

**THE FOURTH BALKAN MUSEUM
NETWORK'S ANNUAL
CONFERENCE 'MEET, SEE, DO'**

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

13-15 April 2016
Shkodra, Albania

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About Balkan Museum Network

FORWARD

For us at the Balkan Museum Network “Meet, See, Do” museum conference is the highlight of the year. In 2016, we have been so happy to have had the opportunity to hold our fourth annual conference in the welcoming city of Shkoder (Albania). These intensive three days gathered ninety-seven museum and heritage professionals from ten countries. In 2016, the programme has improved to include more examples from the Balkan region and to offer new session formats. We are always interested about in improving the ‘Do’ part of the conference, thus it was pleasure to attend sixteen workshops given by the museum colleagues from the Balkan region. Some that were selected workshops based on the open call for the workshop facilitators and four that were prepared by the members of the Balkan Museum Access Group (BMAG) focusing on access and inclusion. Apart from the keynote speeches and parallel workshops sessions, we had new session formats, such as the opportunity to meet the colleagues through the speed dating; take part in the talk show and feel how the room gets electrified while discussing “Who is afraid of history-teaching in museums”. We also heard about the two case studies related to the joint projects between the public institutions and NGOs and we were reminded

what is play and why we play. Session titled “Open microphone” is always an opportunity to hear interesting examples in 10 minutes per presentation. The conference offered the visit to fascinating Rozafa Castle and its museum that are overlooking the town. In 2016 we also had a session outside of the official programme related to the issue how design can help refugee crisis in Europe. “Meet, See, Do” was also opportunity for the annual assembly meeting to discuss the matters related to the Balkan Museum Network as an organisation. The details of all of that and much more that has been covered by the “Meet, See, Do” programme you can find in this small publication that brings the descriptions of the individuals sessions.

The conference in Shkoder was funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and co-funded by the British Council. We would like to acknowledge the Historical Museum of Shkoder for their hospitality, as well as the other cultural institutions in Shkoder.

We look forward to see you in 2017 when “Meet, See, Do” will take place in Prishtina (Kosovo).

Sincerely Yours, Aida Vežić, Secretary General of BMN





INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Welcome Speech By President of the BMN Steering Board, Tatjana Cvjetićanin

Dear colleagues and friends, esteemed ladies and gentlemen,
It is wonderful to be able to meet for the fourth time in Shkoder, after meeting in Sarajevo, Tirana and Shkoder.

The Balkan Museum Network, as most of you are aware, was founded with the idea to contribute to the process of peacebuilding, to promote dialogue, to strengthen communication between museum professionals, and to establish new ways of sharing between communities. We gather museum professionals and all other interested and willing to participate in the creation of a better society with heritage. Our most visible activity is the annual conference, where we meet – making partners and friends, where we see inventive and important concepts, models and current work of many different museums, and where we learn how to do, how to develop project ideas and help museums improve their approaches, attitudes and fully accomplish their social role. How to become more responsible.

We are still working in a challenging landscape, challenging in a lot of different ways. But the numbers are growing, those who are participating in this conference, in the Balkan museums access group or in a virtual exhibition

of the Network and implementing projects under the Network's call is. This year we want to encourage stronger partnerships with the civil society sector and our communities and grants within the call for small projects that will be announced at the assembly will be offered to those creating a collective voice for Balkan heritage.

And on that way we have had support of our partners and friends. In partnership with Cultural Heritage without Borders, a new three-year project on access and inclusion has started with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and this conference is part of that endeavour. As before, the assistance of the Swedish government was crucial for our efforts. The British council helped with the participation of international speakers, and our gratitude goes out to both of them as well.

The Steering Board of the BMN is responsible for this conference, but it would not be possible without the help and persistence of Aida Vežić, BMN Secretary General and Aida Salketić, from the CHwB office in Sarajevo, and other capable helpers. The last for this year but the most important is our generous host, the Shkoder Museum, and its director Fatmir Juka. On behalf of the BMN I would like to express our appreciation.



DAY 1

Keynote speech: Can you see me? Representation in museums and galleries - Diana Walters

Museums create meaning and as such they are powerful transmitters of knowledge, values and thinking. For many years curatorial practice has been moving beyond 'what is there' to an exploration of 'what isn't there – and why'. This concept of the Hidden History is equally powerful, and equally subject to a range of values and opinions that show the subjective nature of museums and their practice.

For me it's important to start with a statement that I am not neutral about this. I have an opinion and with regard to Deaf and disabled people this is grounded in a commitment to a social model approach. Understanding that it is the environment and attitudes that disable people (and not their embodied selves) then collections and representation are an extension of this. So why then are Deaf and disabled people either buried or absent within museums? Well, adopting the Hidden History paradigm and with a social model gaze this is due to prejudice (then and now) and lack of records.

Let's look at these. Prejudice against Deaf and disabled people is a real contemporary issue. Colin Barnes (1992) examined the way that disabled people were portrayed in the media and found a number of stereotypes that equally apply to museums and other cultural institutions. Disabled people are portrayed as pitiable, weak, sinister, evil, freaks, objects of humour, a burden – or superheroes that 'overcome'. Think about the Disney portrayals of disabled people – the villainous Captain Hook, the pathetic and unlovable Quasimodo. James Bond's adversaries are almost always 'damaged' in some way. What does this feed in terms of attitudes in the non-disabled world? Hardly positive, is it.

If we apply social model curatorial practice and to our collections and displays we can see that there are a multitude of other stories to tell. Deaf and disabled people have always been a part of our families and communities and therefore it is fair to assume that they exist within our material

culture. You may to have to rummage about a bit – but stories of everyday life and the material culture of that will be there. Equally, by applying an empowerment approach to disability and – crucially – working with Deaf and disabled people themselves – a number of things can be achieved. Firstly, an understanding of where the prejudice is and where the gaps are can be countered by contemporary collecting, temporary exhibitions, adopting appropriate (non-offensive) language, building creative partnerships with civil society and NGOs. Secondly, engaging in Disability Equality Training for all staff can reveal and challenge negative thinking and attitudes (the biggest barrier of all). Thirdly, mining the collections and looking at documentation can ensure that past prejudice and ignorance can be balanced.

I'm so proud that since 2007 Cultural Heritage without Borders and the Balkan Museum Network has engaged in strategic approaches to disability within the Western Balkans. Our work is going from strength to strength and the Balkan Museum Access Group is an amazing resource. In this work we are superbly supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation - and our thanks goes to them.

It's an old quote but still a valid one – but Stuart Hall wrote in 1990s 'Heritage is powerful mirror. Those who cannot see themselves feel excluded'. There is some excellent ongoing work to reclaim the history and culture of Deaf and disabled people. It's a fundamental issue of human and cultural rights and we need to continue to defend these and empower a huge number of children and adults across our communities. Representation shapes attitudes – we could start there.

“

Meet See Do is getting stronger every year with new countries coming every time.

We are stronger through internationalism.”

Diana Walters



PARALLEL SESSION 1

DisABILITY = ThinkABILITY
Lejla Agić & Željka Sušić

The communication with visitors means reciprocity, a two way process in which both parties need to participate actively. If the communication process is defective and inadequate, it is necessary to establish and eliminate the reasons for this. The elimination of communication “noise” requires the identification of the factors that cause it; for example, personal attitude, inaccessible environment, ignorance and incompetence in the understanding of problems by all who are to make crucial decisions related to the implementation of legislative regulations and the reinforcement of professional interest in other professionals employed at the heritage institutions.

One of the reasons for the exclusion of people with disabilities from the cultural life of community is also connected with the accessibility of heritage institutions. Inadaptability means both, physical unavailability and content unavailability. Therefore, it is necessary to open the space for discussion about the awareness of museum community and about its sensibility for the problems of socially excluded people, in this case — people with disabilities.

Having a disability or chronic health condition saddles the person with more than just the physical barriers. One has to struggle with the social meaning of that disorder as well. Often society is not very accepting of illness and disability and the person affected becomes stigmatized as a result. Stigma still exists and is practiced among us. Stigma adds a social burden on top of the physical burden of a health disorder. One of the goals of the presentation was to put the light on perception of stigma, coping technique and that we can by changing our beliefs and attitudes ensure that community environments are accessible for people with disabilities, including cultural institutions. Also, heritage institutions can provide the staffs that are adequately trained in disability, implementing training as required and including service users in developing and delivering training.

The other, really important goal of the workshop Access 2 Go was practical presentations and tips about people with impaired vision and intellectual and communication difficulties (speech or language problems). We have explored terms: total loss of sight, vision impairment, intellectual functioning and

inability to communicate using the basic means of communication among people – speech. We've showed where and what are the barriers for visual impairment (objects that cannot be touched, small print size, bad color contrast, no audio tapes and no materials in Braille) and intellectual difficulties (many disturbing visual or audio elements, lack of a clear and coherent organization of material, using unnecessarily complex phrases, lack of clear, simple graphic displays). And also how we can overcome barriers - adequately describing an item (practical work with participants and tactile replicas of museum archaeological exhibits), how to present and give information (spoken and written - letter sizes, contrast, color, background...), what can ease orientation and movement of a blind and visually impaired

person (contrast, lighting, exhibits and descriptions placed in a line, exhibits placed in the level of reach 90-120 cm, descriptions angled at 45°, the most appropriate object size up to 60 cm), augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems and types of AAC systems.

All the Access 2 Go workshop experience was based "hands on" practical tips, presentations and activities and aim was to take something knowledge with you when you go back to your own cultural institution, and spread, to use it for good. We hope we've achieved our goals to increase participant awareness of disability issues and disability culture, and offer a basic understanding of the barriers preventing people with disabilities from full participation in society.

“Being a member of BMN from its establishment makes me proud, and being an active participant of MSD gives me the opportunity to strengthen existing knowledge and gain new experiences!”

Lejla Agić

“Being part of the BMA Group is a challenge and opportunity at the same time. This Network is built on trust and communication and not on authoritarian principles, and that gives us freedom to positively influence people and society in general to foster better and more human living. I am looking forward to those important challenges that I strongly believe that we can indeed influence museums in a positive way. That is why I find so important to be member of this Network where we all agree on these simple yet so important basics.”

Željka Sušić

FIND A MENTOR! Mentorship as a model of professional development - Višnja Kisić

This text aims to introduce the idea of mentorship in the professional context of museums in the Balkans and to encourage the search for mentor by giving some specific tools and tips for mentoring relationship. It is based on the experience of the Creative Mentorship program, the first mentorship program in Serbia that provides opportunities for personal and professional development of upcoming leaders in the field of culture.

About mentorship

Mentorship is a complex, interactive process which involves the transfer of knowledge and experience from a more skilled and experienced person (mentor) to a less experienced person (mentee). It is, however getting more and more common that a younger and less experienced person becomes a mentor to an older expert, because s/he has a perspective of a younger generation and the attitudes and ideas which are not yet bounded by the pre-established professional conventions. The aim of mentorship is to provide possibilities for the continuous improvement of skills and knowledge, and personal and career development. The role of a mentor is to listen and by asking the appropriate questions and for the relationship significant questions, to open spaces for new directions

in thinking, or simply to encourage an innovative and creative approach for work and everyday life. What the mentee can gain through the mentoring relationship is to further develop his/her self-esteem, to create a better personal and professional development plan, to improve on his/her own capacities, and to enlarge an existing network of contacts.

Finding a mentor

Before looking for a mentor, a mentee should spend time analyzing his/her current situation and position in a professional field. Be able to articulate the desired development direction or goal, and analyze resources, knowledge, skills and contacts needed for reaching that goal. Some of these knowledge skills and contacts will be those that the mentee already has, while some will be those that the mentee needs to acquire in order to move forward. It is exactly these areas of needed knowledge and skills where one should look for the mentor with this expertise. Once you have a desired profile of your possible mentor, search for the people that fit into it, through internet, friends, colleagues, or search for mentorship programs. Having a concrete name and contact, send an email to that person stating your current situation and development needs, explaining why you think that particular person and contribute as a mentor.



Establishing quality mentoring relationship

For a quality mentoring relationship, it is important that both the mentor and the mentee precisely define the expectations, are committed, honest and have trust in one another.

Tips for good mentoring meetings:

- On average it is optimal to have 8 to 10 meetings a year
- Plan ahead, continuity is important
- Agree in advance on the date, time and place of the next meeting

Agree few days in advance on the topic of a meeting

- Continuously evaluate your progress, particularly at the last meeting

Example of a 90min agenda:

- What's new since last time – 15 minutes
- Chosen topic/question for the day – 60 minutes
- Summary/plan for the following meeting – 15 minutes

Mentee reflection from the meeting:

- Conclusion: what did we talk about?
- Reflection: thoughts that moved me during and after the conversation?
- Consistency: what do I need to do/consider?

Use the last meeting to wrap-up and give each other feedback about what you appreciated in the relationship, what has moved you, and what might have been done differently. Finally, discuss the next steps and options for mentees development, and celebrate the beginning of the new phase.

Mentorship "out of the box"

Creative Mentorship offers a mentoring model different from mentorship in academia where mentor leads student through the scientific discipline, literature and the process of writing

and researching. It is also different from the model already established in some of the companies and even museums, where a new-coming young intern or employee gets a mentor from the same institutions, who leads him/her through the procedures and practices of that institution. Instead of connecting mentoring couples within one discipline, professional field or organization, Creative mentorship connects mentees working in heritage, arts, cultural management, creative industries, activism or education through culture, with mentors who are experts in culture, business, politics, marketing, science, healthcare, education, etc. This kind of matching challenges one's own knowledge and perspective, creates understanding of a different way of thinking and builds bridges among generations, sectors and cultures. It also fosters "out of the box" thinking and enables mentees to acquire knowledge and skills that they could not easily acquire within their own professional field.

Therefore, why not think about searching for a mentor who is pedagogue, social worker or youth worker if you are a museum educator? Having a mentor who is marketing, PR and communications expert if you are a PR in your museum? Or having a manager from business sector as a mentor for director in museum whose primary education is not in managing organizations and people?

On Creative Mentorship website www.kreativnomentorstvo.com you can find the Mentoring Toolkit available for free download and many other materials and useful links that can support you in starting a mentorship adventure! If you have any questions, ideas or want to start a mentorship program in your own context, don't hesitate to contact us on info@kreativnomentorstvo.com

“I'm so glad that BMN fulfills more and more a crucial role of supporting development, innovation and responsible professionalism in museum sector in the Western Balkans. It creates important opportunities for those professionals who are willing to learn, get new perspectives, exchange their experiences and be challenged!”

Višnja Kisić

Norms at museums

Annette Prior

The idea of the workshop was to plant a seed and make us all think, reflect upon and discuss norms which are around us. Most of us take a lot for granted if we are part of "THE NORM" in the society we live. First we discussed what is a norm. Norms vary from time and place so I started by showing photos of my grandmother and how she was allowed to break the prevailing norm and wear trousers for the first time when driving an ambulance in London during World War II. Unfortunately after the war she was expected to put on a skirt and stay in the kitchen, which suited some women just fine but not what my grandmother wanted. We looked at the new toilet sign which can be found

in many cultural institutions and museums in Sweden today. In America Bruce Springsteen had just cancelled an upcoming concert in North Carolina because of a controversial anti-LGBT law that critics say legalizes discrimination concerning toilets. It is important for places like museums to be actively working towards inclusion and being aware of what is happening in society and not be an isolated temple. Times change and norms can change. What norm would you like to change? The key themes of the session were:

1. My persons norms - in my life, my family, my friends, my home.
2. Are norms good or bad?

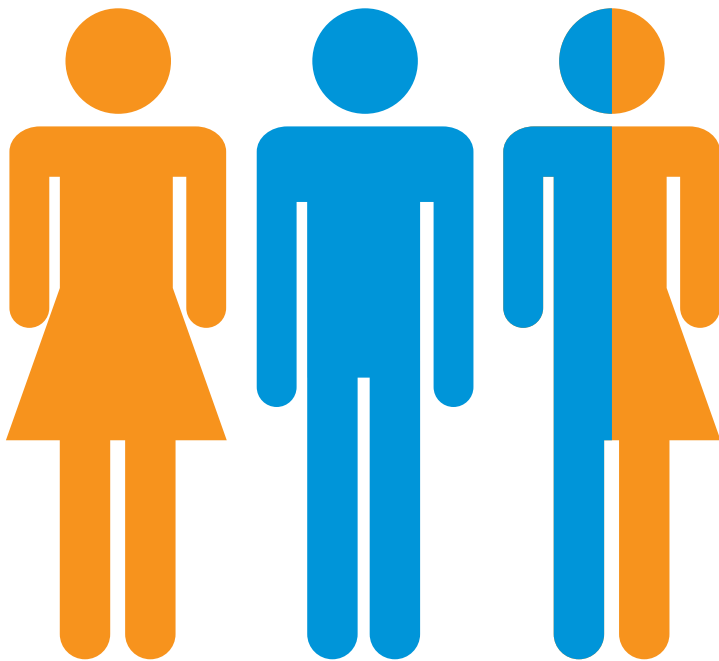


3. What can objects and collections tell you about norms?

4. Which norms are present in your museum?

We discussed power structures in museums, who decides who's story is told and how? What objects are collected and displayed in

exhibitions? Who has power and influence? Who makes the decisions? Budget and priorities? Interpretation? Collections? Exhibitions? Recruiting? Communication? Representation? Enjoy each other's uniqueness We are all different. Life would be so boring otherwise!



HÄR ÄR EN
TOALETT
FÖR ALLA

“Do they really have toilet signs like that in Swedish museums?”

**The Greek lady from Kastoria
when looking at the
toilet sign with 3 people**

Working with digital creative communities

Jasper Visser



A creative community is a group of people who regularly come together to achieve socially recognized goals. John M. Eger defines a creative community as a community “that exploits vital linkages between art, culture and commerce, and in the process consciously invests in human and financial resources to prepare its citizens to meet the challenges of the rapidly evolving post industrial, knowledge based economy and society”. A digital creative community primarily comes together on a digital platform, such as Instagram or Facebook.

In the workshop we set out to identify and create digital creative communities by focusing on their key ingredients, and their existing relations with cultural heritage.

When you want to work with digital creative communities, the first thing you need to recognize is that we are all a member of some creative community (digital or otherwise). The friends with whom

you like to make food, the members of your music group and the commenters on your favorite blog are all creative communities. You also interact with creative communities on a daily basis: Wikipedia is (the result of) creative communities, many of the festivals you enjoy are started by creative communities, as are famous art movements (the French Impressionists: a creative community).

The cultural heritage institution you represent is also a part of creative communities. First, it is part of the creative communities of its employees and volunteers. Second, it is part of the creative communities that share characteristics with its collections, knowledge, and other assets. Every creative community has 1) a shared interest, 2) a shared objective, and/or 3) a shared set of values. For instance, Wikipedians want to make the world’s knowledge available (objective) for free, for all (values). The followers of an Instagram celebrity respond to her lifestyle, clothing, etc. (interest).

Study the website, social media channels, blogs and other platforms you find to identify what Kevin Allocca calls “tastemakers”: individuals that play a large role in influencing the community. In the aforementioned GoodReads group, this may be an author. For your foodie friends, it may be a famous chef. A tastemaker does not have to be a part of the creative community. Your institution may very well be a tastemaker for some communities.

Your challenge is to start working with the tastemaker and the creative community, to become part of the digital creative community. In case of a digital tastemaker, your institution can start inviting him or her to special opening events or behind the scenes tours. If you’re lucky, they will inspire

digital creative communities to follow in their footsteps. If you then align your institution’s objectives with those of the community, and ask them in the right way, they may start helping you achieve them.

Read more:

K. Allocca, Why Videos go viral:
https://www.ted.com/talks/kevin_allocca_why_videos_go_viral?language=en

John M. Eger, The Creative Community: Forging Links Between Art Culture Commerce & Community, Pg. 4

J. Visser, Museums in the City of the Future:
<http://themuseumofthefuture.com/2016/01/28/museums-in-the-city-of-the-future/>

“ I always come away from Meet, See, Do with the impression that it is the most practical, inspirational and future proof of all of Europe’s many cultural heritage conferences.”

Jasper Visser



PARALLEL SESSION 2

Examples of projects: What can you learn from the case study of the museum of Tešanj - Mensura Mujkanović & Michele Taylor

Workshop “Examples of projects: What can you learn from the case study of the Museum of Tešanj- Mensura Mujkanović & Michele Taylor” was devised to present the participants two important projects which were implemented in Museum of Tešanj in the field of access and inclusion. First, Mensura presented a project called Inclusion disabled women in the culture through traditional house craft techniques in Tešanj area, and after that a project called Children in culture. Both projects were founded by the Stavros Niarchos foundation. In the Power Point presentation, Mensura presented project ideas, aims, activities, a lot of pictures which showed the atmosphere during the implementing of the projects and project results. Mensura said that small steps are made in Museum of Tešanj, participants in projects were very satisfied and keen on participating in similar kind of activities in the future. They believe that more promotion and public awareness actions need to be organized. As well as opportunities for interaction of people with disabilities with

arrange of different people from local community, children from schools, kindergartens, representatives from public institutions etc. All this is necessary to break prejudices that are making most of issues and challenges related to access and inclusion. After Mensura’s Power Point presentation, participants at the “Meet, See, Do” asked everything what they were interested in. After 25 minutes of PP presentation, Michele divided participants in few groups. Every group had a 10 minutes to talk about a future projects that they could implement in their museum, and every group presented their ideas.

The main objective of this workshop was to present unusual activities that one small museum done. Those projects connected Museum of Tešanj with its community and visitors.

Michele and Mensura encouraged participants to start with access and inclusion in their museums. Few participants told that they will apply some project ideas in the future based on access and inclusion.

“BMN will become the main link between museums in the Balkans.”

Mensura Mujkanović

The Museum is (not) just a building: Social awareness and how to (re)act - Emilia Epštajn & Ivana Vojt

One of the key learning objectives of our session was to show that it is possible to create socially aware and socially engaging programs not solely around currently “burning” social issues (the ones present in a certain political climate and particularly brought to the forefront by the media), but also those that are, so to speak, less obvious (less visible). As curators at the Museum of African Art in Belgrade we presented three examples from our and our colleagues work: 1. “Practicum – students thematic guided tours through the permanent display” – professional specialization for students 2. “MAA for all, all to the MAA” – special program for the elderly 3. “The Border is Closed” – a program dealing with the migrant crisis in Europe (2015/2016) Working on these examples with our group meant that we highlighted together the theme/topic/issue of each program, their target groups and format in which to realize it (exhibitions, workshops, other formats from museum practice). In short, “Practicum” is an on-going museum project, which

annually brings together 10 students from the Faculty of Philosophy for the purpose of mentoring and preparing them for the curatorial calling. The reason for introducing this program is that students have very little to no opportunity to learn about the curatorial museum profession in a practical way, from the curators and from within the museum. We have successfully completed 4 courses / 4 generations of Practicum-trained young professionals. The “All to the MAA...” project was financed by the BMN (2015/2016) and focused on a rarely seen target group at our Museum: the elderly. This target group was offered the opportunity to learn about the MAA and its collection(s) through practical ceramic workshops. For this project, the MAA “went out of its walls” and visited homes for the elderly across the city, organized events for their visit to the building itself. Finally, probably the most outwardly “socially aware” program was the “The Border is Closed” exhibition and project, which dealt with the current situation of migrant transition through Serbia (Belgrade) in 2015.



The idea was to highlight the desperate but at the same time resolute position of the “migrant” and the ways “we” act, or don’t, towards their presence in our imminent midst. The reactions of our group of session participants seemed to be positive. They enjoyed our presentation and expressed their appreciation that we used on-going ideas and projects as examples, and that we were able to offer them clear and useful points in creating a “socially aware program”. We tried to emphasize that no matter the most general theme of a given museum (whether these are historical museums, art, ethnographic or natural world collections in questions, or even galleries) it is possible to

“package” a program and make it relevant. This should be the core of exhibition and program making in museums. Working in “Balkan” museums can mean a lot of things. This is a very diverse field regarding the contexts or countries they are in, however, we also have certain shared issues we need to tackle. Making a more radical shift from a museum “as a place to visit” to a “museum as a place to create, participate and react” has yet to become our routine, museum professional mind-set. Our work as museum professionals has to be a conscious undertaking and our awareness of our social surroundings has to be our “activism” springing from within.

“
The strengths of BMN are that it connects museum professionals in the Balkans, de-centralizes the museum profession by presenting on-going practical and theoretical issues in museums through acknowledged speakers, and finally, BMN offers the opportunity for us to learn about the richness of our authentic and shared cultural heritages in the Balkans by organizing the conference in different regions such as Tirana, Novi Sad, Sarajevo and Shkodra.”

Emilia Epštajn & Ivana Vojt



The project “MemorInMotion” wanted to explore alternative ways to deal with the difficult wartime past, to confront dominant historical narratives and to question the established concept of identities. The main goal of the “MemorInMotion” workshop and the “Meet, See, Do” conference was to encourage participants to get actively engaged in discussion about history and monuments and to encourage them to reflect critically on their public culture of remembrance. Monuments dealt with in “MemorInMotion” workshop show how concepts of identity have developed in the countries of the Western Balkans and partly in Germany during the 20th century. Transformation, destruction and neglect of the existing monuments and the development of new monuments constantly “update” political concepts and perception of identity.

The “MemorInMotion” workshop engaged participants to create space for constructive dialogue and confrontation between different perceptions, for sharing new perspectives and for reflecting critically on one’s own past and the past of others. Participants had the opportunity to take a critical stance towards the culture of remembrance, the process of memorialization, e.g. through contextualizing the politics of memory and becoming aware of the difficulties of monument building, and the contested meanings of the monuments, as well as the importance of the study of monuments and culture of remembrance as a step further in the process of reconciliation. The workshop got positive feedback from all the participants. The short film “MONuMENTInMotion” especially moved them. Some of the participants were interested to implement similar projects in their own museums.

“Meeting new people gives us a chance to see new perspectives and could encourage us to try to do important things to improve ourselves, our jobs and our community.”

Merima Memić

My Museum and Me: Opening Collections to Multiple Voices - Slađana Velendečić, Elma Hodžić, Jonathan Eaton

“**M**y Museum and Me: Opening Collections to Multiple Voices” was a session about dialogue and emotion in interpretation. The objectives of the session were twofold: to present the BMN virtual exhibition project “My Museum and Me,” inviting others to join, and to demonstrate how multiple voices and perspectives can enrich the interpretation of museum objects.

We began the session with a performance. Sladjana discovered a little book lying on the table, which she showed to me. We treated the book as a mysterious museum artifact and wondered about its use. We related it to our lives. We related it to similar objects we had seen. We remarked on the interesting characteristics from our point of

view. We shared how it made us feel. Then, Elma entered. She knew the object because it was hers, so she was able to explain from the ‘expert’ point of view what it was for and what it meant to her. This little vignette allowed us to illustrate how having multiple voices can enrich the interpretation of an object, by putting it at the center of a dialogue.

Following the opening vignette, we showed how the BMN project “My Museum and Me” is focusing on broadening the voices found within museums and sharing these multiple voices in a virtual space. The museums that are participating in this project are collecting the stories, reflections and impressions of their visitors, which will then be shared those alongside curators’ interpretations within a virtual exhibition.



The best way to share the methodology behind this project is to get people doing it. So, we divided the attendees of the session into 3 groups and sent them out into the neighborhood to talk with shop owners, residents and passersby. We gave each group a photograph of an object from the collections of the Historical Museum of Shkodra, in order to see what new perspectives might come from conversing with non-curatorial voices. After a mere 20 minutes, each group was able to conduct short interviews with 3-4 people before returning to the conference venue to reflect on the experience.

During the discussion that followed, participants agreed that interviewing members of the community had been an eye-opening exercise and quite easy to do. They were impressed by the answers that were given, many times, by people who had never visited the museum, despite

living and working within sight of it. The people interviewed bridged the past and present, making connections to their own lives and their families, to concepts of hospitality, technology, faith and personal and civic identity.

Participants at the session also reflected on the large and growing collections in many museums, which have resulted in vast stores of objects that are expensive to maintain, while never used. A movement to begin collecting voices, rather than objects, can help give depth and perspective to existing collections, without adding to museums' overflowing depots. The session ended with a call for all interested museums to join the "My Museum and Me" project, broadening the number of voices collected and increasing the opportunities for making meaningful connections within and among museum collections across the Balkans.

**“MSD - 3 days of learning, exchanging,
connecting, meeting
proactive people – priceless!!!”**

Sladana Velendečić

Speed Dating session



Zana Hoxha, member of the Balkan Museum Network's Steering Board and Jasper Viser, international consultant have designed the session around our values and experiences, connecting the participants in a fun way. Activities allowed us to move around the room in laughter, as well as to talk with as many colleagues as possible. A perfect ending for the Day 1 of the conference!



DAY 2

Keynote speech: Look! Museum! Andreja Rihter

Museums today are spaces for cultural transmission, intercultural dialogue, learning, discussion and training, play an important role in - education (formal, informal, and lifelong learning), social cohesion and sustainable development. Museums have great potential to raise public awareness of the value of cultural and natural heritage and the responsibility of all citizens to contribute to their care and transmission. Today's museums have no choice but to think seriously about who their visitors are and why they come to museum, as well as about who does not visit their museum and the reason as to why they do not visit. Visitors are at the heart of the 21st Century museums' existence. If we knew the answer to the question of who goes to museums, what people do once in the museum, and what meanings they make from the experience, we would gain critical insights

into how the public derives values and benefits from museum – going which we could use to improve museums. If museums are to maintain their current popularity and success, they will need to get measurably better at understanding and serving their visitors. Today museums are among the most successful leisure venues in the world, but it is not given that museums will always be popular and successful. Also we know that financial support which was once abundant is now more limited. The public primarily used leisure as a mechanism for escaping from the physical and sometimes, the mental exhaustion of work. In the 21st Century, larger numbers of people view leisure as an opportunity to expand their understanding of themselves and their world. Rather than relaxing under the palm tree at the beach, people consider their leisure time as an opportunity to be energized by immersing themselves in new ideas, spaces and experiences. Also we should be aware

that the consequences of the major economic, social and political transitions in the 21st Century has been that more people than ever before enjoy unprecedented levels of affluence, health care, public safety. The museum visitor experience cannot be adequately described by analyzing the content of museums, the design of exhibitions, through easily quantified visitors measures such as demographics, or even by analyzing the visit frequency, or the social arrangements in which people enter the museum. To get the complete answer to the questions of why people visit museums, what they do there, and what learning/meaning they derive from experience, requires a deeper, more holistic explanation. The museum visitor experience is neither about visitors nor about museums and exhibitions, but rather it is situated within that unique and

ephemeral moment when both of these realities become one and the same – visitors are the museum and the museum is visitor. This way of thinking suggests that we stop thinking about museum exhibitions and content as fixed and stable entities designed to achieve singular outcomes and instead, think of them as intellectual resources capable of being experienced and used in different ways for multiple, and equally valid purposes. We need to appreciate that every visitor is a unique individual and that each is capable of having a wide range of very different kinds of visitor experiences. Things that people See and Do in museums are memorable because museums are places that allow people to build tangible memories based on seeing real things in appropriate contexts.

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Working together is only future for all of us in the Region. The strength for all of us in Balkans is that we went throughout the same history and experiences. We should learn from each other first. After that we can also listen what is new in the West.”

Andreja Rihter



PARALLEL SESSION 3

Museum in a suitcase

Etleva Demollari, Artemis Stamatelou and Milena Milošević Micić

We all learn in different ways that's why the Museums need to think about their learning creatively. The session offered an exploration of the learning styles, helping the participants to identify their own and to understand the differences between auditory, visual and kinesthetic learners.

While most people have a dominant learning style, nobody has just one learning style. Learning styles is a theory that suggests people learn better using different methods of learning. We perceive information using our senses. The three most practical senses in learning environments are sight, hearing and touch.

Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University, developed the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Expanding on the accepted modes for learning — auditory, visual, and kinesthetic (VAK theory) — Gardner has identified nine styles of "intelligence" for learning. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences challenged the classroom teacher and educational community by declaring that you ought to not teach the class or the group. But rather, each individual has a preferred way of learning that draws on particular skills and abilities.

Sight tends to be the preferred sense for many museum experiences as museum visitors read labels, look at collections, and view media presentations. But there are other senses museums can use to present the information that allows to the visitors to become involved, no matter what their preferred style may be.

The touch experiences bring visitors of all abilities closer to the collections. Touch tours allow participants to have an authentic experience with pre-selected collection pieces either on display or in a designated space. On touch tours, a staff or volunteer uses verbal description to facilitate the exploration and to provide additional information as the participants' hands uncover the distinctive characteristics of an object, sculpture, or painting. A visitor's hand moves over the gestalt of an object's size, shape, and weight. This allows the visitor to deconstruct the work detail by detail, becoming acquainted with the materials it is made of, how it was crafted, and how it works or was used. If the original collection piece is unable to be held, reproductions, models, and props can create similar exchanges between the visitor and the related object.

The project “The museum in a suitcase” is to look at a generating multi-sensory experience that replaces a real visit to the museum. This is motivated also by the museum’s challenge of making their collections accessible, whilst being housed in historical buildings that are not amenable for wheelchair access or for museums that not allow touching their collections. The experience should be multi-modal, engaging as many senses of the visitor as possible – tactile and aural feedback to augment/replace visual feedback for the visually impaired for example.

The session took the example of the National History Museum of Albania to show how the project “The museum in a suitcase” or “The Albanian Epic songs in a suitcase” can be used for the blind and impaired sight children and for a wider public also since in the National Historical Museum it is not allowed to touch the collections. The participants of the session had the opportunity to see the suitcase and the selected objects.

There were provided items such as lahuta (lute), tirq (traditional trousers), vest, xhubletë, embroidered gown, a horn, a cradle, medieval war cannons made of wood. All the materials

were accompanied by a label with the Braille alphabet. Writing in the Braille alphabet was implemented in cooperation with the teachers of the school for blind children in Tirana: “Ramazan Kabashi”. A documentary film on this topic was associated to the session. The lecture was illustrated by the objects that we have purchased associated with the sounds of lahuta. There were shown also tactile images of “kulla-s” (typical Albanian dwellings) realized through the device Zy-Fuse Heater.

The Museum in suitcase session objectives were to present possible ways of presentation and interpretation of the objects, but also a different ways of communication with audience, involving all senses and providing a safe space for audience to connect and feel, learn in a different ways about the symbolic meanings and aspects of the collections. One of the most important goals was to give a chance to the attendants to participate and think about their own possible models depending on the types of the collections and institutions they work with. One of the key themes was how to address and communicate collections with different target groups. Participants were surprised by the numerous options, different possibilities and use of the presented model.

“Balkan Museums Network is sharing ideas, good experiences and time together.” Etleva, Artemis and Milena – members of the Balkan Museum Access Group “The strength of the network is based on professional approach, development and communication, helping us find the possible solutions and partners in the future work. Constant tendencies towards better future through dialogue, practice and learning processes are creating new space for new bonds. Meet, See, Do was once again very useful and educational.”

Milena Milošević Micić

Gamification of Storytelling

Tina Kaplani & Bogdan Španjević



The learning objectives of the session “Gamification Of Storytelling” was to demonstrate to museum and culture professionals that the pillars of game design could be applied to daily activities without heavy equipment or technology. The key themes covered during the session were: the basics of game design and gamification, introduction of the new principle “Meaningful

play” that the lecturers have used in different projects, practical examples of possible games following the mentioned principle. Our goal was to “pull in” the participants of the session into the game itself. This model resulted with smiling faces of the participants who were having fun while gaining a real understanding of gaming and its infinite possibilities in the museum world.

“**Balkan Museum Network is a powerful tool that produces new connections, projects, ideas, meanings, and above all the sense of growth and future in the field of museums.**”

Tina Kaplani

“**At Meet, See, Do I feel at home because I am surrounded with enthusiasts who share the same passion and understanding of the importance of heritage and culture.**”

Bogdan Španjević

Toy Story! Big Project, Low Budget

Sladana Velendečić & Aleksandra Stefanov

Through session “TOY STORY! Big project – low budget” we wanted to share our interdisciplinary experience in making Museum for children as an inspiring and educative place. Taking in mind that goal we focused on specific museum’s objects – toys, since they are very common, both for children and adults. Museum for children is a place where children learn by playing about different topics and phenomena of daily life in present and past and through workshop we explore how museum objects can be displayed and interpreted in order to become understandable for children.

In session we presented how to make exhibition interactive and how we acquisition of the new objects through participatory part. But, the most important objective of workshop “TOY STORY! Big project – low budget”, was to show how Museum for children, as example of good practice, could be easily applicable in every cultural institution.

In order to achieve our aims, session was organized in two parts – theoretical, with Power Point presentation and practical, through interactive activities. With the Power Point presentation we presented Museum for children, our successful project, its methodology and concept and how we interpreted toys in the context of different phenomena of daily life. We also show how could be toys exhibited by several aspects: by chronology, by different materials that they were made of, by specific kinds such as intangible heritage etc. Participants saw how we built interdisciplinary team, what the advantages of interdisciplinary approach; what was the way for engaging museum colleagues, visitors, and local community, in general, what it took in order to take part in our project. Also, we presented some possibilities of usages of new digital technologies, media and social networks to promote and attract new audiences. At the end presentation show how we recycled old exhibition design and find good solution with low budget.



Practical part of session consisted of group-work, hands-on activity and discussion. At the beginning, as iced breaker activity every participant introduced himself and remembered a favourite toy from childhood (10 minutes). In the next exercise we showed three toys and asked them about their associations and which messages those toys could send to visitors in general (10 minutes). Then, we divided the attendees of the session into several groups. Every group gets photos of different toys. The task was to recognize different messages and phenomena the toys had and to think about the possible concept of exhibition for children. After 25 minutes, every group demonstrated their ideas and concepts to others and we open discussion about it.

Results were very impressive. Every group had it's own specific concept with different interpretations of similar toys which express richness of possibilities of those kinds of museum objects. Also, participants said that they enjoyed during the process of creating exhibition since they were pushed to use imagination and creativity. A conclusion, that we came to together was - that toys, as museum objects, are very powerful educative tool and they sent multiple messages. In the case that we are limited with budget, if we had a good team and think 'out of box' we can reach our goals. Also very important is, to take in mind that the best way to build future audience is starting from the earliest childhood.

“
**The best way to build future audience
is starting from the earliest childhood.**”

Sladana Velendečić

Success stories: Public institutions in partnership with NGOs

I am Museum - Ines Bulajić

This session covered the biggest civic campaign after the war, when it comes to culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The campaign was made and implemented by NGO Akcija from Sarajevo, small cultural independent organization. The goal was to put the issue of closed National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the top of political and media agenda, after it had been at the bottom for many years. Although the workers were not paid for more than 30 months, they were still coming to work every day, guarding the artifacts and the building. Raising the public awareness by speaking the story of the workers through their own voice was made through the following

activities/ The exhibition of the photo portraits of the workers made by Ziyah Gafic GUARDIANS OF THE MUSEUM, the concept A SHIFT FOR THE MUSEUM where the citizens came to take their shift and identify with the workers, various art programs and intensive cooperation with the media and the representatives of all public spheres in the country. The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina reopened on 15th September 2015. and the temporary model of financing has been approved. The systematic and permanent solution for the Museum and the other 6 cultural institutions that were left in legal vacuum after 1995. is yet to be found.



The biggest strength is networking and learning from the others, exchanging opinions and mapping the chances for cooperation. The future is in forming even more partnerships, campaigns and mutual projects.



Ines Bulajić



Dokufest - cinema Lumbardhi

Eroll Bilibani

DokuFest's history starts with a group of friends all coming from different professional backgrounds but connected through one common dream: Love for cinema and love for their city. The main idea behind the initiation of, then first film festival in post-war Kosovo was very simple: TO RETURN THE CINEMA BACK TO THE CITY. Through hard-work and consistency turned DokuFest into the main cultural event in Kosovo and one of the most important festivals in the region and beyond. Turning this dream into a success story and the philosophy behind was based on three things: Love for the cinema and the city Nothing is impossible approach, and blending of the entire city in the organization of the festival. This is perhaps best illustrated with the paradox of DokuFest organizing a film festival in the city without a functional cinema, nor technical capacity to support such a venture. But, the town had a lot to offer: a beautiful river, city castle, old Hamam and other historic facilities. Most importantly a very vibrant youth, eager to learn and a population known for its warmhearted hospitality. Soon afterwards these city settings transformed into cinemas, concert venues or exhibition halls. We built a temporary festival cinema literally in the riverbed, the medieval castle overlooking the town turned also to a cinema during the festival days. The walls of the buildings turned to cinema screen, while the old Hamam hosted many exhibitions, workshops and panel discussions. This approach provided unique screening experience and at the same time incorporated Prizren landmarks into our own agenda of promoting the city through culture. We believe this to be very important when talking about the effects of events like DokuFest

on the development and cultural consumption of the cities. This way we were able to create a bond with the city and to give to the citizens something that they would be proud of. A festival that now they call their own. The increasing number of participating volunteers for each year, played a major role in the growth of the festival. The enthusiasm of the founders of the festival coupled with the eagerness of young people to support the festival made DokuFest what it is today. Besides its cultural contribution and shaping public opinion abroad a study of 2015 conducted by Institute for Advanced Studies GAP – shows not only the cultural impact, but also the economic impact of the DokuFest for the city of Prizren. This analysis proves that beside a cultural character, DokuFest impacts also positively on the economic aspect. DokuFest affects positively country's GDP with 4.2 million euros per year. DokuFest's vision roots back to the vision of its founders: Return of the Cinema. A vision that doesn't foresee only an annual film festival, but is dedicated to development and promotion of Kosovo's young filmmakers and artists through its programs. Despite our extensive work in the field of culture, and its impacts we are still struggling to protect the birthplace of DokuFest - cinema Lumbardhi, the oldest cinema in Prizren. Lumbardhi Cinema in Prizren is one of the most important evidences and values of cultural identity of the Kosovar society. Preserving this value is an obligation of the current generation of the society. We have developed a management plan, and are undergoing consultative process with the community to shape the future of Lumbardhi as a cultural landmark, not only for Prizren and Kosovo, but for the entire region.



DAY 3

Keynote speech: Are Museums Political?

David Anderson, Director General, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

In the United Kingdom, museums have a long tradition of avoiding controversy and debate. We have claimed to be politically neutral. Following the Independence Referendum in Scotland in 2014, and the divisive vote to leave the European Union in June 2016, even deeper political and cultural divisions have opened up between England, as the former colonial power on the one hand, and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the other. Of course, museums in the United Kingdom have never been politically neutral, and we have never been 'one museum sector', but these fictions have now become impossible to sustain.

This year is the centenary of the Easter Rising of 1916. The Proclamation of the Provisional

Government of the rebels promised that all citizens would have religious and civil liberty, that all the children of the nation would be cherished equally, and that all women as well as men would have the right to vote. Fine ideals, but the legacy of the Rising was also a century of blood sacrifice and violence against civilians.

As WB Yeats wrote in his poem 'Easter 1916', "Too long a sacrifice may make a stone of the heart. O when may it suffice?" And Bertholt Brecht said, "Unhappy the land that is in need of heroes." The Easter Rising was a significant event not just Ireland but also for England – and yet in 2016 not one museum in England staged an exhibition to mark the centenary of the event.



PARALLEL SESSION 4

Access and Inclusion at your museum: First steps in assessing what needs doing - Michele Taylor

This session was designed as a practical exercise, with advice, on making a preliminary assessment of a museum's accessibility for Deaf and disabled people.

I started off by giving some general principles for assessing access; these included a brief introduction to the Social Model of disability since the practice of assessing access relies on us looking for obstacles in the environment rather than focusing on people's medical conditions and then attempting to guess what their needs might be. The Social Model deals in practical information; it asks individuals what their requirements are, and it provides information about the environment that people can expect to find when they arrive at the museum.

My intention was to focus on delegates' thinking on practical matters and to encourage them to take responsibility for the environment they create at their museums. I also emphasized the importance of consulting with disabled people to make sure that the changes museums are investing in are really the ones that are needed. We discussed the fact that there are obstacles that can be removed without spending very much money, as well as those that do require financial investment.

We were lucky enough to have our session programmed at the Historical Museum in Shkodra and so half of the session was taken up with a practical exercise in which delegates went around the museum in small groups. They had two tasks: to identify obstacles and then to think of ways (preferably cheap ways!) in which those obstacles could be removed or at least their effects reduced.

This is such an important exercise since it gives people practice in Social Model thinking: forget about particular disabled people and look instead at the environment and the ways in which it is difficult or doesn't work for visitors (or staff).

Of course, the Historical Museum is a good example because it is a very old site and naturally has many obstacles: for example, uneven ground, stairs and very basic toilet facilities. However, there has been work done to reduce the impact of some of these obstacles and delegates were able to see that work can be done even in the most apparently difficult situations. The pavement that has been installed in the downstairs area of the house is a great example of changes that can be made to make even ancient sites more welcoming and easier to navigate for many disabled people. It illustrates too, how making such changes can improve the experience for many other visitors and not just those who are disabled.

When the delegates returned, we compared notes and this led to discussion around priorities and implementation. My concern was partly to remove the idea that there is a formula for approaching this kind of work and that it is, to some extent, simply a case of starting somewhere. As I said to the participants at the session, you can't do everything overnight, but you can make a start; the worst thing is to allow a feeling of being overwhelmed by how much there is to do stop you from doing anything at all.

That is why, for me, the social model is so powerful, it makes this straightforward and practical and emphasizes that ensuring disabled people have access to our museums and heritage sites is our responsibility, not a charitable act. Finally, I encouraged participants to look at the Disability Toolkit which is available on-line as well as in hard copy and gives all sorts of practical ideas and examples, as well as including some articles on the theoretical basis for this work.

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Meet, See, Do is a highlight of my year. It is a joy to be in such an energized environment of people who want both to think seriously about the work they do in culture and heritage and to develop their practice. I was impressed this year, as I have been each year, by the extent to which the Balkan Museums Network has embraced access and inclusion for Deaf and disabled people as a fundamental principle for its work; this comes, not from any sense of charitable endeavor, but rather from a commitment to the notion that heritage simply is for everyone. ”

Michele Taylor

Introducing the concept and principles of Disaster Risk Management for Museums – Natalija Ćosić



General trends, such as climate change, urbanization, population growth and environmental degradation means that the frequency and intensity, as well as the impact of natural disasters, increased significantly during the last few decades. In addition to the loss of human life and economic losses, disasters have resulted in significant losses of cultural heritage, on the one hand due to damage during the disaster, and on the other hand due to unpreparedness, carelessness, recklessness, destruction, vandalism and looting. Also, in the area of preservation of cultural heritage, and recent losses caused by natural and man-made disasters shaped the way we think

about disaster management and indicated strong necessity to improve emergency preparedness for the cultural heritage protection, taking into account socio - economic factors and the needs of the community engagement. The main purpose of the workshop is to contribute to better understanding of catastrophic risks and to provide structure for more efficient disaster risk management model for the cultural heritage as well as reliable and the comprehensive plan for emergency situations. Part of the workshop is dedicated to the reduction of catastrophic risk and the process of stabilization and rescue of cultural heritage in the event of a disaster. Due to this concept, workshop consisted

of disaster simulation, several exercises as well as several core topics regarding disaster management in museums. Thus, program started with simulation of disaster in fictional museum. Participants had task to create teams, plan salvage and to perform evacuation of the part of collection (didactic material) from set disaster scene. After brief discussion and evaluation of the process, participants were introduced with several issues: *Disaster risk Management Introduction *Risk Assessment Concept *Phases of Emergency Reaction Activities *First Aid actions *Triage activities

*Documentation and communication aspects. Even though time was extremely short for this type of program, participants were satisfied with shared and gained information, estimating that it was very interesting and instructive session. Particularly, simulation was singled out as most interesting part of workshop, since it clearly illustrated the importance of preparation and planning in disaster situation. General conclusion was that this kind of topic is something that is missing in their professional education and that there is important need for this kind of training in their museums.



“

The power and advantage of BMN is that it brings together experts with similar professional legacy, but with most diverse personal concepts, experience, solutions and ideas!”

Natalija Ćosić

Divisive history? How can historical topics be addressed in a constructive way in museums - Nicolas Moll



To what extent can museums in post-conflict-societies avoid to deepen existing division lines, within and between countries, and on the contrary contribute to tackle or to overcome these divisions? This workshop explored possibilities of museums to address historical topics in a constructive way through a creative and interactive exercise: In four parallel teams the participants were given the following task: "Your team is applying for a grant calling for the creation of an exhibition which should a) deal with a topic related to the history of the 20th century in the Balkans', and b) contribute to tackle or overcome existing division lines within and/or between countries of the Balkans'. Please discuss and decide about the following points: Which topic are you choosing? Which methodological/museographic approach do you chose? What title do you chose for your exhibition? Where do you want to show your exhibition?"

After the group work, the four teams presented their proposals: the topics addressed ranged from "Fascist occupation in the Balkans 1939-1941", "Forced emigration outside of Greece after the end of the Greek civil war", "The influence of Yugoslavia on the lifestyle of Kosovo Albanians", and "Forced migrations as a result of World War One". Despite the different topics, one common point to the four groups was that they all had chosen a transnational perspective. Also methodologically the approaches were similar: The groups proposed mainly to choose a multi-perspective, in one hand, to focus on daily life and individual stories on the other hand. Both were seen as methods that help to deal constructively even with sensitive and difficult topics. All groups proposed to organize their exhibition as a travelling exhibition, in accordance with the transnational perspective of their topic. One interesting point was that three out of four groups had chosen a topic

linked to war and violence (while this had not been requested in the task): This raised a discussion about the question “why we focus often on violent periods of history and why do we not deal more with positive events” which could also be a way to tackle existing division lines in our societies. Concerning the question of multi-perspective, during the workshop. was presented the example of “History of the

Great War” in Péronne (France): This museum was conceived by the historians and curators of France, Germany and the United Kingdom. It shows in parallel objects from these three countries in order to illustrate similarities and differences in the relation of the French, German and British societies towards the First World War.

“ I experienced the Meet, See, Do - conference as a very stimulating mix of lectures, workshops, exercises, visits and networking. It is important to continue this work, in order to strengthen the connections between museum professionals in the Balkans and also to make their work more known in other European countries ”

Nicolas Moll

Role-play: "Curator vs. Artist"

Andrej Bereta



The "Curator vs. Artist" workshop was held at ARKA center on the third day of the Meet, See, Do conference in Shkoder, Albania. For me, as co-creator of this role-play with my colleague Srđan Tunić, it was a really challenging situation. This is because for the first time it was supposed to involve professionals from the public field, mostly a bit older than our previous participants (students, younger artists, etc.), and from different backgrounds in terms of both profession and nationality. I was very interested to check my ability to engage all of them in workshop. Role-play is not such a common tool in education,

at least not in the Balkans. It is demanding because during the preparation period you have to think about potential situations and predict the reaction and reception of the participants. Once they get into their roles, things might get slightly out of control, because people try to defend their own position, which creates a great role-play environment, but might go in some unplanned directions. There is a time consuming element too - if you manage to engage people to behave in a relaxed manner to make them comfortable in their roles, you have to ensure that they do not get carried away. On the other hand, it is best to leave enough room for individual free

styling from participants while creating their roles. Those were just a few of my concerns. However my colleagues actually accepted the roles with passion and dedication. It was truly great to watch them become absorbed in their roles, as if it were real, and to listen to them communicating and arguing their points. When I announced that the role-play was over, most of them wanted to continue. But it was a time for the final step - reflection. It was very important to let the participants discuss their impressions, feelings and thoughts about the situations they created in the role-play. From my point of view they pinpointed all of the important things that are essential for fluid, honest and fair communication between professionals, in order to understand other opinions, themselves, and to recognize mutual interests and goals. Since this role-play was based on a true situation, which they knew, there was even more to discuss in relation to that. But the timeframe was already slightly breached, and we had to close our workshop with a relaxed atmosphere and good vibes. I learned some new things in the workshop and had a good time as well. I hope the feeling was mutual. "Curator vs. Artist" is a role-play that consists of two groups of participants (up to 12 in total), who communicate between themselves as representatives of one of the roles (curator or artist) through a flexible framework/screenplay.

Gradually developing ideas and a position in the overall discussion, all participants have enough creative space, depending on their imagination, to express themselves both individually, and as representatives of one of the chosen roles. Once the role play is over, participants suggest topics to discuss afterwards, and that is the most important part of this workshop - to pinpoint important facts, locate crucial moments, re-think the importance of communication, and to learn something in the relaxing and creative context of this workshop. Essentially it is about the importance of communication, openness and defining your own position as well as understanding the position of others, through creative discussion and trying to reach the same goal. It is about breaking some old stereotypes too, such as the relationship between artists and curators, which is still often seen as possibly conflicting. The role-play developed based on a true story in the "About and around curating" project for students from three faculties of the University of Belgrade, as an integral part of their academic course, and was officially certified and held in Belgrade 2012/13. Since then, it has been adapted for multiple scenarios (Mikser Festival 2013, ArsKozara, several exhibition projects, guest lecturing for students of Cultural management in Kaunas, Lithuania, etc.).

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The number of dedicated professionals in the field of practical museology ready to learn from each other about examples of good practice, and interested to overcome stereotypes within the profession and more broadly; Awareness of each other's presence in the regional field of culture, and direct communication that might lead to the development of some collaborative programs in future; Possibilities for collaborations on different levels: cross-sector, regional, between institutions etc.”

Andrej Bereta

The Talk Show:

Who is afraid of history-teaching in museums?

Maša Avramović, Nicolas Moll, Denis Detling facilitated by Elma Hašimbegović

Are we afraid of teaching history/histories in museums because history is often seen as controversial and being too sensitive topic? Why is it important to teach history/histories within the museums? How can this be done and what are the challenges in doing so? These were the key questions of the Talk show which gathered three professionals actively engaged in history education in and around museums: Maša Avramović teaching assistant at the Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade and head of C31 - Centre for Developing Children's Rights Culture, organization that develops educational programs with young people based on the use of history and museums as in learning democracy; Denis Detling former history teacher and museum pedagogue who initiated many educational

programs in the Museum of Slavonija in Osijek, where he is a director now; and Nicolas Moll historian based in Sarajevo, initiator of the Memory Lab platform for dialogue on difficult memories and reconciliation, active in the work with international groups mainly from Balkan and Western Europe in the field of history education. The discussion during the Talk show brought up the issues how we understand the role of the museum and teaching history. Is the museum "treasure of knowledge", "guardian of truth" or space for dialogue, reflection and creation of meaning? Do we teach history by transferring facts and knowledge or by inviting (young) people to engage in fundamental questions, encounter "people from the past" and their stories, reflect upon (past) societies and different perspectives on history?



Maša Avramović presented an example of the educational program “Museum of the Past for the Future” in which the difficult heritage of WWII in Serbia, museum collections and memorial sites are used as a starting point for reflection on issues of discrimination, human rights and freedom. Learning history becomes a tool to raise relevant ethical and political questions, consider historical events and processes and reflect upon how history can be relevant for the present and our on-going efforts to build democratic society. In the dialogue with the audience, it was pointed out that young people usually have certain interpretations of history often influenced by existing public discourses. Therefore, museum can become an important forum for young people by inviting them for dialogue, opening new perspectives and encouraging them to reflect upon learning from history to influence the present and the future. Denis Detling shared his experiences in creation of learning programs within the museum, presenting several approaches and examples. Museums today can prepare interactive guides through exhibitions, develop

additional educational materials and/or conduct educational projects. These are possible models or ways how to teach history in museums, even sensitive and controversial history, and at the same time to communicate heritage and be relevant for the school curriculum. Nicolas Moll added international perspective and reflection on how is to teach history in and through museums with international groups of students, teachers or NGO-activists. He pointed out the importance of including diverse groups in dialogue and reflection on experiences from different countries which is often helpful for opening new perspectives and addressing sensitive and difficult topics of own country’s history in a constructive and non-confrontational way. The dialogue with the audience was concluded with pointing out that teaching histories in museums is a complex and challenging issue which assumes readiness to create space for dialogue and different interpretations, taking ethical stands, acknowledging young people as partners, and developing tight partnerships between museum actors and history education actors outside of the museums.

**“Museum is a forum
for dialogue.”**



BMN ASSEMBLY MEETING

Like every year, “Meet, See, Do” conference was the time to have BMN general Assembly meeting. Topics that were discussed were reporting on activities in 2015. Everyone was informed that the Network has been registered in April 2015, and that on-going projects are dealing with Access and Inclusion, Interpretation, Capacity building, Funding for the small grants and Leadership development. Regarding access and inclusion Chairperson of the Assembly, Elma Hašimbegović informed everyone that a new project has been initiated through Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB), with the financial support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation; That new Balkan Museum Access Group is established and that other activities will deal with the ‘museum in a suitcase’ training for craftsmen. As for interpretation, a virtual exhibition title ‘My Museum of Me’ has been produced as a collaborative project of eight museum members; two training workshops on interpretation have increased understanding and skills of the Network members for creative communication. In the previous year five small-scale projects implemented resulting in increased accessibility of museums that have received the grants. In terms of leadership, the second generation of the WILD (Women International Leadership Development) Program has been successfully finalized.

Everyone present has been reminded of the structure of the Network in terms of institutional and individual membership in the Network and decision making procedures, as well as listing two meetings of the BMN Steering Board that were held in 2015. Everyone present was informed that the Network has a new website with sub-sites for the conference and the virtual exhibition. Also for the visibility of the Network’s work three publications have been produced: “Balkan Museums without Barriers” on access and inclusion, “Disabled people in museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and “Meet, See, (critically) Do Conference Proceedings”. Key partners for the Network are CHwB, SEE Heritage Network, NEMO, International Coalition of the Sites of Consciousness, Social Justice Alliance of Museums and British Council. Apart from past activities, future activities have also been presented for the period March – December 2016 especially related to the Call for small projects 2016. Other issues on the Assembly agenda have been approving the new member explaining the procedure for the online voting as nine individuals have been the candidates for the position. In order to plan the operational plan for the year 2016/2017. group brainstorming has been organized from which an amazing number of ideas has been generated. This list will be the basis for planning the future work of the Balkan Museum Network.



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

The conference was funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

CH
WB
Cultural
Heritage without Borders
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

The conference was implemented in partnership with the Cultural Heritage without Borders Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ABOUT BMN

The Balkan Museum Network (BMN) exists to celebrate, preserve and share the complex common heritage of the Balkans and to create, through cooperation, a strong, collective voice for Balkan heritage and the museum profession.

BMN is a unique structure that welcomes and works for all museums in the Balkans, finding ways for cooperation and exchange in difficult contexts. We also connect museums within broader heritage sectors (government institutes/agencies and NGOs in heritage field) and establish international ties.

Members of the network are museums, museum professionals (individual membership) and NGOs devoted to promotion and protection of cultural heritage.

You can support The Balkan Museum Network in the following ways:

- Join the E-Community by following us online and subscribing to the Newsletter
- Volunteer for one of the museums
- Be a partner in one of BMN projects
- Invite us to conduct a workshop in your institution /foundation,
- Link 2 Us
- Make a donation and become a friend of the BMN
- Become a sponsor
- Continue dialogue



info@bmuseums.net



Tel: + 387 33 267 915

Fax: + 387 33 267 916



www.bmuseums.net



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