

Exhibition Project

Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life

The exhibition project “Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life” was carried out from May 19, 2023, to September 7, 2025, at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. The author of the exhibition is Zvezdana Antoš, PhD, Museum Advisor and Director of the Ethnographic Museum, while the author of the art display is Ksenija Jurinec, M.A. in Art, designer, and associate Vesna Meštrić, Museum Advisor and Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. The exhibition partner was *Prostoria*.

Figure 1. Ana Hušman: *Instead of the Spin Cycle, Come Piano Lessons*





Figure 2. Museum advisor and the author of the *Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life* project, Zvezdana Antoš, PhD, in the exhibition *Biography* by Nika Radić

The Ethnographic Museum's exhibition *Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life* featured objects from its furniture collection for the first time, dating mostly from the 19th century to the mid-20th century, together with contemporary artistic interpretations that provide a provocative look at different modalities of human intimate space, as well as the diversity of depictions and complex meanings of everyday objects from the women's perspective. Everyday objects have great personal meaning and are included in today's current social issues and topics such as migration and heritage preservation. The exhibition project was based on long-term research of the furniture collection and reflection on the meaning of these objects as part of everyday life and their role for the home and family. The objects selected mainly from the museum's furniture collection and museum holdings represent inspiration for the people who kept them; they represent the emotions of the people who owned them and, in addition to their symbolic role, they also have an intimate role in their lives. Likewise, it was necessary to consider what each object in the museum collection represented to the person who bought or owned it, and how it was used within a specific interior. Furniture also had a major role as an indicator of social status and was considered as important as clothing and personal items.



Figure 3. Art Pavilion in Zagreb – Relocation: *Illuminated Room – Conflict*

The exhibition showcased the importance of objects in home decoration and how these objects affect the private and social life of the family, as well as their role in preserving family heritage and tradition, and how our relationship to space changes in the event of sudden unexpected circumstances such as changes of space due to earthquakes, isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, refugeedom due to wars, poverty, and loss of home. This theme is told through seventeen personal stories of people and illustrated with photographs by Damil Kalogjera taken at various locations in Croatia from February to May 2023, which are displayed in the thematic part of the exhibition titled “My intimate spaces”. Visitors could get more information about the collection in the book by Zvezdana Antoš *Furniture Collection*, and in the virtual exhibition *Digital Stories of Furniture*: <http://www.emz.hr/digitalne-price-pokucstva/hr/index.html>. A QR code was provided in Croatian and English for each text panel so that visitors could get more information about each segment of the exhibition.

During the exhibition, a series of thematic exhibitions were organized that addressed the broader context of the topic of intimate space. In collaboration with the Museum Advisor and Director



Figure 4. Art Pavilion in Zagreb – Relocation: *Celebration* by Tanja Dabo

of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Vesna Meštrić, works by Ana Hušman “Lunch”, “Instead of the Spin Cycle, Come Piano Lessons” were exhibited throughout the duration of the exhibition, along with the temporary exhibition “Biography” by Nika Radić. In collaboration with the Curator and Director of the Art Pavilion, Irena Bekić, we set up the exhibitions “Conflict - The Illuminated Room” and “Celebration” by Tanja Dabo, as well as the international exhibition “Six Samples of Disaster”, which presented topics that are sometimes extremely difficult, such as violence against women and children, as well as migration, wars, loss of home, inequality of women, and ecological disasters. The theme of memory of family and the most beloved intimate space was presented by Mejra Mujičić with the exhibition “Tinel”, which included the screening of the film “There Was No Wind” – by Mejra Mujičić, Nika Radić and Marina Viculin. The exhibition by Manuela Pauk “Sweet Saints” questions the topic of consumerism, and the exhibition by Dijana Nazor, PhD in Art, “Luminous Easter Eggs”, brought the theme of Easter. The theme of everyday life and family relationships was presented with a lot of humor by the artist Tisja Kljaković Braić with the exhibition “They”, which was extremely popular with visitors. Senior curator Gordana Viljetić presented the exhibition by Bane Milenković “Kuleri, šmizle, foteljaši – a selection from



Figure 5. *Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life* exhibition layout

the Dog and Animals cycles”, and an ethnographic film in the form of an interview with the author about the challenges of spending everyday life with pets, as well as shaping the lives of caregivers to their needs, and vice versa, within the walls of a shared home.

Visitors were encouraged to participate, co-create content, and discuss through the thematic exhibitions. Alongside the exhibition “Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life”, an interactive and participatory program was developed using the methodology of an “open museum” and attracting new audiences, as well as involving young people in co-creation of the content. The exhibition “New Spaces of Intimacy” was realized in cooperation with the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology), the Academy of Fine Arts (Department of Animated Film and New Media), the Faculty of Architecture (Department of Design Studies and Department of Architectural Design), and the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology (Department of Wood Technology) of the University of Zagreb. The exhibition displays works created at the workshop “Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life”, which was held from October 2023 to March 2024 and induced 64 hours of classes and 25 students divided into five interdisciplinary groups with mentors.

The inclusive approach was developed from the very beginning, from the project assignment, concept, to the setting up of the exhibition “New Spaces of Intimacy”, whereby the Ethnographic Museum actively involved mentors and students in the joint reflection on the theme and design of the space, thus co-creating these contents. The aim of the project was to contribute to the understanding of the interaction between people and space, as well as the role that intimate spaces can have in shaping identity and interpersonal relationships. At the same time, different aspects of everyday intimate spaces were observed transdisciplinarily, from the perspectives of different professions and fields. Also, the long-term goal is to develop creative tools that can be used to critically approach the research of intimate spaces of everyday life in contemporary society and to detect “new” aspects of intimate spaces. The project assignment was to explore, analyze, and creatively react – (re)interpret intimate spaces of everyday life, question their roles in the everyday life of individuals and the community today, taking into account the presence of digital technology and its influence on changing the understanding of intimate space and expanding the definition of intimacy. Mentors: Assoc. Prof. Sanja Lončar, PhD, Assoc. Prof. Petra Kelemen (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences – Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology), Prof. Branimir Rajčić (Faculty of Architecture – Department of Architectural Design), Assoc. Prof. Danijela Domljan, PhD (Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology – Department of Wood Technology), Assoc. Prof. Ana Hušman (Academy of Fine Arts – Department of Animated Film and New Media), Assoc. Prof. Ivana Fabrio, M.Sc., Assist. Prof. Andrea Hercog, Assistant Nina Bačun (Faculty of Architecture – Department of Design Studies). The exhibition is accompanied by the catalog “New Spaces of Intimacy” published in 2024.

Alongside the exhibition “Intimate Spaces of Everyday Life”, new programs for audience development were developed that included active networking and strengthening of collaborative networks and partnerships. The programs were carried out in collaboration with numerous independent organizations, artists, as well as the local community. The pedagogical program focused on implementing various interactive workshops and activities specifically designed for different target user groups, from children to elementary and high school students. These programs were based on approaches such as interactive storytelling, discovering the importance of objects for their family and community, raising questions about gender equality through interactive dramatic content, talking with curators about specific interesting objects from the museum collections, and involving the local community in transferring skills and knowledge to younger generations.

The exceptional success of this exhibition project is evidenced by its media presence, with 147 publications and the fact that the exhibition was visited by 10,000 visitors in 2023, 27,000 visitors in 2024, and 17,000 visitors in 2025 until September. A total of 54,000 visitors.