srpska, asked ourselves while making and producing the exhibition Migrations in Art – The Art of Migrations. The idea about the topic of migrations and its relations to art started a few years ago when the team of the Gallery of Matica Srpska planned an international exhibition project for the European Capital of Culture 2022. The topic was at that point slowly losing interest of the public and national and international news, however, as it turned out, it became a burning issue just a few days after the opening in February 2022.*



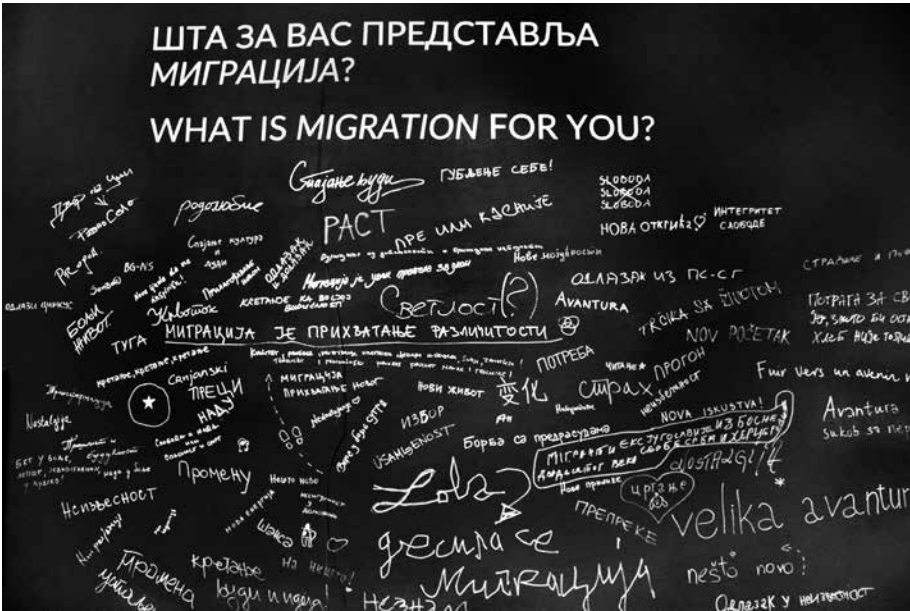
individuals. The idea was to observe, examine and understand migrations in a wider context, which affects nations and raises many ethical and cultural issues during the current global migration crisis.

individuals. The idea was to observe, examine and understand migrations in a wider context, which affects nations and raises many ethical and cultural issues during the current global migration crisis.

The exhibition was divided into three parts, each curated by one of us: *Three Artists – Three Migrants* – *Three Case Studies*, *Migrations – What Can Art Do?* and *Migration As a Case Study in Art: Migration of the Serbs* by Paja Jovanović. Even though these segments could be considered as three different views on the topic, they correlated on different levels, making visitors dwell on the subject. We started the exhibition in the Gallery space with a simple statement and three questions: We are all migrants.

contemplate the intertwining of cultures, identities, and the feeling of (not) belonging, but also the political and social circumstances in which they created art. They reminded us that unique artistic phenomena were precisely the results of cultures crossing paths and individuals migrating. However, these three cases were not just stories about art, changes in style, influences on art movements, and the course of art history. They were the telling of stories about national, gender and religious identities, the ways of traveling and moving, about hopes, acceptance and the lack thereof, about societies and their (in)flexibility, but also about one's willingness to change oneself and the world around them.

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Then, the visitors would leap from 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century art into the contemporary (art) world. The second part of the exhibition brought up the question of what (contemporary) art can do for society, particularly with regard to the phenomenon of migrations. Can art be used as a tool for the much-needed re-examination of our reality? In recent times, the actuality of this social occurrence grows and empowers an exceptional platform for new artistic phenomena and acts. Contemporary artistic practice abounds in numerous attempts to mark, extend and properly introduce the complexity of this social phenomenon. Displayed works of contemporary art presented the selection of relevant art projects coming from the region and abroad, diverse in terms of media, which thematically dealt with the phenomenon of migration in the context of contemporary European socio-political crises in a broader sense. Without being directly interlinked, the works of Taus Makhacheva, Mladen Miljanović, Safet Zec, Rena Rädle and Vladan Jeremić, as well as curator-artist Luka Kulić, suggested the diversity of perspectives

and provided space for discussing migration issues from different angles.

Taking historical strongholds, the symbolic images typical of the Balkan region as its starting point, it made perfect sense that the famous historical composition by Paja Jovanović *The Migration of the Serbs* occupied a well-deserved spot and a special part of the exhibition. More precisely, there are several versions of one (similar) visual representation created two centuries after the historical event, i.e., the Migration of Serbs under Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević in 1690. The artist summarized the nature of the Serbian people's fate with an allegorical ring to it, making the image that came to life in the overall consciousness of Serbian visual culture one of the most impressive representations. This major work of art is located on the panel dedicated to patriotic icons of the Serbian people, as a key image for understanding the motives behind intertwining tradition with the national sentiment. The complex story of the creation and multiple meanings of this painting were presented through a video animation of the monumental painting from the Patriarchate



Court of the Serbian Orthodox Church, a painting from the National Museum in Pančevo, chromolithography and a sketch drawing of the famous composition. Furthermore, a metaphor of *The Ark of the Covenant* with relics of Saint Prince Lazar brought in the migration of Serbs was artistically displayed in the form of a golden coffin *Kvazi kivot* (quasi-covenant) made by curator-artist Danilo Vuksanović.

As already mentioned at the beginning, we saw from the start the exhibition as an open platform for various kinds of discussions and perspectives, implying the notion of the power of the museum to bring change. Therefore the main part of the exhibition was actually its so-called accompanying program. Over the course of two and a half months of the exhibition, curators conducted more than 30 guided tours; there were several open discussions and talks with contemporary artists, sociologists, historians, art-historians and philologists, lectures by experts, as well as projections of international documentary and feature films dedicated to the subject. A special program was dedicated to children and youth – drama workshops, *HearMe* workshops, and

creative art workshops – with the aim to encourage critical thinking and reflecting on the social issues of the contemporary world through art.

Moreover, the exhibition had an eponymous catalogue and a special publication *(Re)views of Migrations: Essays on the Phenomenon* written by Aleksej Kišjuhas, PhD, Branko Bešlin, PhD, Danilo Vuksanović, Sandro Debono, PhD, Jelena Ognjanović, Luka Kulić and Vladimir Gvozden, PhD. The book examines the links between the historical development of demographic, social, and economic phenomena, on the one side, and mass and individual migratory movements on the other, through the sphere of art, history, and literature.

The exhibition and publications provided a glimpse into a small microcosm of the very broad topic of migrations. Working at different levels – temporal, spatial, ethical and others, it gave people opportunities to reconsider their own attitudes and the attitudes of society, or even civilizational challenges through the language of art. It also empowered us as curators in thinking that museums really can enforce social change. ♡

# EYE TO I/(O)GLED

## Hybrid form of a Magazine/Collection of Essays, Curatorial Project, Retrospective Exhibition and Expanded Monograph

By ANICA TUCAKOV

*Every part of society has to offer a resilient, logical and constructive response to the complex on-going crises, to reevaluate existing modes of operation in order to survive, while preserving core values. The same applies to arts and culture. The collision of exterior socio/economic/political forces and inner motivation generates the source of every creative innovation, including the production of the art magazine (O)GLED. Based on the work of one artist, with texts that directly address the selected artist and others that provide theoretical, cultural, artistic and historical background, and following editions in Serbian, we present the English edition EYE TO I that includes segments from the first three issues in the form of three solo shows.*

May you live in interesting times, the well-known expression or curse and also the title of the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Art Biennale in 2019, seems to describe quite precisely the time we live in. However, interesting times demand interesting solutions.

Reappearing disruptions caused by financial crises from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, life under the regime of permanent crisis mode and the Covid-19 outbreak had substantial impact on every part of our lives, while the current war in Ukraine and global geopolitical shift that is happening before

our eyes, are changing in every way the world we know. The one good thing that can come out of it is that we are forced to reexamine efficiency, productivity and most importantly – the rationale of our activities so far, to leave behind obsolete and inert ones and to act in response to the new reality.

Every part of society has to offer resilient, logical and constructive responses to the complex on-going crises, to reevaluate existing modes of operations in order to survive, while preserving core values of its mission. The same applies to arts and culture.



*Necessity is the mother of inventions* is another well-known proverb. The collision of exterior socio/economic/political forces and inner motivation generates the source of every creative innovation, including the production of the art magazine (O)GLED, based on the work of one artist, with texts that directly address the selected artist and others that provide a theoretical, cultural, artistic and historical background. After editions in Serbian, we present the English edition *EYE TO I* that includes parts of the first three issues in the form of *three solo shows*.

#### EXTENDED MONOGRAPHS – RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITIONS

It is getting harder every year to organize retrospective exhibition or large solo shows in a systematic manner, due to the financial constraints and significant costs that such production requires. As a consequence, artists are also deprived of the theoretical analysis of their work that usually accompanies this kind of exhibitions. Therefore, a considerable portion of the public remains unaware of the significance of the work of contemporary artists. They lose their place in the public sphere.

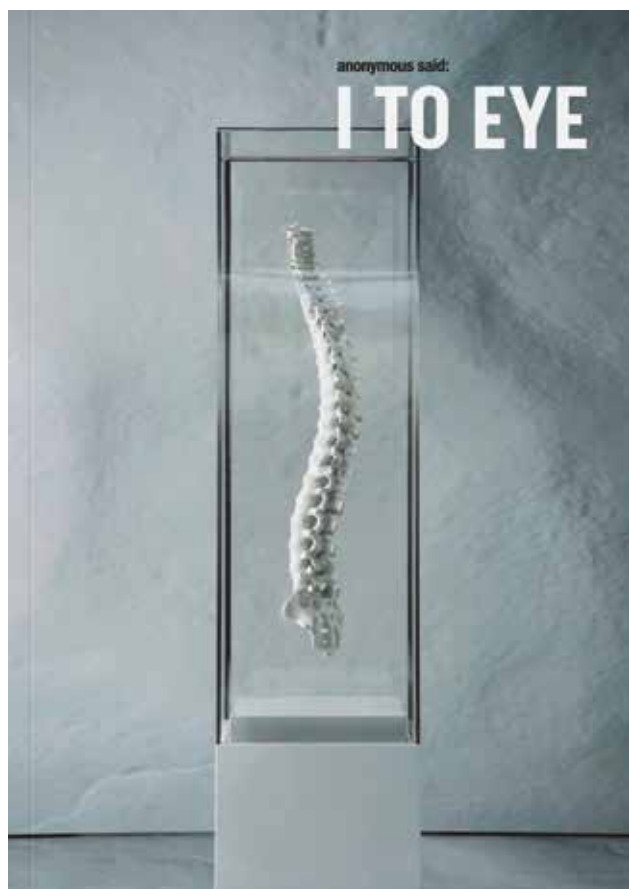
The artist selection was based primarily on the quality of their work, significance and complexity of their art practice, demanding nature of their work presentation and their unique and somewhat isolated position on the local and international art scene.

#### CURATORIAL PROJECT

*The form of the publication allowed us to establish more complex and exciting relations – between art works, theory, literature, philosophy and other social disciplines – investigating core problems set by the selected artist. It gave us an opportunity to have side by side works by influential international artists or historical figures and artworks by Vladimir Nikolić (1974), artist of the first edition of (O)GLED, Zoran Todorović (1965), artist of the second and (former artist) Goran Đorđević (1950, aka Gregor Mobius) artist of the third edition. The Magazine's structure allowed us to form a complex web of meaning and to establish wider cultural, philosophical, historical and theoretical links.*

**anonymous said:**

# EYE TO I



1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION / ARTIST: VLADIMIR NIKOLIĆ,  
NEW MEDIA AND ART, SUMMER 2021

The main preoccupation of the selected artist was the way we observe and mechanics of visual perception. This was an opportunity to position his work in the context of contemporary art practice and to investigate the central topic suggesting possible links between observations made by most influential international and regional art critics, theoreticians, writers (among others John Berger, Paul Virilio, Jovan Čekić, Jasmina Čubrilo, Peter Handke and Karl Ove Knausgård).

Just several months after the appearance of this issue, Vladimir Nikolić was elected to represent Serbia at the 59<sup>th</sup> Venice Art Biennale, with the work *800 m* that was on the front cover of *(O)GLED*, as the first presentation of this work.

2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION / ARTIST: ZORAN TODOROVIĆ,  
BIOPOLITICS AND ART, WINTER 2022

The second edition is devoted to the artist and professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, known for his radical approach to the body and the investigation into possible uses of the human body as medium, tool, and material for art projects. To approach this complex and mentally and physically challenging and powerful body of work, we proposed the examination of the relation between biopolitics and art that is at the center of Zoran Todorović's interest.

To facilitate understanding about such a radical artwork practice, we invited renowned art historians, philosophers, curators from Serbia and the region (Mario Kopić, Miško Šuvaković, Goran Gocić, Zoran Gajić, Sunčica Ostoić, Olga Majcen Linn, Jurij Krpan) and placed their contributions alongside studies written by their international colleagues.

3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION / ARTIST:  
GORAN ĐORĐEVIĆ (GREGOR MOBIUS),  
NEW ATLASES OF ART, SPRING 2022

The latest edition is based on the work of an artist who has, during his career, mainly addressed questions of institutional critique, copies, authorship. A significant part of his concerns (as Goran Đorđević) deals with the question of art narratives as constructs created by Western civilization. On the other side, under the name Gregor Mobius, he has started to investigate semantics of a visual language that led him to DNA Semantics and questions of Biosphere as self-conscious entity.

Bearing in mind the ongoing war, the creation of new maps and geopolitical boundaries that we are not fully aware of, *New Atlases of Art* are trying to comprehend the complex nature of art system in general, influence of politics on it, and at the same time to explore first images of the world, suggested by the artist's explorations and the last images of the world – in the form of AI, Facebook, Biosphere or the Aesthetics of the Catastrophe. Among others, contributors to the third issue are Jelena Vesić, Nikola Dedić, Saša Janjić, Petar Jevremović, while contextual analysis includes works by Vernadski, Lynn Margulis. The third issue explores what connects Gregor Mobius, Bach's fugues, Leonhard Euler, Freud, Sefer Yetzirah, Leibniz and Kate Crawford's and Vladan Joler's AI Atlas.

The issues feature a hundred and twenty pages, printed in large format (20 x 29 cm) and in full color, providing a comprehensive visual and tactile experience. 🍷



# MUSEUM AUDIENCE AS GESAMTKUNSTWERK (IN AN ATTEMPT)

By DUŠICA POPOVIĆ

*Museums are institutions which actively contributed to the making of a modernistic world image. But in its contemporary variant, they are surely able to offer to the audience certain frames of orientation within the general cognitive cacophony of the present times. Still, museums often succumb to the prevalent anti-intellectual climate, thus pandering to the expectations of a supposed ignorant audience, which prefers sentimental, technical (interactive models), technological (conservation) or anecdotal programs, rather than those of an analytical character.*

Modern humanistic education is nowadays certainly a part of the history of educational paradigms, with regard to its alleged political, gender, social, class... neutrality and abstract equality, which in fact implies ideological, religious, ethnic etc., formation of reception (with omitting not only the experiences of particular individuals but also entire *unsuitable* population strata). This type of education was grounded on the rationalization of dominant social hierarchies and exclusions. However, we also consider its replacement in contemporary public and educational discourse to be problematic. It is a matter of disregarding the *conservative*, meaning the cognitive, and favoring (more pleasant) emotional aspects

of comprehension as *more immediate* and *more democratic* forms of learning. By emphasizing the affects, through routine relativization and through spreading all (nonargued) standpoints of unequal value and complexity, contemporary culture represses and devalues critical culturological approaches, since they are not met with general understanding, commercial profitability and/or social visibility. At the same time, one of the most important features of contemporary media and society in general is the myth of the accessibility of education. In practice, the contemporary individual is met with deafening and thus paralyzing noise of mediatised information. The disoriented individual is able to seize only fragmented,

de-contextualized and popul(ar)ized narrations in the function of hasty position assuming: to have an opinion about everything became more important than the content of the opinion itself, bearing in mind that such a thought process is less reflective of always questionable knowledge, and more so of the (unquestionable) ideology of *empowerment* as a value in itself.<sup>1</sup> Museums are institutions which actively contributed to the making of a modernistic world image. But in their contemporary variant, they are surely able to offer to the audience certain frames of orientation within the general cognitive cacophony of the present times. Museums rather often succumb to the prevalent anti-intellectual climate, thus pandering to the expectations of a supposedly ignorant audience, which prefers the sentimental, technical (interactive models), technological (conservation) or anecdotal programs, rather than those of an analytical character. That is why museums sometimes emphasize activities with a limited range, especially on the occasion of various holidays and events such as March 8<sup>th</sup>, Valentines Day, Museum Night, etc. Besides that, participative projects with the audience are often reduced to improvisation and superfluity and education is transformed into an external entertainment section. This is the reason why the question arises: to what extent does culture, in the narrow sense, already play only an instrumental part and whether its survival in the future will be possible only in the form of an *auxiliary discipline* of the entertainment industry? Is audience work necessarily a function of the management of *positive thinking*, i.e., the vulgarized variant of positive psychology instead of epistemology?

Also, through the very fact that they play an important part in the formation of social consciousness, contemporary museums take on considerable

*Also, by the very fact that they play an important part in formation of social consciousness, contemporary museums take on themselves a considerable responsibility. However, it seems that certain museums, after contextualization and (declarative) de-fetishization of the museum object, do fetishize the audience, i.e., the care about the society, most often in the form of ethical Kitsch: from former implicit despising of the audience i.e., modernistic exhibitions incomprehensible to wide auditorium (or avant-gardistic explicit cursing of the audience) to present babbling to the audience (and literally by making not only musical programs for babies). Programs of doubtful qualities aspire to attract and keep the audience since the priority is participating – in participation.*

<sup>1</sup> Each epoch aims at reduction of human nature by giving the advantage to certain psychological type of a person as a desirable standard of humaneness, independent from real need and personal profile of her/his contemporaries. For instance, in pre-modern times modesty and piousness were in demand, in the age of modernity it was revolutionarity and progressivity, and today it is self-confidence and assertiveness.



responsibility. However, it seems that certain museums, after contextualization and (declarative) de-fetishization of the museum object, do fetishize the audience, i.e., caring for the society, most often in the form of ethical kitsch: from formerly implicitly despising the audience i.e., modernistic exhibitions that are *incomprehensible* to the wide auditorium (or avant-garde explicit audience cursing), to present babbling to the audience (and literally making musical programs for babies). Questionable programs aspire to attract and retain the audience since the priority the priority is in participation. Participation replaces reflection, moreover, it often functions as a populist substitute for reflection. Collecting and exhibiting objects/ideas/experiences is replaced with gathering and *fostering* the audience. It seems that contemporary museums sometimes try to look like rather unusual institutions of social care (since they still have certain symbolical capital), where visitors are invited mostly to feel accepted and learn something only along the way, in the shadow of reified/realized social adjustment. Thus, inclusivity transformed itself from the means and the precondition of a much wider social and cultural effectiveness into

an aim and an axiological criterion. Inclusivity as imperative good of our times appears to assume the features of classical disinterested aesthetics of the beautiful: the juncture of these two produces only seemingly the oxymoron *disinterested ethics*, which could be the term for those ethical principles of inclusion that do not have a real (educational) purpose or, at least, have doubtful educational reach.

Consequently, following the logic of affective priorities, of disinterested, i.e., purposeless ethics and/or perhaps all the more influential convictions of deep ecology<sup>2</sup>, further development could involve making exhibitions, guiding tours, workshops, etc., for house pets or – house plants. But it is not certain whether such gestures would represent institutional self-criticism/self-parody or rather the self-exaltation of socially responsible politics of the museums. Therefore, we leave this topic open-ended. ♡

<sup>2</sup> Deep ecology is a holistic environmental philosophy which advocates the inherent value of all living beings, and rearranging human societies in accordance with such a standpoint.



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INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

## The Power of Museums