

Jadran Kale

Muzej grada Šibenika i Sveučilište u Zadru
Šibenik, Zadar
Croatia
jkale@public.carnet.hr

UDK 069.02:39]:316.77

Preliminary communication

Received: March 2, 2011

Accepted: March 17, 2011

How to Present Tradition *in situ*: the Task of the *Rossini and Matavulj Buildings in Šibenik Project*

The Rossini and Matavulj are two buildings in the center of Šibenik which can be connected with the possibilities of ethnographically exhibiting them in close association with their social environment. After delineating the pertinent work done in the museum, the space and the urban ambience, the author elaborates upon the contours of the project with the emphatic participation of interested civil groups. The concluding section underlines the advantages and the disadvantages of the inclusive museum use of these spaces and the theoretical implications they have for today's professional, cultural and social status of the museum.

Keywords: civil role of museums, intangible cultural heritage, museum policy, oral history

The social role and the purpose of the museum undergoes changes and an interesting example of what the museum is supposed to do is the management of cultural practices whose material results are stored in its holdings. It can seem that amongst museum exhibits we find ourselves within a Romantic wood in which we cannot see the trees of cultural goods, people, communities and their unfolding cultural practices. “Even material remains, no matter how old they are, are perceived and used in the present – and so, paradoxically, they are ageless, endlessly transforming as the society around them changes” (Molyneaux, 1994: 2). The authenticity of ethnographic objects does not prove their status of being ancient or original but rather the choice of usage and reception because many “older” or “more original” objects take second place faced with those that are able to distinguish and promulgate the community according to current opinion.¹ “Tradition” never existed as an unquestionable assembly of objects but rather as a social relation towards some amongst them (Smith, 2006:

¹ Concerning this point an analysis of pictorial motifs used for cover designs of expert publications, musical motifs in announcements of expert-led public festivities like folklore festivals etc. could be an interesting endeavour.

11-43). Such experiences of traditional culture span the extremes of homage or humiliation. On the one side is the ability to create an environment of spiritualized festivity whose values are shared by both the performers and the viewers. Certain answers to the survey question put to folk dancers - "how they feel when they are wearing their costumes" (Saliklis, 1999: 225-227)² - bear witness to this fact. On the other hand, a theoretician of music on the global level maintains that "in today's world, to emphasize 'traditional culture' is not, in my view, a particularly responsible or constructive thing to do, however attractive it may be from the point of view of showmanship" (Hudson, 1991: 460).³ Ethnographically speaking, no individual culture can any longer come upon us with the untouched originality of its lived culture.⁴ In like manner, there no longer exists a settlement with one's own culture whose streets are walked by people dressed in folk costumes of choice, verified by the museum to bear witness, according to the principle *pars pro toto*, to the aesthetic and the integrity of one's own whose culture. Since the 1960ies its has become clearer that such isolated places never even existed. Ranging from isolated peoples to one's own remote island or mountain settlements, isolated places untouched by cultural interactions, where the observer could recognize pre-civilizational beginnings, departure points of evolution, origins or treasuries, uncorrupted noble savages or ecologically-sustainable traditionalist, were no more than a composite picture made to meet the needs of one's own self-questioning.⁵

² The author carried out the survey in 1993 as part of her dissertation amongst two hundred members of ten Litvanian folk groups receiving back 153 filled forms (Saliklis, 1999: 232).

³ "I am depressed when I watch television reports of the visits of royalty, presidents, or other distinguished personages to African countries and see black people performing 'tribal' dances in front of the guests from abroad. Why, I ask myself, is it felt necessary or desirable to put on these demonstrations of long-outmoded customs, which always feel to me like ethnographical museums brought to life? I find it degrading and wonder if the dancers and singers do, too. (...) This [...] is my major criticism of ethnographical museums: that by their over concentration on 'traditional cultures', they encourage a patronizing and escapist attitude toward the people involved." (Hudson, 1991: 463 i 464). In Croatian circumstances, compare the public debates which warn that in the redistribution of social resources what is left over for the local communities is onyl the role of acting as the folklore animator within someone's new, foreign market products (for example, "Our space will be taken over by the large corporations, foreigners will reap the profits while we will dance folklore.", in the article "Hrvatski turizam ne može oponašati Karibe!" (Croatian tourism cannot imitate the Caribbean) which the Internet portal ezadar.hr published on June 17, 2011 at the address www.ezadar.hr/clanak/hrvatski-turizam-ne-moze-oponasati-karibe).

⁴ "One thing is certain. We have arrived at a stage in history where it is increasingly improbable that any ethnography of a distinctive people or culture is going to surprise anyone because of its stunning uniqueness and exotic nature." (Barret, 2002: 16).

⁵ "(...) The history of the theory of primitive society is the history of an illusion. It is our phlogiston, our aether; or, less grandly, our equivalent to the notion of hysteria. (...) The theory of primitive society is about something which does not and never has existed. (...) At the same time, criticism is not my main concern. I am more interested in accounting for the genesis of the illusion. The persistence of the model is peculiarly problematic since various of its basic assumptions were quite directly contradicted by ethnographic evidence and by the logic of evolutionary theory itself. The difficulties were clearly stated by some of the leading scholars in the field (notably Westermarck, Boas and Malinowski). Notwithstanding, social anthropologists busied themselves for over a hundred years with the manipulation of a fantasy – a fantasy which had been constructed by speculative lawyers in the late nineteenth century. This is a fact which must provoke thought, and not among anthropologists alone." (Kuper, 1988: 8).

In the halls of ethnographic museums where folk traditions are stored, which were constructed according to the principles of 19th century spiritual tenets in the centers of capital cities,⁶ the current generation of ethnologists has recorded changes in the needs of its visitors which are without precedent since the time when the interest for folk culture was established (Brstilo and Jelavić, 2010). Museum ethnography as an imperial science – offspring of an evolutionary anthropology (Shelton 2000.), became historical artifact emptied of capacities of a working tool. Within museums in general and particularly in the ethnographic ones, visitors are being transformed into users and furthermore into participants of the evoked cultural practices (Šola, 1998; Karp, 1992: 12),⁷ while the passive public has acquired an authoritative voice of a participating community (Karp, 1992a: 13).⁸ The exhibition is the arena where such cultural cooperation and confrontation continuously takes place (Karp, 1992a: 21-22). As far as exhibitions, maintaining that they represent the true and authentic image of the people and their culture, are concerned it is only certain that they represent “hegemonic practices that reproduces the values and privileges of the center”, because claims connected with prescriptively perceived cultural authenticities could be strategies of oppression as well (Karp, 1992a: 26).

When in 1969 Brno, Bauer summarized the discussion of the museologist seminar in Brno, defining the museum as a social institution, he placed special emphasis on the environment in which the museum carried on its activities (Bauer, 1970: 27). He saw the development of the institutions as dependent on them adhering to broader professional standardizations that evade the narrow interest of the community (ibid., 30 and 32). Earlier the experience of the museum frequently depended on their immediate administrators but henceforth the institutions were to be depersonified and their functions objectivized (ibid., 27 and 35). The changed view of the life of the museum within their communities and the connections with the community from which the museum objects derive was effectively presented at the gathering “Museums and Communities” which was held in the Smithsonian in 1990 (Karp et al., 1992). Voices from local communities, either amongst the “First Nations” of one’s own country or from transoceanic localities, came to the fore in the discussions which lasted from the beginning of the 1970ies and irretrievably transformed the museum view of native culture (Hallam and Street, 2000; Peers and Brown 2003). “Here the community

⁶ “All of this was done in the cities and for its inhabitants. As it is, peasants, “living somewhere distant”, were neither good nor original enough in comparison with these museum projections. The urban people continued to despise or ignore real peasants. Because of this, museologically speaking, work in the field was more like a scientific robbery but justified by the seriousness of the scientific interest which, independently of everything else, always truly existed. Curators rarely thought to see their institution as anything more than a place where they indulge their scientific interests.” (Šola, 2003: 92).

⁷ “We had to see our *visitors* as *users*, which is to say that our success could no longer be measured in terms of number of visits, but in terms of repeated, and thus sustained, action.” (Bradburne, 2001: 77).

⁸ Compare concept of “collaborative and community-controlled research” in nature conservation: “collaborative research involves a partnership of equal parties in which local communities are treated as expert collaborators” (Posey i Dutfield 1996: 140). As an example one could cite “Potato Museum” established by local communities in “Potato Park” (“El Parque de la Papa”) in Peru. Biodiversity reserve is a place for the museum and biocultural register. Register is needed as a legal tool for collective property over genetic heritage, contested in biotechnological patents’ procedures.

demand is not a place in an accepted scheme, but for revision of the scheme itself (...) and these relations take the form of questioning the claims of truth and beauty made by museums and their staff”, while the unarbitrated dialogue becomes multifaceted and even contradictory (Karp, 1992: 2 i 11; 1992a: 29). The same period saw the formation of cultural, economic and legal viewpoints pertaining to intangible cultural goods whose collective owners are their local communities, conceived as environments for creating an accommodating and dynamic culture in which the locals are not only the “bearers” but also the creators and owners (Gibson 2005: 287).

In what follows an attempt will be made to present and explain one such situation of the emergence of an inclusive and developmental ethnographic museum which was assigned by the local community the project of exhibiting tradition according to museum norms *in situ*, on the very site of its documentary formation and its coming to life.⁹ It has to do with the Rossini and Matavulj buildings, one in the very middle of the historical core of Šibenik and the other located on its edge. The article concludes with a recapitulation of the exhibition and general museum perspectives of this project and with remarks pertaining to its professional and theoretical implications.

The historical interest for the folk tradition in Šibenik is a textbook commonplace. It is in this city that Croats during the late Middle Ages for the first time celebrated folk expressions and their comparisons with antique models (Šižgorić, 1981 [1899]), that the first dictionary of the Croatian language incorporated local terms which we as such recognize up to our own times (Vrančić, 1971 [1595]).¹⁰ Alberto Fortis in the spirit of the Enlightenment wrote impressive pages about the folk culture of the area while Nikola Tommaseo¹¹ did so in the Romantic manner, whilst in the XXth century explorations were conducted here which defined both the classic corpus of the ethnological field of interest and its methodological vocabulary. It is particularly interesting how the only Croatian vigorous investigation of the culture of a local community was conducted under the auspice of the city of Šibenik which ethnologists carried out with the collaboration of other auxiliary scholarly disciplines and which culminated in the publication of a monograph and a series of smaller journal articles (Rihtman-Auguštin: 1982). The first museum in the form of an archeological collection of stone monuments was founded in 1925 on the civil initiative of the Šibenik dean Rev. Krsto Stošić marking the occasion of the celebration of the millenary celebration of the historical Croatian kingdom. The buying of ethnographic material took place depending on the sporadic offers made by the populace while systematic ethnological interest, as a necessity amongst other museum activities, emerged as a consequence of the extension of available space and the refurbishing of the historical Duke's palace in 1975 to meet the needs of a permanent exhibition, which opened in stages in 1979 and 1986 and closed in 1991 due to the war, and because

⁹ Terminologically, “developmental” museum follows “traditional resources” (used instead of “folklore” or “traditional knowledge”) in Gibson 2005: 29-31.

¹⁰ For example, the terms “pridivak”, “lakomica” or “lupeščina”. For ethnographic application see Kale, 2008: 115.

¹¹ Starting in 1840 he collected some three hundred folk songs. The person who told him most of them was Nikola Blaće in Šibenik (Drndarski, 1989: 162).

of the launching of an ethnographic book series at the end of the 1970ies and lasting to the present.¹² Parallel to the preparations undertaken for the permanent exhibition devoted to the history of Šibenik, the neighboring palace Rossini was also being secured for museum use.

Within the city core: the Rossini palace

The Rossini palace is a three-storey building whose stylistic trademarks begin with XIIIth century Romaesque features.¹³ Its name pertains to its last owner and not to its earlier inhabitants. A researcher of the medieval Šibenik city core considers it to be the beginning of the representative building of houses in the city, after the epoch characterized by isolated city towers standing amidst the street outlay of the then contemporary wooden architecture (Zelić, 1999: 117, 193). Today it is the last remaining integrally owned larger medieval residential whole in the city of Šibenik with some preserved elements of the historical culture of habitation such as stone sills on the windows, profiles of inner doors and etc..

A number of entrances lead into the palace while its surface area in addition to existing openings is satiated by subsequently walled in doors and windows. The axis of the stair way which leads from the historical New Gate of the waterfront city walls takes us to the portal of the palace on the southern facade of the building while the space of the small square whose other side is formed by the facade of the small church of Pp. Barbara is in reality the still visible consequence of the aerial bombardement of

¹² The island tome of the series “Folk Creativity of the Šibenik Region” was published in 1980, the littoral tome in 1984 while the hinterland tome was published in 1988. On the suggestion of the reviewers Milovan Gavazzi, Božidar Finka, Jerko Bezić and Lovro Županović, the series was conceived as a series of five books in which the four ethnographic tomes (with the ethnography of the city of Šibenik as the fourth book) would be followed by a concluding analytical tome of ethnological studies. Ivo Furčić (1927-2001), teacher in the Music School, melographer and author of music initiated the project and gave it its ethnographic tone. Recorded conversations, of tellings, singing and his own folklore reviews for broadcasting remained in the museum documentation after Furčić passed away. The illustrative nature of the books were greatly enhanced by photos of folklore stagings that took place on the occasion of the ethnographic visits to the villages. The photo negatives of these have also been preserved. In 1997 Furčić completed the ethnographic material for the fourth volume for which archival investigations continued to be conducted.

¹³ The often emphasized historical fact that Šibenik is the oldest city on the coast built by Croats has an unusual correlation with this period of time. In the XVIIth century Ivan Lucić of Trogir wrote: “In 1263 the custom still reigned to summon all the people in front of the church of St. Jacob and that gathering was called the *‘skupština’* (assembly) and the people lived according to Croatian customs.” (according to: Vrandečić, 2002: 23). To Lucić this folk custom merited mention because he was referring to the conclusion of the peace treaty with the people of Trogir on February 7, 1263. (Codex diplomaticus V: 749). This is at the same time the first mention of public gatherings on this place alongside the one-time church of St. Jacob, above the public cistern on the bluff and in the vicinity of the palace which we today recognize as the Rossini palace (Zelić, 1999: 123). Concerning the folk tradition of folk gatherings in the region see Kale, 2009: 240, footnotes 17 and 24. A rare image of the local plebian from that time exists on a fresco of the not distant small church of Our Lady of Srma.

Šibenik at the close of WWII.¹⁴ Climbing the main street of the historical city core from the cathedral upward, this southern facade of the Rossini facade is replaced by its eastern facade which is memorably ingrained into the perspective of the street. The lowering of Kalelarga street around this corner of the Rossini palace eloquently bears witness to the chronological priority of buildings in forming the main life-line of old Šibenik, to the transversal of the steep city center and the only street without steps. This is why the pedestrian approaching the cathedral cannot avoid from this side the emphatic frontal experience of the palace but also owing to the fact that the “square” in front of this facade came into being because the house destroyed in the 1944 bombardments has not been rebuilt so that the pedestrian’s view broadens exactly in front of the Rossini palace. The third free side of this palace is in the side street which connects by a shortcut Kalelarga street with the Loggia, the city hall. From this side one enters the courtyard with the stone crown over the cistern where the smaller part of the palace conjoins the remaining part of the residential bloc in front of the Šibenik cathedral.

As this whole part of the city, the palace stands on a steep stone foundation. The difference in height between the courtyard entrance and the portal, through which one enters in front of the small church of St. Barbara into the space underneath the ground floor in the perspective of Kalelarga street, is about four meters. As a spatial result there are altogether five stories of different dimensions, the courtyard and the separate volume of the cistern whose base is at the height of the ground floor on the eastern facade. If a pedestrian would extend his walk on Kalelarga street according to the axis of the street, he would end up through the walls in the cistern with its characteristic vault arches. The entire usable space of the building amounts to around 700 square meters. After city offices moved into more practical accommodations in 1975, the Museum began to use the upper stories of the palace as storage rooms, gradually taking possession of the whole building.¹⁵ In the Museum itself, the professional staff, alongside the spatial extension of the institution into the spaces of the Duke’s palace, grew in number for the first time at the beginning of the 1970ies. It was then that alongside historians, archeologists, a historian of art and a restorer were engaged on the project task of creating a permanent exhibition of the history of Šibenik.

Within the permanent exhibition in the Duke’s palace building the ethnographic heritage was presented only in one show-case with clothing of city common folk, which as part of the task of permanently exhibiting the ethnographic holdings was intended for the Rossini palace. A number of essential circumstances changed before the time when it became possible to realize this task. First of all, owing to the slow return of the

¹⁴ This was part of the Duke’s palace in which is located the City of Šibenik Museum. From the small un-interpelated square one has a view of the covered atrium in the complex of the space of the permanent exhibition.

¹⁵ Today the eastern facade part of the ground floor is not owned by the museum. Its smaller segment is owned by the city and used by the Philatelic Club while the larger is a privately owned shop. Because it is listed in the Registry of Cultural Goods, the local government has the right to be the first buyer. Because of a lack of money this transaction through which the last space of the palace would be bought has not yet commenced.

former permanent exhibition and to the reduction of capital investments in culture, it became clear that the new permanent exhibition could not be put up in the manner that the the Duke's palace building had been adapted for.¹⁶ This encouraged the possibility of carrying out the project in stages and of thematizing the floors of the building and thusly reduced the chances of having an integral static permanent exhibition.

Such an articulation of the task of the museum opened the door for the profiling of visitor and user groups. Alongside the main determinant of accepting visitors, this being the direction taken by the visitor on his way to the cathedral from the city center, this meant that the entrance into the palace from the axis of Kalelarga street would ultimately lead to the exit from the palace downward by the street leading to the cathedral and on the other hand would be different than the manner of accepting visitors through the court-yard entrance. That is why in the preparation of the project by stages, the main entrance, which on an axis leads to the acoustic space of the cistern, on the suggestion of the author of this paper, was conceived as the beginning of a museum complex devoted to oral and singing contents with collections of oral history and recordings of Dalmatian harmony-singing groups as thematically digitalized material. On this site we also understand oral history as a means of participation for the local community in redefining the authority of museum narration (Adair et. al., 2011). Its documentation base is represented by Ivo Furčić's ethnographic record and tape library together with later recordings.¹⁷ The collection of material for the fourth, city tome of the book series "Folk Heritage of the Šibenik Area", with its characteristic sequences devoted to the authorial modifications and imitations of the folk melos, provided a foundation for the creation of a publically accesible documentary fund of the history of Dalmatian group singing in Šibenik. In this sense, as if a made-to-order civil partner, the Association *a capella* of Dalmatian singing groups in the Šibenik-Knin county was formed in 2003 at the height of the renewal of interest for the Dalmatian group way of singing and afterwards revived its activities in the spring of 2011.¹⁸ As it turned out, an important common need of the singing groups was a place where to rehearse – a need that could be met because of acoustic reasons by the Rossini palace historical cistern – and a place where written scores could be consulted

¹⁶ Excepting the gradual buying of space, the only investment in the Rossini palace was an intervention on the roof construction at the beginning of 1986.

¹⁷ Furčić's record and tape library encompasses around 150 hours of voice recordings. Among the later ethnographic recordings are wholes such as the 12-hours interview with one of the last Šibenik field laborers Ivo Ercegović-Kutlić, which served as an introduction to other recordings which were made in the manner of *life story*-tellings. During the last years video-technique was used. The recordings done by my colleague Marija Krčević in the local community achieve a recognizability and the expansion of the circle of tellers through her weekly newspaper column "Telling of Lost Time" (since 2009) and a selection of fragments on the Internet channel youtube.com/kazivanja. A distinct collection of tellings has been made by the local recordings and evocations of the war-time culture of life for the research project of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore entitled "Homeland War and War Victims in the 20th Century: ethnographic aspects" which was conducted from 2002 to 2006..

¹⁸ The number of Dalmatian groups is increasing. At the time this article was handed in 15 (14 of whom were active) of them were registered as societies. I express my thanks to Filian Vuletić from the Association of Societies *a capella* of Singing Groups of the Šibenik-Knin county.

and where various documentation material connected with the singing group movement such as had been gathered since 1970 could be collected.

Considered from the ethnological point of view, the Dalmatian group type of singing is a characteristically urban phenomenon whose collective memory is practically delimited by living generations. The museum catering to groups engaged in this kind of singing therefore meant providing a space for generating a characteristically urban content which is held to be one of the most recognizable cultural features of Dalmatia. In that sense the museum interaction of users, performers and visitors, by sticking to the cultural products that still retain a clear ethnographic marker, would not betray the urban tissue of the historical palace in which cultural changes are evident in the different stylistic features interwoven into the stonework of the entire building. The sung ethnographic contents in the space of the ground floor would have to connect with oral history and with the verbal testimonies of the culture of living. The ethnographic recording of memories of war and of periods of political maltreatment which the Zagreb association Documenta undertook in 2011 was coincidental with this development.¹⁹ In Šibenik war memories continuously play an important role because an armed insurrection took place here on August 17, 1990 while at the outbreak of hostilities in 1991 the city had to defend itself against a renegade army. If we compare the older idea of an ethnographic permanent exhibition with the contours of the museum as a place where cultural products are not only exhibited but are also created, it is obvious how the tectonics of the new project task, articulated according to the needs of interested groups who emphasize important cultural practices, redefines the work that the museum as such has to do within its local community, in front of visitors and society.

The remaining part of the contents accessible on the ground floor in the Rossini palace is connected to the court-yard and the auxiliary entrance into the building. Valorizing the positive achievements of *Baštionica* ("Heritage Playground"), the educative part of the exhibition of northern Dalmatian folk costumes and culture of dressing that was held in 2002, this space is intended for preschool and school-attending children.²⁰ In this sense the court-yard whose surface is some 50 square meters has a special performative potential and perhaps it would be possible to combine the connected rooms in the interior of the palace with the mezzanine. The civic support for the design and the use of this part of the palace is founded in the continuous cooperation with nursery-school teachers, elementary and secondary school teachers who during the the years-long visits they paid the Museum on their own initiative have profiled themselves as a distinct group of users.²¹ The program of presenting history through first person singular narration, with construed composite characters of a

¹⁹ The project was presented in Šibenik at May 12, 2011.

²⁰ The exhibition was held in Zadar (April-July 2001) and Šibenik (January-October 2002, with 9820 visitors), while "Baštionica" attracted 30 group visits with 800 children with its seven games, cartoon and children exhibit labels. Croatian Ethnological Society awarded its annual "Milovan Gavazzi" award to "Baštionica" as the best ethnological achievement in 2002.

²¹ In addition to educative initiatives, an interesting situation occurred before the celebration of the city holiday in 2010 when the theme of heritage, which the county department responsible for schools assigned as theme, motivated a number of classes to visit the Museum.

Šibenik pair from 1895 for the need of whose presentation costumes from the museum holdings were replicated,²² but also the didactic ensemble in the form of an enlarged Šibenik cap which with various teaching aids (replicas, models, casts, mannequins and others) is lent out for use in Šibenik kindergartens and schhols were accommodated to meet their needs.²³ In consultations with counselors and managers of entertainment programs for celebrating childrens birthdays, on the basis of their experience it turned that in this part of the palace during weekday mornings it would be best to target elementary school and kindergarten groups. Evenings would be the appropriate time for childrens' workshops with the welcome participation of parents while weekends would offer the opportunity for the celebration of childrens' birthdays in the traditional manner and similar gatherings. An adequately organized space supported by a professional staff would enable profiled activities associated with the children spending the night in the museum.²⁴

Both the first and the second program from the ground floor would serve as an introduction to the remaining museum programs of the building, including the polyvalent hall on the higher story, the exhibition core of the permanent exhibition and the study cabinet with the open storeroom of city crafts and handicrafts on the uppermost floor. This additionally corroborated the importance of collaboration with various groups propagating cultural practices because the museum processing of techniques characteristic for city interactions has led to the incorporation of the tradition of sewn lacework of the Šibenik region into the intangible cultural works heritage in the Registry of the Cultural Products of the Croatian Republic,²⁵ as well as to preparations for making the proposal to incorporate in like manner the skill for making the Šibenik button,²⁶ while the broader effort for incorporating the North Dalmatian polychromatic embroidery on "material" is being made by the National Museum in Zadar (Žuvanić, 2011). Another solution of the same type that surfaced in the procedure after an application was made by a tradesman signified the growing interest of the local community for for this region's version of the the red cap – for the "Šibenik cap". As far as buttons and caps are involved those most interested are the tradesmen who as a rule are interested in close inspections of the items in the holdings and they would be the ones who would receive the greatest benefit from open-type show rooms combined with study collections and a library of professional books.

²² This being the year when electricity and street lights came to Šibenik making it the first city with an integral system of producing and distributing alternating electric energy. The setting of the date for the performance by the actors was selected by unanimous consent at the meeting of the museum curators. The program of presenting history in the first person began in 1999 and its main shortcoming was the schools' inability to host paid actors. The best results were achieved in the integrated teaching process.

²³ Presentations and discussions in city and private kindergartens and during consultations with teachers of Croatian language and literature, of figurative art, history and information science preceded its elaboration and handing it over to be used. The didatic full set was made in 2009;; see www.sibenskakapa.hr (last assessed 1. VI. 2011.).

²⁴ Meeting with the then-owner of the children playing yard Božena Bačelić and the woman responsible for the pedagogical program of the yard, the nursery-school teacher Marija Burazer on April 20, 2010.

²⁵ Through the branch of Matrix Croatica civil association in Primošten.

²⁶ On the initiative of the prominent jewelers and their guild in Šibenik.

Outside the city core: the Matavulj house

The Šibenik cap is an amalgam of the larger red cap from the Šibenik hinterland and the lower-placed and the characteristically embroidered red cap of the coastal towns and the common folk of the city of Šibenik itself. The speed-up of its production by coloring with the more accessible orange color, the simplification of the design which did away with the cone-like top, its decoration with the sewing machine instead of hand embroidery, the dilution of embroidered decorative elements to today's well-known "boula" dispensing with further embroidered stuffing and, above all, the corresponding organization of teaching girls and the supplying of material and the selling of the product made by these women-cooperatives were developments which took place in the the "Industry of Folk Embroidery" enterprise of the Matavulj family that occurred at the beginning of the XXth century. The activities of this family, encompassing clothing, distillation and industry, lasted continuously from 1844 to 1943.²⁷ Of their various products it was the Šibenik cap that achieved a certain renown. It owed its market status to the Italian annexation of Zadar and to the development of a new shape to the cap, embraced by farmers who had come into possession of the land they had previously worked for the feudal lords and symbolizing now Slav resistance against aggressive foreigners. The easily applicable expressions derived from the cap (its color and ornament) are amongst the most recognizable elements of today's Šibenik cultural identity.

Because of these reasons the first visit between January 18-24, 2010 by the Matavulj family descendents and inheritors who live in the USA, motivated by their father's and uncle's death and by the ruinous condition of the Matavulj building roof, initiated an interesting train of events.²⁸ The building is a two-storey edifice in the plebian, "Varoš" part of the city outside its walls built in the XVIIth century and extended at the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century. The total interior surface encompasses around a thousand square meters. A one-storey industrial annex dating from 1924 stands alongside the house. A part of the kindergarten "Građa" is

²⁷ On the facade of the house is a memorial plate commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Simo Matavulj. However, for the commercial history of the family the decisive role was played by his mother Simeona (Šima) born Triva and his brother Đuro whose offspring are today's dispersed decedents of the Šibenik Matavulj family. His grandfather Georgije Matavulj moved from Grbavci village nearby Bosanska Gradiška (in Bosnia) to Kosovo Polje near Knin, while Georgije's son Stevan in the XIXth century moved from there to Šibenik to marry. There is an oral history at Grbavci village about two Matavulj brothers which came there; one brother established Matavulji hamlet while other left for Dalmatia. I thank mr. Mladen Matavulj from Velika Gorica (letter dated February 10, 2011) for relaying to me these facts. According to the opinion of the onomasticist Vladimir Skračić, whom I consulted about the name, the suffix "-ulj" indicates a possessive adjective originating from Roman languages ("-ul" in proper Romanian relates to the masculine gender); I thank him for the letter dated July 4, 2011. Compare the older Šibenik surname Kožul.

²⁸ Because of the difficulties with its maintenance the building was listed for sale. On the occasion of their visit with the Mayor of Šibenik dr. Ante Županovića on January 21, 2010, the Matavulj couple offered the city the right of being the first buyer which the city administration could not accept. Strictly speaking, such municipal right does not exist because property is not listed in the Register of Cultural Goods. After second inspection, Ministry of Culture decided at January 21st 2010 that "house has lost authenticity of its former traditional style", and "it lacks style characteristics".

today located on its ground floor while the upper floor houses apartments. With the permission of the owners, the garden beyond the house, the last horticultural space of the sort in the Šibenik city core, on a number of occasions served as a gathering place for devotees of traditions associated with the cap.²⁹ From the numerous donations which the Matavulj family inheritors had given to the Šibenik Archive, the City Library and to the Museum, the collection of woven works made by girls who attended the vocational school that after 1945 was located in this building was selected for the exhibition held on June 30, 2011 to mark their return visit to Šibenik. Owing to the interest shown by the teachers in the kindergarten, located in the factory annex from the 1920ies, the exhibition format accorded with the educational concept of an art workshop inspired by the exhibited items.³⁰

On the other hand, the communication established with the owners of the building initiated a discussion regarding its future. The first Šibenik ethnographic exhibition was held in this building.³¹ Additionally, the building is interesting to the Museum because in the holdings of a number of Museum departments are acquisitions of the culture of dwelling, musical instruments, craftsman's tools, etc., which derive from this building. Furthermore, it is interesting because the Matavulj building is the last larger preserved space of the first city industrial capacities which radially studded the land belt of the historical city walls which were on a number of instances pulled down during the second half of the XIXth century (Marković, 2009: 91). As an original factory space, with evident traces of the one-time boiler-house and installations in a number of rooms, such a place offers the possibility of exhibiting the proto-industrial and industrial heritage of Šibenik,³² of particular significance for the development of the city considering the early introduction of electricity for supplying machines.³³

²⁹ This was a children's workshop around themes dealing with the Šibenik cap supervised by teachers on June 5, 2010, a projection of documentary films about the Šibenik cap on October 12 of the same year and "Whose cap is older?" on March 30, 2011. Since the house and the theatre are situated on a slope, the old horticultural arrangement in cascades allows the possibility of an amphitheatrical distribution of visitors.

³⁰ The principal of the kindergarten is Mila Kovač, while the educationist is Anka Barbača. A meeting with all the kindergarten teachers was held in the kindergarten "Grada" on May 4, 2011.

³¹ "On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the cathedral and the Eucharistic Congress in Šibenik, a cultural exhibition or better to say a number of exhibitions were organized. The renowned firm Matavulj put up an ethnographic exhibition of all possible costumes from North Dalmatia both on land and on the sea and of tiny home articles with folk ornaments. (...)" (Stošić, 1931: 221). My Museum colleague, the curator Marija Krnčević, found the newspaper article.

³² For one of the characteristic city crafts, candlemaking, the space of the Matavulj building offers practically only one possibility of permanently exhibiting two available wax chandleries. It is difficult to assume that the two-storey city chandlerie could be exhibited anywhere else than in this space. The social interaction characteristic for chandleries pertains to the minority communities within the city because the craft of making them was habitually practiced by Italian families (one of them was the Gavazzi family, one of whose members was the famous Croatian ethnologist Milovan Gavazzi – see Šestan, 1995.). Alongside the habitual needs of the Croatian population, important consumers of the product were Serbs, the Orthodox congregation, because of their characteristic liturgical needs.

³³ The first electric distribution in 1895 started at the electric plant on Skradinski buk and supplied electricity to the street lighting, to the city buildings and industrial facilities in Šibenik; when the network was expanded in 1904 it was the most powerful system of the transmission of electric energy in Europe (Marković, 2009: 94-96).

From the ethnological point of view, it was interesting to establish that in a part of the shop on the raised podium there were mannequins dressed in folk costumes made on the premises.³⁴ The design work, corroborated by documents, on fashion adaptations, modifications and paraphrases of textiles and embroideries for the modern taste, that also took place in the building, authenticates it for new atelier and workshop activities. All of these occasions provided sufficient reasons to consult leaders of significant projects initiated by civil associations which are devoted to heritage and cultural themes. The original assumption for discussion was the developmental project which accompanied the exhibition of North Dalmatian costumes held in 2002. It was then that weaving instruction for women from the Šibenik region was begun in partnership with humanitarian organisations whose goal was to make home-made looms for handiwork done at home and for cooperative employment for the souvenir market.³⁵

Discussion: dialogue; inclusion; conflict and the museum

Going by the above explanation of the museum value of both locations it is clear how the primary question was not “what museum items to exhibit?” but rather “how to exhibit tradition?” This particularly came to the fore in the Matavulj house, in the very place of genesis of, for example, the Šibenik cap – literally *in situ*. In this sense both of the places that have been described are complementary and can constitute an integral museum project. Instead of material cultural products, intangible cultural goods which are capable of generating anew objects – be they imitated, reshaped (such as the amlgaman of the Šibenik cap) or paraphrased – have better chances of being exhibited.³⁶

“This task involves not just seeking out objects and cultural materials that are representative or stylistically central. It also involves engaging in dialogue with people who stand apart from their communities or who form different communities, and it involves seeking out objects and knowledge that can be used to deny essentializing assertions of identity.” (Karp, 1992a: 31)

By the very definition of the recurringly mentioned category of the intangible cultural product, ethnographic museums thusly engaged find themselves on the interactive peak. Important guidelines are to be found in the 2003 international Convention for preserving intangible cultural heritage:

³⁴ On the basis of objects and documentation obtained for the City of Šibenik Museum in 2010.

³⁵ Training took place in Šibenik, Knin and later in Drniš. An additional consequence of this training was the establishment of the cooperatives “Tkanica” in Knin and the association “Žena” in Drniš.

³⁶ Where Đuro Matavulj approached his embroiderers with machines, a century later craftsman like Nelića Knežević used computer for embroidery implementation. Ana Udovičić and Marija Stojić, the authoresses of original digital works connected to the Šibenik cap, could be called “digital cap makers” (Kale, 2010a: 16).

“One of the most significant aspects of this Convention (...) is the central role it gives to the cultural communities (and groups and, in some cases, individuals) associated with intangible cultural heritage that is unprecedented in this area of international law. This is a response to the very specific character of intangible cultural heritage that exists only in its enactment by practitioners and, therefore, whose continued practice depends wholly on the ability and willingness of the cultural group and/or community concerned. (...) The identification of any intangible cultural heritage as such is dependent on the recognition by ‘communities, groups and individuals’ who are continuously recreating it and to whom it provides a sense of community.” (Blake, 2009: 45-47)

An elaboration of such an inclusive task assigned to the museum does not make it easy to enumerate how many profiled groups are involved here. Without them one could not even approach the task as set forth.³⁷ Nevertheless, some of their features are easily discerned. In the first place one can place the gender key because in many of its segments cultural narration is presented in the feminine mode. Without exception, in the case of the Rossini palace these are the nursery-school and elementary school women teachers who throughout the years have imposed themselves as users in need of appropriate museum programs.³⁸ In the case of the heritage of the Matavulj “Industry of Folk Embroidery” it was the cap-makers,³⁹ while during the civil initiative associated with the idea of making the Matavulj house a public good they were the women leading the most successful projects founded on the traditions and culture of this part of Croatia.⁴⁰

The other is the ethnic and the minority key. Within this discourse the Matavulj house is not symbolically identified with the entrepreneur Đuro Matavulj, but with his famous brother, the writer Simo, just as the one-time Italian community in Šibenik (Mattiazzi, Mazzoleni, Pelegrini, Poleti, Dominis, Kapeli etc.) is identified with Nikola Tommaseo’s political engagement as minister of culture of the short-lived restored Venice Republic from 1848. In such a manner the “Industry of Folk Embroidery” work

³⁷ Compare examples of local communities “as curators” in Adair, 2011.

³⁸ While amongst kindergarten teachers and their professional pedagogical staff there are no exceptions, in the circle of some two dozen interested elementary and secondary school teachers there is only one male teacher.

³⁹ All those who made the Šibenik cap were women. The exception being the first “man maker of caps” in the family of the woman, Nelica Knežević from Vodice, who initiated the process of incorporating the skill of making the Šibenik cap into the Registry of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia as an intangible cultural product. In the same manner, a biographically significant stage of the craft and industry of the Matavulj family lies in the hands of Simeona (Šima), the mother of Đuro and Simo Matavulj.

⁴⁰ Up to February 26, 2010, those responsible for the largest local projects connected with the themes of heritage and tradition (as a rule all women, all together five of them) were contacted after the visit by the Matavulj couple. On March 26, 2010 a meeting was held with those interested in the initiative to refurbish the Matavulj house. Because of the procedure of evaluation the most important aspect was European funding. As a result of organizational exploratory work and the formulation of founding documents on June 5, 2011, with collaborators from this circle, the association “Težački dom” (Commoners’ Home) was established as a first step in the direction of establishing a foundation for the civil development to be located in the Matavulj house.

from 1844 to 1943 is perceived through the eyes of the first part of the 1990ies.⁴¹ Because in 1991 Šibenik found itself to be the target of one of the first occupation offensives and reports issued by those attacking it used almost the same phrases as can be found in the prose representation of Šibenik in the work of Simo Matavulj,⁴² efforts to make the local community sensitive to the heritage and legacy of the Matavulj house is not an unambiguous dialogue. Nevertheless, the responsibility for the dialogue concerning heritage and for instructing the local community about its past lies with the majority group. In that sense the locations of authentic opuses contain an important evocative potential and “dynamic tool [that] communities use to create consensus and manage conflict from within” (Camarena i Morales 2006: 328). Keeping silent is as equal a fruitless possibility as is the monologue.⁴³ It is clear that in such a process the museum as the place of passive consumption of represented objects has gone wholly astray:

⁴¹ “They overlook the value of retrospection, minimize the importance of hindsight, and travel back to see the past as though it were the present, because for them things are explicable only in the present.” (Lowenthal, 1985: 23). The period of conflicts in the anti-Italian Croatian-Serbian political coalition in Šibenik and the publication of, for example, the short story “Count Ile Deseti and Ilija Vulinov” in Belgrade in 1889 is charged enough with the tensions of its time. The walk through Šibenik in dialogue form is written in the best manner of realistic prose. When published in abridged form this segment is usually omitted. One of the finest descriptions of Šibenik retreats into a Romantic demographic mathematics in which the čakavian-speakers from a part of the historical core of the city, some thousand of them in number, are sole Croats while the rest of the non-Italian population speak a western or southwestern Serbian language, some two thousand of them in the remaining part of the city core and some four thousand other “genuine Serbs of the purest blood” in one thousand houses of Varoš outside the city walls. However, at the end of the introduction, by summarizing about one hundred houses of the “Old Law”-inhabitants (accordingly, about half a thousand of inhabitants), it is obvious how Matavulj represents the entire non-čakavian and non-Italian speaking part of the populace as Serbs or as their descendents (Matavulj, 1964 [1889]: 14-18). However, on the basis of the available history of the intensive city life in the Matavulj house there are no traces of promoting a political program espousing a vision of Great Serbia. A number of city associations and initiatives humanitarian in nature were implemented in the house – up to the founding of the city branch of the Red Cross and a home for war orphans by Milka Bučić born Matavulj in 1945; see the documentary Matavulj holdings in the State Archive in Šibenik and in the City of Šibenik Museum. Political tensions were evident also during presentation of NGO Documenta’s oral history project in Šibenik.

⁴² As I heard it myself, the evening radio news of Radio Television of Serbia on September 18, 1991 announced that the Army had entered into “Serbian Šibenik”. The claim that all štokavian-dialect speakers are Serbs is still used as a provocation (“Red graffitos in Cyrillic script at Cinema hall in Borovo Naselje ‘Welcome to Republic of Srpska’ and ‘All of you are Serbs’; police says 10-days old graffitos were accompanied with a fresh one with ‘Kosovo’ inscription and 2x1,5 m big Cyrillic letters ‘S’ at the local post office”, news article “Againg graffitos ‘This is Serbia’, ‘Death to Croats’ in Vukovar”, “Jutarnji list” daily at 3rd February 2009.).

⁴³ In this sense the preparation for the memorial-plate to be put on the house where Nikola Tommaseo was born is of special interest. It carries verses from one of his poems chosen by a Croatian academic and is organized by the Šibenik Rotary Club. His bronze sculpture which was put up by the city administration headed by Ante Šupuk was melted down in the city factory a day after the speech given, on this very place, by the president of the Croatian government, the writer Vladimir Nazor on January 24, 1945. The photo-journal recorded the moment when Nazor (wearing a Šibenik cap which he was given as a gift) pointed a finger at Tommaseo’s monument and read: “The only Italian preferer I can see in Šibenik now is the old man Nikola Tomaseo, a man now made of bronze, cold and stiff, who was very talented and learned but who did not fully empathize with the people from whom he had come.”

“... The division between the hidden space of museum in which knowledge is produced and organized and the public spaces in which it is offered for passive consumption produces a monologic discourse dominated by the authoritative cultural voice of a museum. To break this discourse down, it is imperative that the role of the curator be shifted away from that of the source of an expertise whose function is to organize a representation claiming the status of knowledge and towards that of the possessor of a technical competence whose function is to assist groups outside the museum to use its resources to make authored statements within it. (...) If the space of museum is to become more fully dialogic, and if such statements are not to be framed within – and so, potentially, recuperated by – the official voice of the museum, in allowing the museum to function as a site for the enunciation of plural and differentiated statements, enabling it to function as an instrument for public debate.” (Bennett, 1995: 103-104)

According to its pedagogical essence, the museum as a space for the permanent exhibition format and a space for occasional exhibitions where cultural values are presented as a dictate harmonized with the ruling viewpoints of import for the political platforms of museum financiers is like Disneyland – it offers what the public desires (Bennett, 1995: 105). According to the same museum theoretician, the opposite conception of the museum as an instrument of instruction and an instrument enhancing culture and the intellectual thought of the community (*ibid.*) takes us back to the period of Bennett’s nineteenth century “birth of the museum” when they were perceived as being instruments for achieving positive social changes (Sandell, 1998: 408).

“By the 1830s there was increasing acceptance of the idea that making museums accessible to a wider public could deliver social benefits. (...) Furthermore, by the mid-nineteenth century there was increasing interest in the role which museums had to play in delivering positive social change through education. (...) Such ideals inspired a number of access-related initiatives, particularly from the national museums, including evening openings and free admission (...)” (Sandell, 1998: 409)

Ethnographic exhibition formats are places for creating cultural authorities (Karp, 2000: 199-207), contact zones in which exhibited items are not contextualised but actualized (Clifford, 1997: 193). “The ‘core product’ of the museum will continue to be its site and collections and the associated expertise of its staff, what is changing and developing enormously, however, is the huge range of both tangible and intangible elements through which visitors can access this core product.” (Black, 2005: 268-270). In such a setup museums do not follow their scientific object of study with the necessary programs of acquisition but rather the community “reinforces the group’s capacity to be a community, to imagine its identity collectively, and to project its imagination in action” (Camarena and Morales 2006: 328).

“(…) Negotiation of borders and centers are historically structured in dominance. To the extent that museums understand themselves to be interacting with specific communities across such borders, rather than simply educating

or edifying a public, they begin to operate – consciously and at times self-critically – in contact histories. (...), [like] a ‘cultural text’ that could not be read from a stable location. (...) Thus, the multiplication of contexts becomes less about discovery and more about negotiation, less a matter of creative curators having good ideas, doing research, consulting indigenous experts, and more a matter of responding to actual pressures and calls for representation in a culturally complex civil society.” (Clifford, 1997: 204, 207 and 210)

Conclusion

If the visitor, on a task similar to the one undertaken by the secret shopper, were to have his eyes covered so as to keep hidden the physical ambience, I doubt whether he would be able to easily recognize, on the evidence of the exhibition, pedagogical and publication programs, that he is dealing with institutions in communities whose social fabric has been torn apart by war, in others whose social capital is in the midst of processes of allocation without precedent, in third ones in which a series of recognizably profiled groups holds these places as sites for the entertainment of the wealthy or the idle, or in societies which share all these features together with many others.⁴⁴ These doubts belong amongst “hard questions [which] are now being asked about the justification of museums” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1997: 1, cited in : Sandell, 1998: 403). Recapitulating Hewison (1987), Harvey (1989) and Walsha (1992), Clifford recognizes in museums the destructive effects of the globalization of capital:

“(...) a relentless erosion of ‘place’, of local and continuous senses of collective time, and the substitution of shallow, spectacular, and merely nostalgic conceptions of the past. Heritage replaces history, contributing to a hegemonic articulation of national and class interests. (...) Similar neoliberal hegemonies [are] at work wherever changing societies, engaged with expansive capitalism, represent and consume their past as heritage. The commodification of local pasts is part of a global process of cultural ‘de-differentiation.’” (Clifford, 1997: 216)

Globalization destroys ineffective producers, but at a same time “in a few cases, offers these cultures the possibility of becoming stylized and disseminating their music,

⁴⁴ Amongst the institutions that address this kind of questions are the administrations of protected parts of nature, “museums of nature in the open”, amongst which during the last decades a principle has affirmed itself known under the acronym CBNRM (*community-based natural resource management*). The authorization of native communities to administer their heritage (beginning with nature and continuing with culture) in New Zealand and Australia has been going on for almost half a century (Creamer, 1994: 135). How to protect in an administrative situation founded on the local community, for example, the rice terraces on Bali concerning which Geertz held that they represent a physical-technological-social-religious unit, with all of their accompanying features such as are parts of the museum? The skill to permanently protect them has to do with opening up intangible cultural heritage to dialogue (with its unbuilt innovation). Regarding the “*subak*” terraces see Geertz, 1980: 79. In this sense the places where the cultural heritage is opened to dialogue are simultaneously the places of ameliorating injured cultural landscapes, far from the confines of museum walls.

festivities, and culinary traditions through transnational companies” (Camarena and Morales 2006: 323).⁴⁵ As a rule, “[local] community is to be protected against threats to remove the management of resources (...) to the private sphere of exclusive monopolies” (Gibson 2005: 297). These were the reasons for a new concept of intangible cultural heritage, as a reaction of African and South-American folklore to copyright, as well as implementation of Japanese model for conservation of traditions (Lucas-Schloetter 2004.). In such a world where original goods are valued, the inclusive museum is an instrument of the process of democratization (ibid., 410), and among the results of this process are the connotations of “heritage” and “authenticity” themselves. The experience of authenticity is created in the contact zone of the cultural product, between those who establish it and those who consume its meanings. “Heritage” is a matter of one such cultural consumption without which there is no creation of new cultural values (Prentice, 2001: 22). The space of the consumption of the meanings of cultural objects is the arena of cultural production (Löfgren, 1994: 66).⁴⁶ The museum as the facility of the creative industry and the scene of participatory democracy in reality represents the ethnographic definition of the ethnographic museum. The ability to emphasize is its important professional tool.⁴⁷ The more we distance it from the monological transmission of the systems of social power and bring it closer to the ambiances of the creation of new social values – social capital as much as cultural goods – the nearer we will get to the creation of an inclusive and developmental museum.

Translated by: Stipe Grgas-Mufa

⁴⁵ “Paradoxically, while globalization has contributed to the destruction of indigenous communities, as they are increasingly dispossessed of their territory and resources, increasingly marginalized or transformed into commodities, it also increases their access to new tools to impact global awareness and defend their integrity” (Camarena and Morales 2006: 325).

⁴⁶ Creativity through consumption belongs to the theme of the cultural construction of demand which is beyond economics (far outside the “*consumer behaviour*” research), concerning which Thorstein Veblen and Walter Benjamin have written about in the sociology of culture. Newer studies are enormously anthropologized having to do with the processual spaces of culture: “Degrees of freedom in strategies of consumption reflect degrees of freedom in the constitution of life spaces, the degree to which the subject may possess a conscious strategy of appropriation of the world in the making of his own smaller space of existence, of his own life-style expressive of a given or created identity. Degree of freedom are also situated in terms of the larger social context. Creativity may be understood as variations on a given theme or as a replacement of one theme by another” (Friedman, 1994: 16).

⁴⁷ “Apart from providing accurate knowledge about other places and societies, it gives an appreciation of other experiences and the equal value of all human life, and not least, it helps us to understand ourselves. In the contemporary, intertwined world, anthropology should be a central part of anybody’s *Bildung*, that is, education in the widest sense. Anthropology can teach humility and empathy, and also the ability to listen, arguably one of the scarcest resources in the rich parts of the world these days. It can even be fun” (Eriksen, 2006: 130).