

FOREWORD

After a break of some time, we are able to publish a scholarly work of museology, this time in the field of ethnology. In this number of *Muzeologija*, we are publishing a slightly modified version of the doctoral dissertation of Zvezdana Antoš, senior curator of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, entitled *European Ethnographic Museums and Globalisation*.

In museological literature in this country, few publications deal with the new ethno-museological practice at a theoretical level. The last such instance was the collection of Proceedings from the international symposium on *Authenticity and Memorial Places: Problems, Potentials and Challenges*, of 2005, published by the Museums of Hrvatsko zagorje, “Old Village Museum” of Kumrovec. The journal *Muzeologija* also published, back in 1997, Proceedings from the symposium *The Position and Functioning of Ethno-Museums and Outdoor Museums in the Republic of Croatia with Possible Models in Europe*.

This monographic edition of Zvezdana Antoš is the outcome of her active collaborative engagement in European research and exhibition projects from the domain of ethnography, folklore studies and cultural anthropology. From this point of view, she has produced a number of important exhibitions held in the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. These scholarly disciplines have for some long time dealt with a number of current topics; they study the interrelation of tradition and contemporaneity, they problematise the issue of identity and regional diversity, deal with the relation of culture and

politics in everyday life. The result of such research is visible in the changes that have taken place in ethnographic museums in Croatia and in the world at large; in their field research, their policy for purchasing museum objects, choice of exhibition topics and in their interpretation of the museum object.

The scholarly discourse the author mastered while working on international projects facilitated the definition of the point of departure for research, elaboration and new scholarly interpretation of the mission and objectives of ethnographic museums today. The dissertation covers research into the history of European ethnographic museums, it analyses the impact of politics and ideology on museum institutions, and considers the reflections of ethnological science on the elaboration of museum exhibition conceptions.

The author has directed particular attention to reviews of new museological theories – eco-museology, econo-museology and new museology – as well as to museum approaches and trends that the discipline has developed in recent times. There are several essential changes here relating primarily to the way the actual museum object is understood. New museological practice insists on modifying the attitude to the object from the aspect of its contextualisation and broader interpretation, indeed, on the affirmation of human beings as creators of the object and bearers and transmitters of culture and cultural practice (the intangible heritage). Equally important is the promotion of regional diversities and particularities

within the framework of the work of ethnographic museums, for this expresses the reality of the world in which we live; the world of interwoven cultures, ethnicities and races.

Research areas and museum practice drawn on as widely as this have enabled the author to place ethnographic museums and collections in the country objectively and to compare the Croatian with the European ethno-museum scene. What is more, the survey covering European ethnographic museums that Zvezdana

Antoš administered in the course of her problematisation of the role and significance of the permanent display could be a good point of departure for the solution of local problems.

At a moment when the framing of the ethno-museum mission, which has to face up to the “new European reality”, is a professional challenge, the work of senior curator Antoš is extremely welcome.

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