

Exhibition presentation:

*Planks – Corners – Ornaments.*

*Documenting the Wooden Architecture  
of Turopolje – Older and New Material in  
Dialogue.* Velika Gorica, Turopolje Museum,  
7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Ethnological exhibition *Planks - Corners - Ornaments. Documenting the Wooden Architecture of Turopolje – Older and New Materials in Dialogue* is the result of a two-year research project *Rural Architecture in the Turopolje Area* (2022-2023). The exhibition was set up at the Turopolje Museum in Velika Gorica from 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The authors of the exhibition are Maja Ergović, senior curator documentarist (Turopolje Museum) and Associate Professor Sanja Lončar, PhD (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology), in co-operation with the Associate Professor Hrvoje Tomić, PhD (Faculty of Geodesy, University of Zagreb), master joiner Pep Cvetković and master carpenters Goran Selanac and Marijan Dragičević (Vocational School Sisak), explored and documented the richness of the wooden architecture of Turopolje using innovative approaches to provide visitors with a completely new perspective.

Using examples of wooden architecture of Turopolje from older documentation from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and new documentation created during their own research in 2022 and 2023, the authors questioned the ways and challenges of supplementing, enriching and using documentation on wooden architecture. The aim was to point out the importance of continuous documenting of the wooden architecture in the Turopolje area. The exhibition shows a combination of archival and field research, the application of modern technology and different research methods, as well as the connection of the process of documenting and documentation with secondary and higher education. The exhibition is presented through detailed posters about field research, photographs collected from various institutions such as the Ethnographic Museum Zagreb, the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Turopolje Museum, as well as through carpentry tools from the holdings of the Turopolje Museum and private collections (Figure 1).

Starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the exhibition provides a contextual overview of documenting the wooden architecture of the area, highlighting extensive research that has resulted in architectural, photographic and written documentation, as well as documentaries and feature films. The research conducted in 1972 by the Republic Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments



Figure 1. Exhibition setup in the exhibition space of the Turopolje Museum, photo by: Maja Ergović

in Zagreb, in co-operation with the Turopolje Museum and the then director Višnja Huzjak, was also highlighted. Through the action research titled *Research and Determination of the Condition of Ethnological Monuments to Collect Documentation and Study the Possibilities of Their Protection in Croatia* (1972-1989), the surroundings of Velika Gorica were explored and photographically documented in detail. Encouraged by this documentation, the authors of the exhibition became interested in field situation fifty years later (2022). Hence, during 2022 and 2023, they conducted desk research, including research of museum and archival materials and professional literature, and digitisation of existing documentation on wooden architecture. In addition, they conducted ethnographic field research in the settlements near Velika Gorica to supplement the existing documentation and record new information on movable and intangible heritage, including information on local active master carpenters, tools, construction skills and knowledge.

Through research on wooden architecture in a wider historical, cultural, social and natural complex, the authors are aware of the complexity of the topic and connect different disciplines and methods with the use of modern technology. A special feature of their exhibition is the presentation of the possibilities of using modern technologies such as 3D laser scanners, unmanned aerial vehicles and DSLR cameras in documenting material. Photographic and photogrammetric recordings and the creation of 3D models of wooden buildings were carried out by the Associate Professor Hrvoje Tomić, PhD, striving to document the actual condition of the buildings and ornaments on selected buildings (Figure 2). One of the key roles of modern technology was in discovering ornaments and inscriptions on buildings. While some of these inscriptions, faded over time, have become invisible to the human eye, modern technology has made it possible to expose and display these inscriptions. By integrating different methods, the technology



Figure 2. Presentation of digital technology application in exploring wooden architecture, photo by: Maja Ergović

has made it possible to discover details that would otherwise go unrecognised. This innovative approach to documentation enables a better understanding and valorisation of cultural heritage and contributes to the preservation and promotion of traditional architecture of Turopolje.

The importance of master skills and knowledge in the construction of wooden houses was emphasised through the exhibition. It shows individual tools and aids, as well as wooden doors made by craftsmen and students of the Sisak Vocational School (Figure 3). The special importance of this exhibition is in the popularisation of ethnological material and its application in secondary education through lectures and workshops. At the end of September 2023, *the Day of Traditional Construction Skills and Knowledge* was held at the Vocational School in Sisak, as a part of which lectures and a workshop titled *Traditional Construction Knowledge and Skills in Practice* were held, in which the students attending the Vocational School participated. Based on a photograph of a single-storey house from Bukevje (built in 1869 and documented in 1972), master carpenters Goran Selanac and Marijan Dragičević and students attending the Vocational School made an element of the door – the porch, locally referred to as *ganjak*, of a wooden house in Turopolje. The door, along with the original photograph from 1972, was presented at the exhibition. The exhibition is accompanied by the eponymous 32-page catalogue.

One of the most attractive parts of the exhibition was a 3D video presentation of a multi-storey and a single-storey wooden house. This innovative approach to documentation allowed the visitors to experience the architectural beauty and complexity of wooden buildings from Turopolje in a completely new way. The author of this video is the Associate Professor Hrvoje Tomić, PhD. For the youngest visitors of the museum, large-size magnetic puzzles with motifs of wooden





Figure 3. Presentation of implementation of ethnological documentation in education (on the left-hand side there is a presentation of carpentry tools and aids and on the right-hand side there are the doors made by the students attending the Vocational School Sisak), photo by: Maja Ergović

architecture had been prepared. The authors of the exhibition did not provide only the presentation. Moreover, within the Night of Museums 2024, they gave a professional-popular lecture linked with the exhibition, and as part of the 29<sup>th</sup> Educational Museum Action (EMA), senior curator Maja Ergović gave lectures and workshops that built on the topics of the exhibition. Elementary school students were given lectures on the research of wooden construction, ways of building and living in traditional wooden houses (locally referred to as *hiža*) and multi-storey houses (locally referred to *čardak*), and through practical workshops, students had an opportunity to assemble a miniature wooden house.

Through the application of modern technology in documenting ethnological material, the exhibition *Planks – corners – ornaments* (locally referred to as *Planjke – vugli – cifre*) presents new possibilities for information analysis, interpretation and visualisation and sets new standards in documenting and preserving cultural heritage. This innovative approach to documentation enables a better understanding and valorisation of cultural heritage and contributes to the preservation and promotion of traditional architecture of Turopolje. The exhibition encouraged a dialogue on the importance of preserving traditional buildings and promoted awareness of their importance as part of local, regional and national identity. In addition, through educational programmes and workshops, the exhibition provided an opportunity for young people to learn more about traditional architecture and woodworking and to develop a greater interest in the preservation of cultural heritage.