



On Ethnographic Museum of Istria (EMI)
Lidija Nikocecic (EMI, Croatia)

이스트리아 민족지박물관과 무형유산

리디야 니코체비치
(이스트리아 민족지박물관, 크로아티아)



Lidija Nikočević

Safeguarding intangible culture: Croatian experience

CROATIA



MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE 2003 UNESCO CONVENTION BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

- 1999 - The Act on the Preservation of Cultural Assets
- 2002 – Advisory Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of Culture was formed
- 2004- Department for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of Culture was established
- 2005 - The ratification of the 2003 Convention



ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ICH

Since 2002:

- 7 experts from various scientific and expert institutions
- Experts for specific types of intangible heritage
- Encouraging its legal and practical safeguarding
- Preservation and promotion of ICH



COMPETENT BODIES FOR SAFEGUARDING ICH



- Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research
- University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities, Department for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology
- Croatian Cultural Congress
- Istrian Centre for Intangible Culture
- University of Zadar, Department for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology
- Croatian Chamber of Trade
- Ethnographic Museums
- Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics
- Folk Dance Ensemble of Croatia "Lado"
- Croatian National Tourist Board

REGISTERED CULTURAL ASSETS

Number of the assets inscribed on the National Inventory – **148**

Register of Cultural Assets:

1. List of Registered Cultural Assets -**143**

- language and, dialects, oral expressions of all kind: **19**
- folk creativity in the domain of music, dance, play, customs, ceremonies, rituals: **47**
- traditional craftsmanship: **77**

2. List of Cultural Assets under Preventive Safeguarding/Protection: **5**

- language, dialects, oral expressions and oral literature of all kind: **1**
- traditional craftsmanship: **4**



PROPOSALS

- The applicant(s) for the establishment of the safeguarding of intangible cultural property can be every private or legal entity in the Republic of Croatia
- individuals, communities, institutions, local heritage and city museums, NGOs, local and regional administrations, departments of the Administration for cultural heritage safeguarding of the Ministry of Culture, etc.
- Proposals for the inscription in the Register are submitted in the departments of the Administration for cultural heritage safeguarding on the **application form** issued by the Ministry of Culture.



THE APPLICANTS

The applicant - **does not necessarily need to also be the bearer** of a cultural asset, and does not necessarily need to recognise the element as part of own cultural heritage (e.g. if the applicant is the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore or some other institution).



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Financial support from the Ministry of Culture
- *Public Call for Proposals for Programs in Culture in the Republic of Croatia*
- research, collecting, enlisting, education for transferring knowledge and skills, seminars, workshops or regular education programs, exhibitions, classes, performances, audiovisual recordings
 - along with local authorities
- Support of various cultural events and festivals



THE SYSTEM OF MONITORING

The system of monitoring of inscribed ICH assets involves the experts from the Ministry of Culture as well as experts from the Administration for cultural heritage safeguarding of the Ministry of Culture, that are in charge for different geographical area.



Problems:

- The use of the word “protection” in the majority of the documents on ICH, issued by the Ministry of Culture
- Recognizing the activity of various Folk Dance Ensembles that perform dances and sing folk songs on stage as ICH
- Stressing the word HERITAGE inevitably leads to the petrification of the cultural assets that they are trying to “protect”.



Intangible cultural heritage vs. Intangible culture

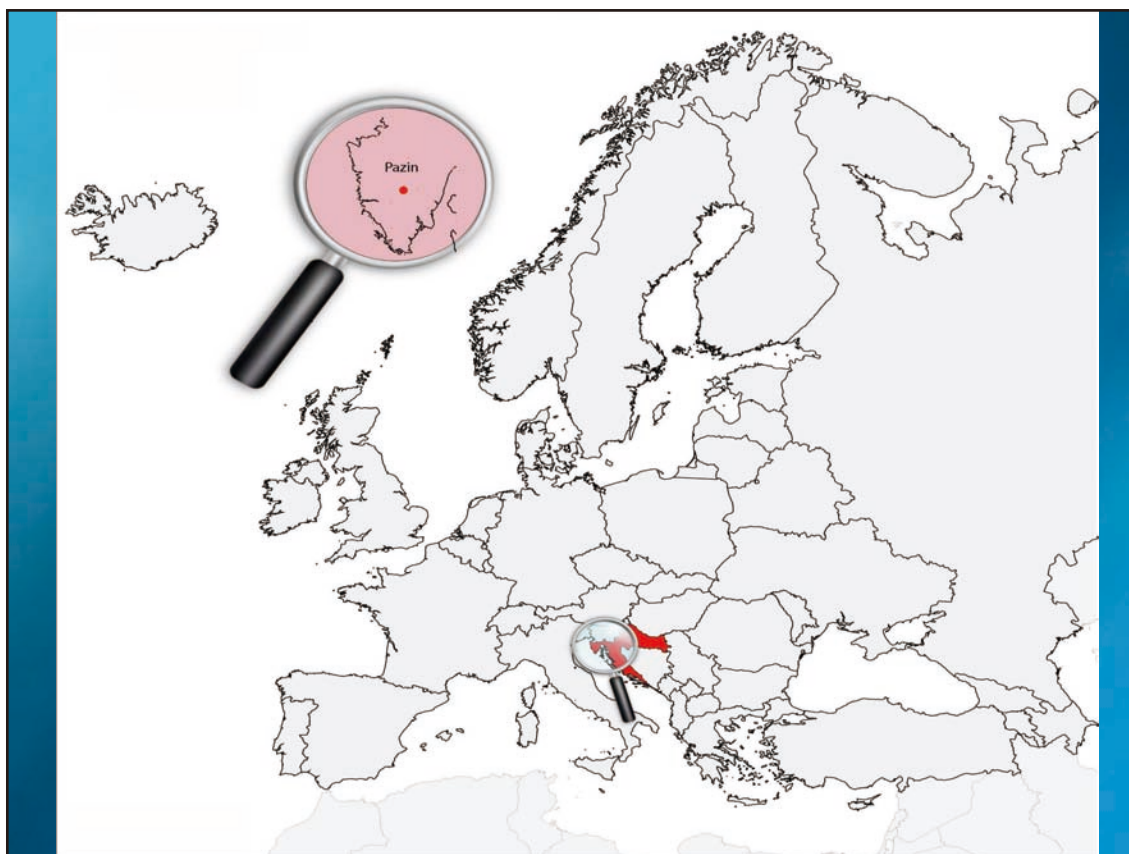
Heritage begins where culture ends

Intangible cultural heritage

- Risks of petrification
- Risks of dealing with constructed heritage and fixed cultural practices
- the “top-down” relation in dealing with living culture
- focused on reproduction

Intangible culture

- attention to processes
- “safeguarding” instead “protection”





anthropologisation of museums

- exhibitions are not necessarily focused on the materiality of objects. Rather, exhibitions “use them as a means to explore ideas, themes and relationships” (Clearly 2006:89).
- wide acceptance and usage of intangible qualities and potentials of the collections
- culture is now more and more understood as everyday practice instead of being divided into “high” and “low” culture

Inclusive / Participatory / Post Museums

- Respects multiply voices
- reflects “more sophisticated understanding of the complex relationship between culture, communication, learning and identity that will support a new approach to museum audiences (Hooper-Greenhill 2007:1)
- fosters multiple understanding and the interpretation of collections
- stimulates participation of different members of the community
- unveils new connections between different elements in a museum
- education and knowledge are culturally situated, so that knowledge becomes relative; learning processes are based in experience
- The post-museum doesn't offer ready made answers; on the contrary, it confuses and questions instead

The determining influence of the Economic crisis on museums

- Has stressed the expectations tied to the purpose of museums
- precisely the concept of the Post-Museum with the strong emphasis on multivocality, engagement and participation using intangible aspects of collections has been successful in proving that museums are irreplaceable, unique and that they at the same time have general social relevance.

Participation and learning skills: workshops for visitors



None of workshops tried to communicate “traditional” historical content only; on the contrary, new material or new approaches were introduced in order to evaluate tradition adding contemporary taste, needs or material.

The most important was the quality of engaging tourists into doing and learning something that connects them to local traditions, stimulating their creativity

Centre for Intangible Culture

The aim of The Centre for Intangible culture of Istria

- to archive documentation of intangible culture (both existing material and by collecting new material),
- to enrich museum projects with the intangible aspects of the material
- to connect communities with intangible culture through various programs
- to organize their meeting and exchange
- To stimulate young creative musicians and artists in general to use some of the traditional elements of local culture into their new production





The revitalization an old small town pub



- A space as a trigger for remembering and sharing many memories, stories and anecdotes
- Social practices were able to reconnect a sense of place.

Targeting students at High schools and Universities

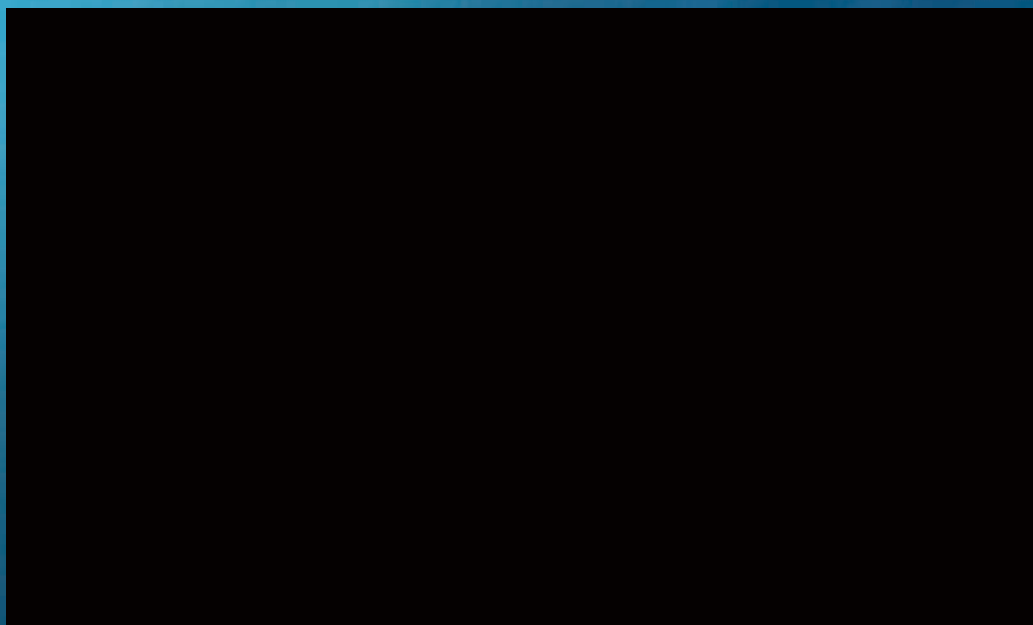
- **encouraging** students to question to a certain degree previous knowledge
- **instructing** in how to do research, document and analyze elements of intangible culture.
- **learning** how to do interviews, photo/video documentation and archive documentation,
- **shaping** the results into a presentation and/or as a contribution to a joint exhibition



Collaborating with local initiatives, especially Eco-Museums in Istria

- The Ethnographic museum of Istria together with its Centre for Intangible Culture has long-term collaboration, formalized also through contracts with Eco-Museums of Istria, such as ISTRIAN DE DIGNAN from Dignano/Vodnjan and BATANA Eco-Museum in the coastal town of Rovinj.





Dilemmas & problems



National/regional romanticism and political ideologies transmitted through institutions, folklore associations, etc.

- Petrified “truths” and myths tied to heritage
- Clear and fixed rules on how folklore should be performed
- Orientation towards reproduction rather than towards creativity

Communities, representatives, exclusivity

Communities sometimes

- accentuate the uniqueness or exclusive value of their cultural heritage (when compared to neighboring traditions)
- Have an idealized picture of the better past
- A small group of people or individuals impose their version of the past
- Fear that a competing community would copy and eventually overtake elements of (thier) heritage

The notion of INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY doesn't acknowledge the fact that imitating is inbuilt in the nature of cultural contact, i.e. culture itself since culture could be in the contemporary context seen as a value that one could “sell” and profit from



The invention of tradition or/and a constant transformation and reinterpretation of traditions



- Choosing from the past only those elements that fit into the desired self-image
- Inventing desirable practices and presenting them as traditional
- Expelling undesirable parts of tradition that don't fit in the today's criteria - and this is the practice of both local, national and international level (including UNESCO)

- How to interpret and deal with the chosen expressions or chosen heritage that a group endorsed just a couple of years ago?
- Is this just an experiment that will soon be forgotten?
- Which expression is representative for a community in such a situation– the one that had lasted up until a few years ago, or the one overtaken lately?
- Who decides about that?

The only way

- To respect multiple voices and endeavor to find a common ground for various approaches and understandings of intangible culture
- To understand culture as a process
- To shape an inclusive platform as a way of promoting dialogue among stakeholders, communities, teachers and museum professionals

Only through the steady communication can a certain level of mutual understanding be achieved; that is a precondition for confidence, exchange and collaboration