

# The Ethnographic Museum and the New Forms of Branding in Culture: Guidelines in Accordance with ICOM-ITC Training Workshop in Museum Activities, Fuzhou, The People's Republic of China, November 2018

- The paper provides insights into the contemporary branding principles in culture. It was prompted by the workshop entitled “Promoting your Museum: Make it Relevant and Attractive organised by ICOM International Training Centre for Museum Studies”, held from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 in Fuzhou, the People's Republic of China. The presentation of the training is accompanied by contextualisation and interpretation from the perspective of operation of the Ethnographic Museum (the frame of reference is over the past decade), including the guidelines and trends in (re)programming through innovative forms of co-operation with the community as a co-creator of museum programmes. In addition, an introduction has been provided and a brief overview of the recent boom of museum institutions in China, which has been considered in terms of the ratio between the elements of quality and content – museum experience.

**Keywords:** ICOM International Training Centre for Museum Studies  
Ethnographic Museum (Zagreb)  
branding in culture, promotion of the museum, audience development

## 1. THE BASELINE – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MUSEUM ACTIVITY AND THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Until recently, and this is frequently even still the case, it has been implied that curators are sufficiently defined by their knowledge of the fundamental academic discipline that they are practicing and by the fact that they are employed at the museum. That is the situation which is not likely to be expected in the future. Moreover, its shortcomings have been visible for years, in the practice of curators faced with the increasing requirements of the polyvalent *new* museum of transdisciplinary togetherness, media synthesis and the communication of heritage (comp. Šola 1997: 219-220). Vocational, parallel or additional education for work (within the concept of lifelong learning), in a unique operational process, such as that typical of the museum, is a necessary condition that needs to be met not only in case of the curators, but also in case of all the other professions, which like the profession of the curator, do not make up, but only shape the museum, as a specific platform for words and actions of the community – the basic factor and the driving force of the museum in the forthcoming global age (or the age that is already here, at the local level).

In anticipation of changes at the level of the curriculum, assistance may be provided by both the national and the international professional associations. Among the latter, it is important to highlight the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which, striving to create the museum of the future, organises a large number of capacity building programmes of the internationally recognised standard. They are intended to improve museum practices and promote regional professional co-operation among institutions that are faced with similar challenges, wherein professional development programmes have been adapted to meet the requirements in individual fields of museum activities and designed in the way to meet both the requirements and different profiles of museum staff.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1. ICOM INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE FOR MUSEUM STUDIES

Founded in 2013, as a project in co-operation between The Palace Museum, ICOM and the National Committee of the People's Republic of China (ICOM China), ICOM International Training Centre for Museum Studies organised a total of ten workshops in Beijing thus far (November 2018), with a special edition of the workshop in Tanzania, in 2015. In figures, it amounted to 344 members of museum staff from 70 countries throughout the world (Africa, Europe, South America, and Oceania) and 24 Chinese provinces, with a certificate of a successful completion of training in different fields of museum activity.<sup>2</sup>

Held twice a year, in autumn and spring term, ICOM-ITC workshops are meticulously designed as structured programmes of active learning about the management of the

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1 According to <https://icom.museum/en/activities/research-development/icom-learning/> (visited on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

2 Information in accordance with ICOM-ITC November 2018 Training Workshop Guidebook.

museum, museum collections, exhibitions and museum education, intended simultaneously also as venues for communication of exchange of experiences about museological actualities and further development of museum institutions. The specific objective of the workshops is development of museum expertise and knowledge of young museum practitioners in developing countries, with a special emphasis on Asia-Pacific region.

## 1.2. THE WORKSHOP ENTITLED “PROMOTING YOUR MUSEUM: MAKE IT RELEVANT AND ATTRACTIVE”

The eleventh workshop entitled “Promoting your Museum: Make it Relevant and Attractive” held in Fuzhou, in the Fujian Museum, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018, is the first case of relocation of the workshop from the capital of the People’s Republic of China, Beijing. It addressed the issue of museum promotion, bringing together seven lecturers – museum experts from China, France, Brazil, Canada and Spain and 31 participants, of whom 15 participants from 9 Chinese provinces and 16 participants from different countries of the world from 5 continents, including Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Chile, Georgia, Haiti, India, Iran, Kenya, Morocco, Poland, the Seychelles, Ukraine, Vietnam and Croatia.<sup>3</sup>

During ten very intensive working days, the lecturers and workshop participants discussed the notion and methods of branding in culture, marketing trends, public relations, planning and programming, as well as the strategies of audience development, with the objective to attract new users. As an addition to the thematic workshop edition, the traditional ICOM-ITC workshop cycle of interpretation of museum objects entitled Reading Artefacts, provided the workshop attendees with an opportunity to have a close look at the valuable cultural heritage stored at the Fujian Museum, in order to acquire practical knowledge about the optimum use of museum collections or museum promotion through exhibitions and/or based on cultural exchange and co-operation.<sup>4</sup>

The topic of the workshop was discussed and explored through different programme forms, including lectures, case studies, group work, fieldwork (surveys/ interviews of museum users) and visits to museum institutions. The seriousness of the project was shown also by several months of preparation of workshop attendees in the form of collection of information through the recommended references, as well as the collection

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3 Ibid.

4 Given the constraints of this paper in terms of its volume, on this occasion the text has focused on the issue of museum branding and it is conceptually founded on sessions of an international consultant for branding, Mr Luis Marcel Mendes (“A New Shape of Branding to Come”/ “Nothing but the Truth”/ “Tell Me Something I don’t Know”), while the issues of museum audience development, interpretation of museum objects, planning of museum exhibitions, as well as museum marketing and public relations, have been left for the potential publication in the future. The addition in preparation has been inspired by an interactive workshop set (“The Millennial Mindset – An Intergenerational Approach”/ “New Audiences, New Demands. Understanding Audiences’ Preferences and Needs”/ “#Staysocial@Museums – Creating Catchy Content for Different Audiences”) by Mrs Cecilia Martin, an independent expert for strategies of branding in culture and a co-founder of *Lava Lab*, practice in reading museum objects under the guidance of the co-ordinator of ICOM-ITC, Mr Claude Faubert, a Canadian consultant for museums, as well as a lecture cycle (“What’s your Job?”/ “Money, Money, Money” / “Planning the Exhibition”) held by Mrs Yu Zhang, the founder of Yu Culture (mediation in cultural co-operation between China and the rest of the world) and a long-term employee at the ICOM headquarters in Paris.

and preparation of presentation materials, subsequently used and upgraded during the training.

### 1.3. MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT AND CHINA AS A CASE STUDY – “BOOM” AND WHAT HAPPENS AFTER IT?

The venue where the workshop is held, to a greater or lesser extent, inevitably affects the perception of the event. Selected as the venue for the last year’s autumn ICOM-ITC workshop, Fujian Museum, one of the most reputable museum institutions in the country, opened in 1993. It comprises of several museum facilities within the meticulously arranged West Lake Park (the total area covered by the estate reaches 6 hectares, of which there are 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space), with collections comprising of over 170,000 museum objects and exhibition projects that independently attracted a total of 357,600 visitors,<sup>5</sup> according to the records, – it appears impressive, even when we are aware of the abundance of the population and the fact that most users come here to have quality leisure time – walking, exercising, running, dancing or simply socialising (most frequently with their family) and enjoying nature.<sup>6</sup>

The basic information about the museum, as well as its operational policy, were presented in one of the introductory lectures held by the Museum Director, Mr Zhiyue Wu, pointing out the co-ordinated, *green* and open development as the basic priority, talents as primary resources and innovation as a guiding force of Fujian Museum (comp. Zhiyue 2018: 1). Nevertheless, innovation includes conceptualisation and design of exhibitions, strengthening of the brand of museum institution/ services, development of creative industries and new management methods, based on a well-rounded excellence of administrators – executors, professional/scientific<sup>7</sup> staff and technical staff.

The museum boom in China is currently a highly discussed phenomenon both among museum professionals and the public, directly consumed through teaching out of the classroom during field trips (Meizhou Island, as well as the cities Putian and Quanzhou) cannot go unnoticed and one cannot avoid asking oneself why? According to local testimonies, Chinese museums, currently vibrant venues abounding in life, are in stark

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5 Information dating back to October 2013 for the exhibition entitled “Splendour of the Maritime Silk Road” (2011), declared a national cultural brand. The museum itself is the winner of the Chinese Museums Association Most Innovative Museums Award 2015 comp. <http://presentations.thebestinheritage.com/2016/FujianMuseum> (visited on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

6 A research performed within the workshop cycle by L. M. Mendes, through structured interviewing of randomly selected visitors with different statistical features, performed by 10 pairs (one pair comprised of 1 Chinese and 1 international workshop attendee), on a sample of 100 users of Fujian Museum (in a broader sense). The findings concerning the motives of the visit were as follows: 69% of the interviewees stated that their reason was personal satisfaction (pleasure), while for 31% of the visitors the museum visit was prompted by their own children (comp. Mendes 2018: 3/2-3).

7 The importance of scientific research in Chinese museums was highlighted by one more introductory lecture within the workshop that, addressing the issue of innovative conservation concepts (“Hospital for Conservation”) at The Palace Museum in Beijing, which was held by Dr. Song Jirong, Director of Gugong Institute and Director of the ICOM-ITC. In a comprehensive presentation of individual conservation projects, she also addressed the issue of modern scientific and technological aspects in the approach and the introduction of modern scientific and technological methods into traditional conservation, yet preserving the unique restoration technique of the Palace Museum (comp. Song 2018: 10).

contrast with isolated, dark and dusty institutions of some thirty years ago. A part of this change was prompted by the visitors. At the time, members of the public did not have many opportunities for travelling even to the cities within their own province. Nevertheless, they are currently travelling throughout both China and the world. The latter change has resulted in the changes in terms of taste and expectations (comp. An 2018: 3). In other words, “there is currently a greater awareness of all the elements of the museum visit. People expect a higher level of both comfort and services, while the museums respond by striving to meet their requirements” (Larner 1996 according to Šola 2001: 38).

Simultaneously with the increasing economic power of China, new requirements emerge for different cultural products. The story is similar to the situations occurring in other countries that have transformed into developed economies. What is unique in case of China, is that, as opposed to Western governments that are increasingly withdrawing from the role of active investors into culture, the Chinese government has been continuously increasing its investment into heritage institutions – from RMB3.76 billion in 2006 to RMB25.85 billion in 2013 (An 2018: 3).

Not less important, museums in China have invested huge efforts in terms of comprehensive implementation of the policy of free admission, supported by government subsidies reaching RMB15 billion (\$2.2 billion) on an annualised level, over a five-year period. As a response to this stimulus, the number of visits of each (!) museum rose over 50%. Moreover, it resulted in a change in the audience structure or attraction of workers - migrants, low-wage urban workers and other groups that were previously prevented from visiting the museum for different reasons (comp. An 2018: 3).

Following the recent intensive orientation to digitisation, the Chinese museums are striving to expand their range also from the virtual aspect. In The First National Survey of Movable Cultural Heritage conducted during the period from 2012 to 2017, 64 million of museum objects were (re)digitised, as a condition for the future information sharing with the public (comp. An 2018: 3).

Perhaps the most interesting changes have occurred in the field of management in both the public and private sector. Private museums, which used to be more or less left to their own devices, had a stroke of luck due to a change in government attitude, starting from 2010. “We can look forward to continuous evolution and transformation of this strong and dynamic industry” (An 2018: 3) according to Mr Laishun An, Vice-President of the ICOM and Vice-President and Secretary-General of the ICOM China, actively involved in the ICOM-ITC workshop and the First International Forum of Young Museum Professionals (2018 International Forum of Young Museum Professionals), which was also held in Fuzhou after the workshop within The 8th Chinese Museums and Relevant Products and Technologies Exposition,<sup>8</sup> involving both the public and private sector with a view of the future.

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8 MPT Expo, a biennial exhibition, is the largest and the most influential international exhibition of museums and museum-related industry in China, organised in co-operation with the Chinese Museums Association (CMA), the Chinese Association of Natural Science Museums (CANSM) and Fuzhou Municipal Government. The 8<sup>th</sup> edition saw the participation of 600 museums and relevant corporations (comp. ICOM 2018 International Forum of Young

From the European perspective, as well as from that of a small country such as Croatia, the words *strong* and *industry* are hardly applicable when considering museum institutions, whose progress is predominantly and primarily observed through the prism of the content quality, which certainly does not exclude the importance of quantitative factors such as audience numbers and public/ private investment in culture. Furthermore, ideally, they go hand in hand with the – (i) “Croatian museum dream”, led by innovative branding, whose need is becoming increasingly obvious in the context of museum development, both at the local and the global level.

As elsewhere in the world, in China, too, the future depends on the answer to the question should the museums retain (and strengthen) their role of public service or cultural industry (comp. Šola 2018: 17). Concerning ultimate values and results, at least in theory, “like the art, the museum, too, has the task that is ultimately poetic, irrespective of how indeterminate this may sound. Museums are a metaphor and a metamorphosis of the reality, a way to understand the reality beyond, above and, perhaps next to statistical or scientific analysis” (Šola 1997: 24). To put it poetically, a *new* (Chinese) museum presents time wisely, sheds light on the soul through memories, testifies history through objects and serves the visitors – sincerely (comp. Zhiyue 2018: 11).

## **2. BE SINCERE, BE INCLUSIVE, BE DIFFERENT, HAVE AN ATTITUDE – MUSEUMS AND NEW FORMS OF BRANDING IN CULTURE**

“Telling effective stories is not easy. The difficulty lies not in telling the story, but in convincing everyone else to believe it.” (Harari 2014 according to Mendes 2018: 1/7).

### **1.1. WHAT IS (NOT) A BRAND?**

“There has always been someone who wanted to exchange something with someone else, while wondering in what way the mutual benefit could be the greatest. In its essence, marketing is a creative conflict of knowing oneself and knowing others in this exchange of interest... Museums, as public institutions, have constraints in the marketing approach. They need to preserve their functions and programmes, not only those that are ‘cost-effective’. Reconciling marketing (understood as serving the customer) and the museum mission (which frequently has an unrewarding role of pointing out *the truth*) will never be easy... It is hence more important than ever to strictly define both the museum mission and the museum products. Every museum is special and unique and so is the identity for which purpose it exists. Marketing needs to identify all the aspects of this particularity, use them for the quality of the products and subsequently divulge them” (Šola 2001: 82-84).

Publicly stated mission of the Ethnographic Museum reads as follows:

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Museum Professionals Guidebook).

“The Ethnographic Museum is an institution open to the broadest public, which in order to promote understanding both of its own culture and of other cultures and nations, as well as of learning and entertainment, collects, interprets and spreads the knowledge of material and non-material culture both in the past and present. It promotes the awareness of the need for the preservation of the ethnographic heritage and cultural identities and in that way serves both the society and the community. Upon the achievement of its objectives the Museum communicates with the visitors, institutions, interested communities and users and encourages the acceptance of ethnology as a science of peoples and their culture, as well as a positive attitude towards the overall legacy, the understanding of the world we live in, creation and deepening of scientific insights, curiosity and innovativeness.”<sup>9</sup>

In order to establish a successful communication with others, an organisation primarily requires a clear awareness of what it actually is and what it represents, just like a living organism - both a person and a living organism. A clear brand is a clear and primarily a realistic guiding concept. A gap between the message conveyed externally by the museum and its internal reality occurs too frequently and this gap, in time, inevitably becomes unsustainable (comp. Jones 2009: 7).

Upon consideration of cultural branding, different authors very frequently refer to the findings of the research performed by Robert Jones, a British university professor<sup>10</sup> and a Branding Consultant, whose conclusions are currently, after eleven years, practically present in most museum institutions throughout the world. According to the survey conducted on the sample of 100 respondents (senior managers) within the conference entitled *Communicating the Museum*, held in Venice in 2008, almost two thirds of the delegates – respondents (65%) concluded, among other things, that the brand determines the appearance of the letterhead (company stationery), signatures and leaflets of an institution. Only 23% of them stated that they believe that the brand determines the focus of exhibition programmes, while 17% concluded that the brand influences also employee behaviour (comp. Jones 2009: 6). An identical survey, albeit this time an open online survey conducted on a sample of 200 members of museum staff involved in the fields of marketing, audience development and digital media (which included 84% public and 16% private museums throughout the world), was repeated by Luis Marcelo Mendes in 2014. Some of the findings were as follows: 45% of the respondents stated that the brand of the institution was not defined in a satisfactory manner (compared with 63% from the original survey conducted in 2008). 41% of the respondents described the museum as a venue with huge, primarily unrecognised potential, 60% of whom believed that the brand was poorly defined or that work on branding has never been serious (comp. Mendes 2018: 11-13).

A brand, in its essence, is primarily neither a name, nor a logo or graphic design. It is not even (exclusively) a marketing tool, as it is actually what an organisation (in this case a museum) stands for and represents, throughout the aspects of its operations,

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9 According to <http://www.emz.hr/O%20muzeju/Povijest%20muzeja> (visited on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

10 University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom.

primarily its programmes. The brand answers the question *why* and, in this sense, it is of vital importance for every institution (in culture). Why should the audience visit us? Why should a city or the state provide the financing? Why should companies provide the support? Why should expert associates join us? Why should anyone care about us? And, last but not least, – why should we exist at all? (comp. Jones 2009: 6).

Jones divides the previously listed questions into two dimensions – an external and an internal dimension. The former is dominated by people – museum users, who, in modern living conditions, have a vast choice of content and a limited amount of time available for its consumption. Why should we be the ones on whom they use up their resources, creativity and ideas? This is not the question only of institutional competition and competing for the audience or financing, but also for the influence in the (city and) the world. Many museums have enabled access online to a plethora of information about their objects and collections, on websites that no one is using because a more accessible, direct and (measured by the interest) more appropriately presented knowledge is available elsewhere (television, private galleries, auctions, art fairs and the Internet in the broader sense, to name a few). Through providing an answer to the question *why* – the brand helps museums to become aware (and to make others aware) of the importance, as well as to increase the presence and unlock the potential (comp. Jones 2009: 6).

On the other hand, within the museums themselves and notwithstanding a large number of wishes for mental experimentation (the mentality “I Want It All and I Want It Now”), time and financing are also limited resources. As a specific management tool, “through imposing” what the museum conceptually (ideally) represents, the brand warns of everything that the museum should or should not opt for in its daily operations, ranging from small to the grand business moves. In that sense the museum brand is its “... unique crusade to the world, its atmosphere, criterion and the magnetic field line of the North (Jones 2009: 6).

## 2.2. A DIRTY JOB? – DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUSINESS AND CULTURE

Irrespective of the fact that it would be wrong to classify all the institutions operating in the field of culture and art as non-profit organisations, a large proportion of them exists in order to pursue some social interest, rather than generate profit, in spite of the fact that they can generate profit from their activity and use it to promote their overall operations (comp. Pavičić et.al. 2006: 52).

The relation between profit and branding is very clear from the marketing aspect. The primary purpose of branding, defined in a simplified way as efforts of a specific company towards a permanent value creation through delighting customers is, primarily based on the created delight/ comfort/ fascination, to induce as many people as possible to buy more things at a higher price over the period of several years (comp. Neumeier 2007: 19). From the (traditional) perspective of a museum institution, the laws of the market adversely affect the idea of the mission.



“The specific objective of the museum is a man in need, while the specific objective of the business world is a desirous man. Museums provide assistance, while commercial activities strive towards achieving an as successful as possible exchange for their product. The former strive towards the achievement of a goal of the common good, while the latter towards the achievement of their own good” (Šola 2001: 43).

In accordance with the previously mentioned survey research (Mendes 2014.), 21% of public museums and 20% of private museums expressed the attitude that brand is a “dirty word – an overly commercial notion”. Simultaneously, the list of museum brands that the respondents admire the most includes MoMA (ranking 1<sup>st</sup>) and Tate (ranking 2<sup>nd</sup>), V&A, Met and Rijksmuseum. Why do we admire brands, while we resist branding? Is reconciliation possible? (comp. Mendes 2018).

Against the backdrop of the modern circumstances (changes), both museums and brands change, as well. The changes that have occurred to them (or those that are yet to occur) are more similar than they may appear at first glance and as they undergo them, those who used to be “enemies” become allies. Robert Jones provides an interesting comparative presentation.<sup>11</sup>

The field of museum activity is faced with three substantial shifts – from the aspect of visitors, co-operation and perspective. The visitors who in the past only *came and had a look* are now striving to have their own role in the museum – they want to comment, contribute and create. In the context of the Ethnographic Museum, community orientation has always been present (it was even imperative in terms of the nature of collecting and research). There are many examples and singling them out would be unrewarding.<sup>12</sup> What we are actually faced with is an opportunity to intensify co-operation with the users and exchange roles, which is especially actual in the circumstances of general popularisation of intangible heritage – “the national cultural brand” – in the way that those who create it (“living cultural heritage”) are given what they deserve – not only the role of the presenter (skills/artistry), but the freedom of speech and room for self-actualisation of the (folk/urban) artist.

Moreover, museums that used to primarily operate independently are currently striving to (and must) co-operate, either with other institutions or with their neighbours (legal or business entities) or with the media. The Ethnographic Museum is not an exception. Upon networking with the “competitors” we actually become more competitive (before

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11 I am hereinafter providing it in the version concretised with examples from the recent range of activities of the Ethnographic Museum, whose purpose, like in the rest of the text, is merely illustrative (certainly not documentaristic or evaluational) and it is even possible for the selection to be random. Other examples of good (as well as bad) practices I am leaving up to the readers to recall and assess.

12 In accordance with the reference framework of this paper, in the context of musealisation of intangible cultural heritage, it is important to mention: Beautiful Head: Museum – Heritage – Local Community (2016), “Folklore Festival and Identity Symbols” (2016), “Children’s Toys from the Croatian Heritage” (upon the completion of the project “The World of Toys”, 2012/2013 to date), “The Croatian Intangible Cultural Heritage” included in the UNESCO Lists (2013 to date), “Praise the Hand – Lace Making in Croatia” (2012), the research project “Carnival King of Europe” 1, 2 (2009, 2012), etc. Furthermore, examples of co-operation with freelance artists are as follows “René Pronk: Images of Life” (2016), “The Magical Crowd – Beliefs in Supernatural Beings in Podravina” (2015), “Bert Teunissen: Domestic Landscapes – Croatia in Europe” (2013), to name a few. Find out more at: <http://www.emz.hr/Izlo%C5%BEbe/Pro%C5%A1le> (visited on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

the rest of the competitors) and the location in the centre of the city is yet another advantage in this respect. At this point the carnival programme dating back to 2017 entitled “Masks on the Open Square”, organised by the Croatian National Theatre, the Croatian School Museum, The Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Ethnographic Museum, as well as educational projects entitled “Two Museums in the Neighbourhood”, 2013/2014 (the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb) and “Album”, 2017 (Typhological Museum, Nikola Tesla Technical Museum, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, Villa Brezovica Home for the Elderly and Disabled and Medveščak Home for the Elderly and Disabled), which besides institutional co-operation, also convey a powerful social message.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, a mode of interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral co-operation provided a project for older pre-school and school aged children entitled “Two Stops on the Croatian Silk Road”, during the academic year 2016/2017 (the Zoological Garden of the City of Zagreb and the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, supported by Zagreb City Libraries).<sup>14</sup> The same applies for the activities in terms of museum niche expansion in the general tourist programmes provided by the city, for example by the participation of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb in the traditional pre-festive event “Zagreb Christmas Market”, with the promotional role within the Christmas Fair, ambiental exhibitions outside the Museum<sup>15</sup> building and thematic exhibitions of Christmas ornaments<sup>16</sup> and Christmas nativity sets,<sup>17</sup> which continue, as expected by the public (and hence worthy of a response), the tradition of marking the festivities, primarily Christmas and Easter, with adequate exhibitions and accompanying educational programmes by the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb.

Thirdly (which, in the specific case of the Ethnographic Museum, due to the nature of the collections and the awareness of the mission, was the case even much earlier), museums gradually abolish the inclination to Eurocentric Western thought, opening to research and presentation of other (and different) cultures, perspectives and voices. Like many other affiliated institutions throughout the world, we are gradually becoming a less vertical hierarchy institution with a one-sided view and increasingly a horizontal

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13 Find out more at <http://www.tifლოსkimuzej.hr/news.aspx?idNews=446> and [http://www.emz.hr/Edukacija/Programi%20izvan%20muzeja/Dva%20muzeja%20u%20susjedstvu\\_5614](http://www.emz.hr/Edukacija/Programi%20izvan%20muzeja/Dva%20muzeja%20u%20susjedstvu_5614) (visited on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

14 The core activities of the project were intended for children of older pre-school and school age. They included educational programmes (exhibitions and thematic guided tours, lectures, presentations and workshops) in connection with silkworm farming or sericulture and home-based production and use of silk thread, striving to deepen the insight of young generations concerning the wealth of natural and cultural heritage, encourage creative skills, transfer traditional knowledge and promote sustainable development culture. In addition to inter-sectoral co-operation between heritage institutions, as added value of this project, it is important to highlight the connection of teaching areas (Science and Social Studies, Biology, History, Geography, The Croatian Language and Visual Arts, to name a few) and non-formal learning in a relaxed atmosphere, based on authentic biological/ ethnographic material, which implies contact with a living animal, a tactile experience of silk in different stages of processing and the use of raw silk in visual art workshops. (Find out more at: [http://www.emz.hr/Izlo%C5%BEbe/Ostala%20doga%C4%91anja/2016/Dvije%20stanice%20na%20hrvatskom%20putu%20svile\\_8833](http://www.emz.hr/Izlo%C5%BEbe/Ostala%20doga%C4%91anja/2016/Dvije%20stanice%20na%20hrvatskom%20putu%20svile_8833)) (visited on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

15 “Nativity Scenes of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb” in Klovićevi Dvori Gallery 2015/2016 “Advent on Prekrižje” 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.

16 “Feathers, Apples and a Grain of Salt – Christmas Ornaments from the Collection of the Ethnographic Museum” 2017/2018.

17 “The Most Beautiful Stories of Nun Samuela” 2018/2019.

platform – a venue for shaping and sharing attitudes, irrespective of whether it is the case of individuals, groups/organisations/communities (comp. Jones 2009: 7). Visiting exhibitions as well as those staged in co-operation with external associates, can be a good start in the implementation of this segment of changes in the modern operations of the museum institution, and there have been many of them, as well as the reactions/discussions on the related topics. For example, those addressing the issue of the adverse effects of alcohol and tobacco consumption, the notion of (folk) sexuality or raising awareness of speciesism, to name but a few.<sup>18</sup>

Simultaneously with the previously mentioned and similar shifts both in museum theory and practice, (market) brand is also being increasingly used as a tool for the citizens (e.g. *Google*, *Wikipedia*) and a link among organisations (e.g. *Fairtrade*), assuming pluralist shapes in the process (e.g. *Pepsi*, *Starbucks*). In other words, consumers of a branded product become its creators, while the brand itself is used more as a background available to “little” ordinary people and less a marketing tool used by “big” corporations (comp. Jones 2009: 7). In that sense, any conflict between the museum as an institution with integrity and the brand as a tool of commercial exploitation comes to an end – their future is identical, as the future is a platform (Jones 2009: 8).

Ultimately, the mere essence of branding is a clearly defined mission and a set of long-term goals and core values (Weil according to Mendes 2018: 3/8). The above-mentioned are also the attributes of a well-managed museum. Hence, management can be taken over from business, while the goals in their orientation remain charitable (comp. Šola 2001: 43), with the focus of museum operations on the user.

### 2.3. *IN FOCUS: A RETURN TO DEFINITION*

Who are we? What do we do? And why is it important? The starting point in brand creation is – focus.

“Museums are currently changing while striving to be interactive and **focused** on the audience and the community needs. They become cultural incubators functioning as platforms in which creativity is combined with knowledge, where the audience participates both in the creation and sharing of the content and a venue in which the needs of the local community are put into the global context. Museums are striving to identify new methods of presentation of their collections and the tradition in order to create new meanings that will have a value for future generations and relevance for an increasingly diverse audience at the global level.”

Suay Aksoy<sup>19</sup>

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18 From the exhibition “Let’s Have a Beer! A View to the Culture of Beer Consumption”, 2012 or “Smoke – Story about Tobacco”, 2015, to the recently held exhibition of the Museum of Macedonia and the Archaeological Museum in Skopje entitled “Red Rooster and Black Hen: Fertility Cults; Rites, Customs and Beliefs”, 2019 and the still actual one “Of Animals and Humans”, 2017-2019, which is currently visiting the Regional Museum Goriški Muzej Kromberk, Nova Gorica, Slovenia.

19 An excerpt from the lecture by Suay Aksoy, MA, PhD, the ICOM President, delivered on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at the Mimara Museum in Zagreb, organised by the Croatian National Committee of ICOM, the Regional Alliance of

The museum of the new age needs a new type of branding. Moreover, the old (museum) brand needs a new type of branding. Opportunities for brand building and transformation of the museum institution into a useful vital background, real or virtual, are numerous, yet the road is long. It starts with a definition. Bearing in mind the change of the role of the museum, it needs to be the definition that will work in the future, rather than only being focused on the past (comp. Jones 2009: 8).

Starting from the foundation of ICOM, from 1946 to date, the ICOM's definition of the museum has been the central reference of the international museum community. Nevertheless, it is not a constant – through its changes over time, it has reflected large-scale social change, keeping abreast of museum development, as well as its role in the society at the international level.

The first definition of the museum by ICOM dating back to the same year read as follows: “Museum is every public institution comprising of collections of art, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material.”<sup>20</sup> In accordance with the actual definition, included in the ICOM Statutes passed in the 22<sup>nd</sup> ICOM General Conference held in Vienna in 2007:

“The museum is every public, non-commercial institution that serves the society and its development, open to the public, one that for the purpose of study, education and satisfaction, procures, keeps, preserves, explores, communicates with the public and exhibits tangible and intangible evidence about people and their surroundings.”<sup>21</sup>

The new global definition of the museum, both with small-scale or large-scale changes in relation to the actual definition, is expected to be prepared for approval in the 25<sup>th</sup> ICOM General Conference to be held in Kyoto, at the beginning of September 2019.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, that is just the beginning. Following the forthcoming conclusion reached in Japan, we will be closer to the answer to the question on how to define (and differentiate) the Museum within the (new) definition of the museum. According to Jones, during the search for the definition (the mission and the vision), it is desirable to primarily consider things from the inside. The easiest way to reach what we represent is by asking ourselves about the reasons behind our foundation and the ambitions of our founders?<sup>23</sup> After that, through conversation with the members of the staff, the current principles and beliefs of the museum need to be explored: what we as an organisation *advocate*, or *oppose*, where the latter as a rule discloses more about the role of the museum in the

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ICOM for South-East Europe and Museum Documentation Centre (according to I.G. 2019).

20 Comp. <http://www.icombih.org/site/definicija-muzeja,19.html> (visited on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019).

21 Adapted according to <http://www.icombih.org/site/definicija-muzeja,19.html> and <https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition> (visited on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019).

22 Comp. “Defining the Museum – ICOM Global Level”. ICOM-Croatia, 2019.

23 The mission defined in the “Instructions for the Trustees of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb” (1922) reads as follows “The task of the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum was to present the entire life and culture of our people, primarily peasants, who have to the greater extent preserved our folk features thus far”. Moreover, in addition to the “scientific study of the features of our people and humans in general”, the task of the museum is “to promote the overall schooling and expansion of education in general; to be a source of incentives for art and crafts and ultimately to represent a part of our entire culture as a high cultural institution”.

society (comp. Jones 2009: 8 and Mendes 2018a: 23). The next step is to consider it all from the outside, externally – with the help of own professional capacities, as well as with the help of cultural criticism, writers, artists and academics, the museum reflects the broader picture of the world in which it exists, striving to provide answers in terms of what does not function in it and what is missing, as well as what the society needs that is within the scope of activity/ the class of museum. Why are people interested in “our” objects at all? What else would they like to find out or do about them? What new problems, challenges and interests appear within this field and, last but not least, how to be of use to the public by increasing interaction with the museum and increasing in that way also the personal realisation of the desired activities? (comp. Jones 2009: 8 and Mendes 2018a: 23).

Upon combining the internal and external perspective, the museum starts defining its core idea – what it represents and what makes it unique. That is certainly not the end to it. On the contrary, the critical process of transfer of that idea into the programme of work ensues and the overall experience that the user gains upon the museum visit. The most common mistake in (museum) branding is primarily the attempt to change the image before the actual visible change has occurred. The museum can revive its idea in different ways – from the permanent collection, to temporary collections, events, the policy of collecting and interpreting materials, educational programmes to the souvenir product range available in the museum shop. It is important to do it before its new (or re-defined old) big new claims have been disclosed to the outside world (comp. Jones 2009: 8). Otherwise, we are yet again returning to the letterhead, stationery and the leaflet from the beginning of the chapter. In conclusion, “the logo can be only the flag – what matters more is the ship” (Jones 2009: 8) and most important, I would like to add, passenger navigation experience. Is there a precondition? Openness to dialogue in good faith and respect for the interlocutor, in both directions.

#### **2.4. COMMUNICATION FOR PARTICIPATION – *WHAT CAN THIS (YOUR) MUSEUM DO FOR YOU?***

In the context of dialogue, let us go back yet again to the sincerity that was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter - to determining the “raw” condition. How many of us, museum workers (at the Ethnographic Museum or any other museum), irrespective of the function performed (Museum Manager, Director of Marketing/ Public Relations, Museum Educator or Curator, to name a few), spend two hours per week (cumulatively) conversing (not guiding!) museum visitors / users?<sup>24</sup> How often do we ask a question - what can this museum do for you (because it is yours)?<sup>25</sup> To what extent are we a part

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24 For the sake of comparison, out of 31 participants of the ICOM-ITC workshop held in Fuzhou, only 3 (<10%) responded affirmatively to this question posed by the workshop manager L. M. Mendes.

25 An example can be provided by the intention to present a proposal of the project of the concept of the future permanent collection of the Ethnographic Museum to the users through an exhibition entitled “What type of Ethnographic Museum would you like?” (2007), in an effort to establish active co-operation with the visitors based on which invaluable data on public (community) opinion about plans and ideas of the Museum would be collected. Nevertheless, both the latter and the concept adopted at the time (by the authors N. Eckhel and Z. Antoš) of the new permanent collection were not implemented for a number of reasons, primarily those in terms of finances (comp.

of the community, how practically (not declaratively) do we involve the community; to what extent are we involved in community outreach (for the purpose of information collection and exchange about its wishes and needs, rather than for field research); how much museum content do we co-create with the community (based on the actual, not the (semi)imposed need for creative expression that matches the topic of the exhibition or the event). Finally, how open are we for the community, from providing a venue for a get together/ performance/ dialogue, to the possibility of participatory governance?<sup>26</sup>

Irrespective of being frequently emphasised within the definition/ mission of different cultural institutions, participation is “the least understandable scope of the modern museum” (comp. Šola 2011: 40).

“Where does it start and how does this superior type of communication end? It starts with any form of co-operation and exchange and it ends in mutual benefit of the participants. The museum that does not communicate, opens its doors and does nothing more than that (there are also examples where the doors remain a physical barrier or are only half open - the psychological impact of which is regularly underestimated, author’s comment).<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the museum that communicates, provides a programme that its users need”. (Šola 2001: 40)

The participatory museum is used by the community as a venue for creative expression and during that process it provides support. The latter is the museum that will be present in the society, conduct interviews and research, make arrangements, have its trustees, strive to conceptualise its (their) programme with the interested members of the general public. Moreover, it is the museum that will help them in everyday life, irrespective of whether it interprets it or it is improving it with them – such a museum is a venue for exchange, a venue for co-action (participation) (comp. Šola 2011: 40).<sup>28</sup>

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Antoš 2010:91). Moreover, the actual practices of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb show that “establishing connections with specific groups and individuals in the society and their involvement in the museum operations is not possible unless the museum employs a team of professionals in charge of multidisciplinary projects. That certainly implies excellent marketing and effective management of the entire project.” (Antoš 2010: 145)

26 Within the project “The Books of Our Streets” (2018-2020) launched in the Zagreb quarter Botinec by the Lastin rep (Swallow’s Tail) Association in partnership with the Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb City Libraries, Pozor (Attention) Association and the Croatian Reading Association, striving to intensify community involvement in cultural life and creation of the path to the aesthetic and cultural completion of the existing collection of literary work – Botinec. Hence, in January 2019, the first educational lecture was held at the Ethnographic Museum about participatory governance in culture, intended for project team members and members of partner institutions, as well as the local government unit employees. The lecture was held by Daniela Angelina Jelinčić, MA, PhD, a scientist from the Institute for International Relations and Development. Find out more at: <http://www.emz.hr/Projekti/Knjige%20na%C5%A1ih%20ulica> (visited on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

27 In addition to the physical manifestation of the entry to the museum and the imperative of a welcome by everyone, especially by the front desk staff, a simple and frequently pointed out example of application of the above-mentioned theory in practice and simultaneously also one that we have been complying with over the last four years is the issue of the museum opening hours. On Fridays they have been extended from only three hours (from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) to the standard eight (from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Taking into account the users’ working hours, which are increasingly frequently until 5 p.m. or even later, accessibility to the new collection and infrastructure at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, both during the working week and at weekends will certainly additionally approach modern Western European / international standards. This simultaneously solves the existing problem of museum closure (of the exhibition halls and the souvenir shop) before special events in the evening hours, which most frequently accompany the current exhibition (which on this occasion cannot be visited) and the admission to them is free, while the potential financial contribution cannot be made even from souvenir purchase.

28 As case studies that support the thesis that museum reform in terms of maximisation of participation of the

In addition, when addressing the issue of branding, as a condition for a successful marketing in museum (culture), we are yet again returning to the community. The brand, as gut feeling and relevance, as an integral element of the brand, is primarily the one produced/identified by the individual/community. In simple terms, the brand is not what you (we) say it is, but what *they* say it is – culture can be anything ranging from Caravaggio to Coachella, from Tannhauser to a taco truck or from *Mr Fulir to Fooling Around by Funicular*<sup>29</sup> (comp. Mendes 2018 2/2 and Halperin 2017).

This range of interests results in the formation of stronger communities by bringing together people who may not believe to have much in common. “The museum is the venue of identity and inspiration for the overall activity of a specific community in space and time. Hence, the active museum is the initiator and inspirer, as well as a participant in development. It helps in understanding of oneself, both as a person and as a collective...” (Šola 2001: 40). *New* museums, at least in theory, are not houses for objects but houses for people – houses for ideas.<sup>30</sup> “The primary objective of the work at the museum is not the same as it used to be, viewed from a narrow perspective, a good museum, but rather a vital productive heritage” (Šola 2001: 41) “...museums are neither collections nor buildings; looking to the future, my priority would be people” (Finlay 1977 according to Šola 2001: 41). Considering the above-mentioned quote from the perspective actual in 2019, the future is here now and people are still the priority. However, are we and to what extent are we prepared to change so that the *new* museum audience would feel comfortable with a sense of belonging?

According to a research performed by Culture Track<sup>31</sup> in 2017, the primary motive behind the cultural participation is entertainment (81%), while among other motives (a total of 14) it is important to highlight interest in the content (78%), gaining new experiences (76%) and stress relief (76%), where the latter was surprisingly recorded for audience members of all age groups<sup>32</sup> (comp. Mendes 2018: 2/4-5 and Culture Track 2017). Gradual (half a century long) transition from the paradigm of collection and curator to the paradigm of exhibition media (intended to provide multi-sensory experience for the visitor), primarily implies communication and communication has its

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community positively affects the operations of the institution, the workshop highlighted the examples of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Panama (MAC Panamá) and The Santa Cruz Museum of Art&History – MAH in the US. Find out more at: <https://www.facebook.com/MACPMA/> (visited on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019) and <https://santacruzmah.org/>, (visited on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019) comp. Mendes 2018b: 4-18.

29 Paraphrased statement by Maggie Hartnick, Managing Director of the company *La Placa Cohen* (comp. note 31).

30 A local example of the mission has been integrated in the name of an institution *Lauba – People and Art House*. The reasons behind it have been provided in a straightforward manner in the initial presentation to the public through the website/ social networks: “Lauba is a unique hybrid venue of co-existence of the business activity of Lauba – People and Art House and the artistic activity of Lauba Association. There is a café in the entry, as a logical get together venue for both types of activity. It is full of life from the morning to the evening, integrating different types of business activity, as well as different lifestyles and work rhythms. That is why we named it People and Art House” <https://www.lauba.hr/o-nama/> (visited on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019).

31 The innovative research and educational drive (in the field of culture), founded upon the initiative of the American company for strategy, design and marketing in culture *La Placa Cohen*, 2001. Find out more at: <https://culturetrack.com/about-culture-track/what-is-culture-track/> (visited on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019), <https://www.laplacacohen.com/about/> (visited on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

32 Comp. note 6 (L. M. Mendes, 2014).

laws. That is why museums have firstly become “more likable, more comfortable, more variegated, more friendly and more interesting” (Šola 2001: 39). Instead of the strict, sterile ambience of the exhibition in a “high” museum institution (often of a “serious” name given on a historical basis), they have become “venues of moving images, living installations, narrative, humour, ideas and emotions, to name a few – a specific type of scientific theatre – theatre of facts (due to their firm basis in science) and theatre of fiction (due to the need to assume, upgrade, reconstruct, to play with assumptions and be used for the vision)” (Šola 2001: 40). Museums currently ideally manage time, attention and visits, taking care of different forms of needs and the comfort of all their users (comp. Šola 2001: 39-40). Where is the limit and is there one at all? “‘Disneyfication’ is a danger in all the weak professions, yet Disneyland still provides an opportunity to learn” (Šola 1981 according to Šola 2001: 40).

## 2.5. (RADICAL) DIFFERENTIATION

In order to succeed in the competitive business climate, (i) the museum needs innovation. Against the backdrop of extreme data saturation, differentiation – *the art* of selection from the competition – is not sufficient anymore. The new rule (of radical differentiation): *When everybody zigs, zag!*, which implies identification of an entirely new market opening, one which will be possible to own and defend, one that will generate profit over the years, rather than months (comp. Neumeier 2007: 26). For most companies the problem with radical differentiation refers primarily to its radical aspect. If no one else is doing it, why should we? Innovation is always surrounded by insecurity. In order to overcome it, many people tend to opt for focus groups in which, as a rule, radical differentiation does not fare well (when asked about their wishes, consumers most frequently wish the same, with superior performances, at lower prices or both). Consequently, upon assessment of a new programme, it is advisable to confront customer feedback and success pattern. The options arising thereof are as follows: good, but not different/ good and different / not good and not different/ different, but not good.<sup>33</sup> The ideal that needs to be pursued is certainly *good and different* (comp. Neumeier 2007: 34-39).

Several years ago, the museum community was marked by the notion of *museum fitness*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art offered its visitors a service comprising of 45-minute fitness and courtyard yoga (with accompanying background music/ recorded narrative) in the morning hours, before the museum opens to the public. Some other institutions (Natural History Museum in London, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, the American Tampa Museum of Art, etc.), provided the so-called “Silent Disco”.<sup>34</sup> And,

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33 Museum assessment (with reasons), in the city/state that the participant comes from, in accordance with this pattern was a preparatory task for the ICOM-ITC workshop in Fuzhou (cycle by L. M. Mendes). It was recommended to include one's own museum in the categories.

34 The notion stands for an event where people dance to music listened to on wireless headphones, often with lighting system typical of a disco club. The first museum to have introduced it (as “silent dance party” within the interactive installation *Dance with Me...* by the artist Meg Duguid) was the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 2002. It has been more widely used in terms of lexicology since the mid-2000's (comp. “Silent Disco” and “Dance with me”).



while the discussion starts with the issue of whether there is any impact of physical activity in combination with auditory (emotional) experience, on a different perception/interpretation (aesthetic and intellectual) of artwork in the collection (due to which this type of “popular” intervention into “high” culture may potentially be justified), the question whose answer needs to be sought reads as follows: What if (also) this type of content helps us in the (new) recognition of the museum as co-creation and play? (comp. Gross-Hoy 2017).

Irrespective of the extent to which the above-mentioned examples may be extreme, and (literally translated) inadequate for a museum of the ethnographic type (which on this occasion we are starting from and which we are coming back to), the significance (relevance) of the museum, as one of the key components of the brand, largely includes a change in perspective (and “more appropriate” interventions). The (radical) Pet Friendly Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb<sup>35</sup> can be used to illustrate the above-mentioned.

## 2.6. IT'S NEITHER THE MONEY, NOR THE COLLECTION – IT'S THE ATTITUDE!

As generally known, the primary focus of presentations of ethnographic/ ethnological museums in the past was not on urban content. Nevertheless, in accordance with their core idea, in the new age (that we live in), different forms of contemporary urban processes (like *pet culture*<sup>36</sup> phenomenon) are being incorporated in this type of museum. Urban content museums are dedicated to modern city life, interpreting different ways in which a city is used from the aspect of museology and providing visitors / users with interesting and different ways of experiencing it. In that way, museums become means for co-creation of urban culture, active participants in urban life – broadening horizons, connecting and transforming from mere exhibition spaces into spaces for work, creativity and socialising.<sup>37</sup> Against the backdrop of new socio-political integrations, attention of ethnographic/ ethnological museums in urban environments is directed to transnational aspects, creation of new identity and cultural patterns, as well as changes in cultural environment and behaviour (comp. Roženbergar 2018: 162-163).

Reflection on the (new) role of the new/ old museum brings to mind the (old) idea of ecomuseum. In accordance with Rivardo's definition, as opposed to traditional museum

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35 The ceremony entitled “The Ethnographic Museum – Animal-Friendly”, was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, preceding the World Animal Day, in 2015. Hence, upon the initiative of the Director Goranka Horjan, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb became the first (officially) pet-friendly museum in Croatia.

36 As a product of urban environment and surplus value, *petishism* currently does not only imply the presence of domestic animals in Western homes, but the overall *pet culture* which arises from the needs of animals in connection with urban life, which is tailored to meet human needs, closely followed and sometimes even prompted by *pet industry* (comp. Viljetic 2017: 121).

37 Following the example of the exhibition by the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb entitled “Let's Have Coffee! How Zagreb Entrepreneurs View the Culture of Coffee Consumption” (2010). Find out more at: [http://www.emz.hr/Izlo%C5%BEbe/Pro%C5%A1le/2010/Idemo%20na%20kavu%20Pogled%20zagreba%C4%8Dkih%20poduzetnika%20na%20kulturu%20konzumiranja%20kave\\_5356\\_](http://www.emz.hr/Izlo%C5%BEbe/Pro%C5%A1le/2010/Idemo%20na%20kavu%20Pogled%20zagreba%C4%8Dkih%20poduzetnika%20na%20kulturu%20konzumiranja%20kave_5356_) (visited on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019).

comprising of a building, a collection, museum professionals and the audience, ecomuseum includes the territory (area), heritage, memory and population, i.e. the community (comp. Babić 2009: 57). “Eco-museum theory, if understood correctly, presents the turning point, the long-awaited mental change that provides the museum community with a prevailing light and inspiration.... The ideal is the museum as a mental state.” (Šola 1999 according to Babić 2009: 7)

Following the orientation to the community, a proportion of museum professionals currently rejects the separation of the ecomuseum concept *per se*, believing it to be a matter of general (necessary) values that the museum as such needs to include (hence, every museum). The new user needs the museum that changes the way they think or question the norms, anything that makes them feel and bring into question what they already know.<sup>38</sup> The consumer is striving to become an activist (comp. Mendes 2018: 3/7) – they need a venue for corrective (inter)action towards sustainable development (comp. Šola 2001: 40-41). Why should we open the door of our (their) institution to them? Strictly from the marketing aspect, if for no other reason, then because opening to the community results in more partners and hence more visitors. This was considered through the prism of museum sustainability in the world (community) of today and tomorrow, because we have no other choice. Neither do we have any justification – *It's neither the money, nor the collection – it's the attitude.* (comp. Mendes 2018: 2/1)

It is important to highlight that the latter is possible, which was proved by the example that resulted from an unrewarding situation faced by the institution that was about to face its closure (due to a lack of interest of the audience, as well as a lack of resources, relevance, participation and support, to name a few). The latter situation was faced by the previously mentioned Art and History Museum (MAH) Santa Cruz<sup>39</sup> in 2011. Having had nothing to lose, MAH started an *experiment* of maximised involvement of the members of the local community in the work of the museum, which resulted in transformative effects on the number of visits and the overall operations of the institution. The policy was recognised as OF/BY/FOR ALL: the content is created by the community-BY, of the community-OF, for (the community and) all those interested-FOR ALL<sup>40</sup> (comp. Mendes 2018b: 5-12).

In accordance with the report by The American Alliance of Museums (AAM), dating back to 2012, about coping strategies and making business moves by the museum, in the context of the age of financial crises and reduced available resources, the policy of taking museum programmes outside of the museum building was pointed out as a future trend. Events or exhibitions outside the museum, outdoors, most frequently in the least expected venues, are held in accordance with the template started by performing

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38 Following the example of the exhibition by the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb: “The Blonde Joke-Stereotypes We Live By (2013). Find out more at: <http://www.emz.hr/Izlo%C5%BEbe/Pro%C5%A1le/2013/Vic%20o%20plavu%C5%A1i%20stereotipi%20u%20kojima%20%C5%BEivimo.5610> (visited on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019).

39 Comp. note 29.

40 Striving to help others with one's own example, self-assessment is publicly accessible online: <https://www.ofbyforall.org/assess-now> (visited on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

arts and street performances, which enables a different type of encounters with the local population. This trend is a consequence of several different social and economic practices, for example a weakened economy (in which it is increasingly difficult to identify users who are able to pay for the services), a weakening of the influence of authorities in culture (in which, due to an increasing number of choices of programmes by what is currently referred to as culture, there is an absence of the need to follow any authorities), as well as a revival of localism in general in response to globalisation processes (comp. Horjan 2012: 90).

Acting in accordance with both principles (opening of the museum to the community/ community outreach) also meets the needs of the new museum audience, within the limits that transcend from the local to global framework or in other words – beyond them.

## INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

“Museums are a rather strange thing. They exist simultaneously as conceptual spaces, as real physical places and as a type of practice, which means that there is always a feeling of redrawing the boundaries of what the museum is and of why it is.”

Suse Cairns – *Museum Geek* according to Mendes 2012

Both as people and as *strange* people of the museum we are living (and working) witnesses of the times in which new museums of the New Age are being founded, not only “from the exterior” and “from the start” (as in the case of the boom of newly built museums, for example in China), but also “in the interior/from inside” and “from scratch”, in a case like ours, when (a European) institution with history and tradition sets of on a quest for the means of survival (and competitiveness!) in the future of inclusive, networked and cross-cultural museums, according to Robert Jones, museums that are “less like cathedrals and more like bazaars.”

The focus of new museums, irrespective of their type, is on what they *do*, rather than on what they *have*, and even beyond that – (re)programming results in a shift from what they *do* to what they *are* (comp. Mendes 2012: 22, 26). That is why the reprogramming process involves, literally, both everyone and everything (both the employees and work domains) - from (re)branding, to audience development, marketing and public relations (in regulatory compliance in terms of communication in the Digital Age) to ideation, creation, interpretation, presentation and evaluation of content/ programmes, in close co-operation with the (local) community or in full abandonment to it.

Integrating international perspectives and different programme forms, the ICOM-ITC workshop held in Fuzhou in 2018 systematically arranged the above-mentioned issues in terms of principles and action in several cycles intended for museum practitioners of younger generation, the main bearers (preferably, creators and innovators) of change, both the forthcoming and the existing. In addition, adapted to meet the requirements and needs of the new users (attendees), it served definitely not as an untouchable *cathedral* of knowledge, but as a lively *bazaar* – a platform – for expression of opinions and experiences, professional assistance and consulting and a unique opportunity for

gaining insight into a broader picture of museum reality and trends in museology at the global level. United in the joys and challenges of the museum activities, we were given the opportunity to learn from the best – transactionally, intensively, in a participatory manner and seriously, in an entertaining way – and how extensively we will be given the opportunity to use the acquired knowledge in daily work depends on a large number of factors that are sometimes beyond our scope of influence and sometimes within it. In any case, it has been accumulated and prepared for the challenges of practical implementation.

Perhaps the greatest value of this type of professional development, among others, is the experience of consideration of the parent institution “from the outside” (where, at the psychological level, also the physical separation/distance from the building/city/country and the effect of the collective certainly is of assistance) and everything that ensues – the detection of the situation in the present moment, comparison (using both theory and practice), identification of difficulties, as well as recognition of existing positive elements in operations/ the mission and thinking in the direction of maximisation of comparative advantages. The condition (that in case of ICOM-ITC has reached perfection) is a friendly, encouraging and optimistic environment in which all opinions are both equally welcome and equally valuable, which does not imply absolute agreement among everyone, always and in every aspect. Moreover, it is desirable to be aware of the possibility of one’s own “human error” and the scope of the subjective assessment, as well as the fact of certainty in “objectivity over historical distance”, as opposed to “honourable risk of evaluation in real time” (comp. Šola 1997: 52-53). I hope that the paper before the readers (actually, at this point it is already behind them) will be perceived in this same spirit.

This experience, with the perspective of learning, sharing and upgrading, is my modest contribution to the best wishes for our Museum on the occasion of its anniversary and simultaneously also to the requirements of daily museum practices to retain all the good, while what is less good needs to be *redesigned*, improved and made *more appealing* and primarily *more significant* through joint effort and synergy with the users.

\*I am using the opportunity to provide a long list of acknowledgements to everyone who made it possible for me to participate at ICOM-ITC Museum Education Workshop in Fuzhou, PR China, in November 2018. Firstly, I would like to thank Mrs Goranka Horjan, the Director, for giving me the idea and the initiative to apply for participation at the ICOM-ITC workshop and Mr Darko Babić, President of the Croatian National Committee of ICOM, for welcoming me to the ICOM community, and especially lecturers (Cecilia Martin, Yu Zhang, Claude Faubert i Luis Marcelo Mendes) – managers of workshop cycles, for the transferred knowledge, accessibility, professionalism and value added - to Cecilia – for human warmth, motivation, commitment and creativity; Yu – for optimism, concreteness and because she reminded me of how much I love my job; Luis – for being *good and different*; and Claude – the heart and the brains behind the operation, who recognised them and brought us all together with his calm and secure (invisible) hand, successfully leading us to the end (albeit, actually only the beginning) of another memorable edition of ITC, to the benefit of all the attendees.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my colleagues from the Ethnographic Museum, the institution that I had the honour to represent, who helped me in different ways, from their good wishes, to practical advice and technical support. In a situation of role exchange, I am both obligated and willing to do the same.

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