

# Reviews



## Implementation of the Project of the New Ethnographic Museum Storage Room at Kačićeva 9/2 in Zagreb

The renovated space of the Royal Brewery at Kačićeva 9/2, named the Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, Kačićeva 9/2, was financed by EU project funds “Reconstruction of the abandoned building of the National Brewery at Kačićeva Street”, co-financed by the EU from the European Regional Development Fund in the financial period 2014-2020 within the Operational Program “Competitiveness and Cohesion”, and the project was executed in partnership with the City of Zagreb. Construction works completed on June 15, 2023 were followed by equipping

Figure 1. Opening of the Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, May 29, 2024





Figure 2. Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, Kačićeva Street 9/2 – Collection of paintings

and relocation of the museum holdings. The project was completed on April 26, 2024. The new Ethnographic Museum Storage Room at Kačićeva 9/2 in Zagreb was officially opened on May 29, 2024.

The Ethnographic Museum Storage Room represents the concept of the first open depot in Croatia with an innovative and state-of-the-art museological approach that allows the availability of museum collections to the public, as well as a display of the museum's "behind the scenes" activities, i.e., how the museum operates. The collections in the depots are available to the public through controlled tours for small groups, expert guidance, and prior notice. This state-of-the-art museological approach makes 54,000 objects available to the public, which were previously completely inaccessible in the depots, given that only 10% of the total number of objects in the collection (88,000) were exhibited in the permanent and temporary exhibitions. Likewise, an extremely valuable holdings of photo archives and museum documentation is available with expert assistance. The Museum Storage Room promotes openness, accessibility, and transparency in presenting ethnographic collections and conservation practices of the open storage concept in a completely new way.



Figure 3. Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, Kačićeva Street 9/2 – Collection of household items

Since the beginning of 2024, the equipping and relocation of museum holdings from the Ethnographic Museum, Trg Mažuranića 14, to the new Storage Room at Kačićeva 9/2 was achieved using the museum's own human resources and with the help of students, and the holdings were transported by museum van. The relocation of the material started at the end of January and finished in mid-May 2024. During transport, the museum objects were protected with acid-free materials (Avos, Tyvek, boxes) and protective bubble wrap and transported in metal crates. All objects were secured during transport, and the material was adequately stored in the new depot. In the seven depots on three floors, various objects from thirty-six ethnographic museum collections are housed in state-of-the-art metal cabinets, shelves, drawers, and grids. In the depots, objects are stored according to material type, i.e., wood, ceramics, paintings, metal and textiles, in controlled and stable climate conditions and under constant humidity control. The storage room is also a working space that houses two restoration and conservation workshops for textiles and wood, metal and ceramics, a space for photographing items, museum documentation, four spaces for the study work of museum curators, and a space for the IT specialist and technician. The building is also equipped with a state-of-the-art CNS system with video



Figure 4. Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, Kačičeva Street 9/2 – Collection of the traditional economy

surveillance and fire alarm. Stairs and a lift were used for communication within the building, and movement for blind and visually impaired people was enabled using tactile strips.

After transport, the objects were placed on the existing shelves, cabinets, and drawers, which were covered with protective acid-free materials (Avos, Tyvek, Plastazote). Work on creating location labels (physically and in the database) continued according to a detailed systematization of location labels for museum materials and documentation with defined labels for storage rooms, types of equipment, and positions within a specific type of equipment. The Department of Restoration and Conservation continues with the daily control and recording of microclimatic conditions. As part of the regular museum activities, the processing of the museum holdings was also carried out, which included the preparation of documentation for insurance, packaging, relocation, and placement of the materials in the new Storage Room. This included teamwork between curators and restorers (22 people). The relocation of the museum documentation to a modernly equipped space will enable easier accessibility and availability to different types of users.



Figure 5. Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, Kačićeva Street 9/2 – textile collections

As part of the horizontal project activities, the focus is on the inclusion and adaptation of the space for blind and visually impaired people, deaf people, and people with disabilities, the LGBTIQ+ community, marginalized groups, as well as vulnerable groups.

Experience is enriched through collaboration with a network of partners such as the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, with which the museum continues to develop inclusive programs with blind and visually impaired people. Various programs related, for example, to the Ekospiritus Association from Samobor, such as “Pečki vez” and a cycle of traditional art workshops in the Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, in which objects from the collection are creatively connected to intangible heritage, or individuals who possess certain skills and knowledge. In collaboration with the Psychiatric Hospital are carried out programs related to the promotion of health and better general psychophysical condition, which can improve the quality of life of vulnerable groups (women, children, the elderly and the sick, etc.).

In addition, the Storage Room was presented to the public as part of the *Zagreb Museum Weekend* program (September 4-7, 2025). Participants had the opportunity to learn about the



Figure 6. Opening of the Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, May 29, 2024

new acquisition of the collection of contemporary workwear as part of the discursive program. A two-day pop-up exhibition *Coming Out Museum Encounters* of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria was opened as a part of the 23rd Queer Zagreb program.

An art intervention program was carried out in the courtyard of the Storage Room, promoting street art in an urban environment in collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts (students and mentor). The exhibited visual installations encourage discussion about the need to use public spaces and the ways in which alternative culture creates new spaces and places. From September, a program was organized as part of "Heritage Days", a series of workshops with bearers of intangible heritage, the "Green Courtyard" program intended for preschool children, a program for the blind and visually impaired, and tours of the Storage Room were organized for professionals, visitors and students with the expert guidance of curators and restorers for small groups of 10 people. A total of 1,200 users visited the Storage Room from May to December 2024, and 1,300 people by October 2025.

During a year and a half of its operation, the Storage Room was visited by 2,500 visitors of various age groups. An active cooperation was established with students of the Academy of Fine



Figure 7. Ethnographic Museum Storage Room, Kačićeva Street 9/2

Arts, the Faculty of Textile Technology, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb (Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Department of Museology), colleagues from the entire museum community in Zagreb and Croatia, interested bearers of intangible heritage, and visitors.

With the establishment of the new Storage Room, the Ethnographic Museum contributes to the engagement of museology, as well as ethnology and cultural anthropology, in understanding current issues of heritage care in the area of contemporary trends and challenges that museums face every day, while providing guidelines for their possible further development and practical application. By establishing the new Storage Room, which is open and accessible to the public, a new form of museum is being developed – a participatory one, which invites the audience to active participation, and becomes accessible to all people, regardless of their level of education, race or religion. The newly reformed Ethnographic Museum cooperates with the public in various aspects, even when seeking new meaning for its collections and objects, which will be given to them by the community in which the museum operates.

