

# I, WE AND OTHERS

## Images of my World

A Guide to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum Permanent Exhibition





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A Guide to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum Permanent Exhibition

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## Slovene Ethnographic Museum on the Map of World Museums

Tanja Roženberger

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The publication of the English translation of the guide to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum permanent exhibition, titled *I, We, and Others: Images of My World*, comes with a slight delay. While there are several reasons for this it is far more important that the translated guide has been eagerly anticipated by our professional colleagues abroad. After learning about the concept of the exhibition, or else viewing it in person, many of them, along with the interested public, wished to explore the presented content in greater detail and enhance their knowledge about the related subjects. The exhibition, which was opened in 2009, convincingly put the Slovene Ethnographic Museum on the map of anthropological museums. Since its narrative is designed as an arc spanning from the beginning, the birth, to the end, the eternity, everyone can recognize in it their own personal story, the stories of other people, or those of their and many other families, and perceive connections between the world, nature, culture, and the society - all of them on a common, universal journey.

In the editorial of the Slovene edition of the guide (2013) the then director of the Museum, Bojana Rogelj-Škafar, wonders about the position of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum both at home and abroad. A decade after the opening of this exhibition and after its evaluation, it is possible to claim that our Museum has established connections with similar institutions in Europe and on a global scale. It follows new professional tendencies in museology, which, at the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is marked by new theoretical paradigms adopted by cultural, ethnological, and ethnographic museums, and by their conceptual transformations. At the end of the second millennium, this type of museum is undergoing a complete transformation, and in order to establish balance in the world the modern urban society imposes on it the most responsible tasks. They include the search for transformed identities in the era of globalization and new sociopolitical integration and separation; establishment of cultural contacts; the search for the European character of ethnological material; and the concept of universality and world culture. All of the above creates new perspectives for the understanding of culture. Conceptual changes and reorganization of museums, and their consequent renaming, indicate a new era of cultural, ethnological, and ethnographic museums. With their updated content, they critically examine their activities in the past and present and raise questions about past ways of object acquisition; decolonizing processes within museums; modern approaches to collecting museum material; connections with the artefacts' countries of origin; and the ethics of exhibiting sacred objects of individual cultures. They wonder how museums may contribute to the development and processes of the movement of people and goods, and which objects should be selected to represent the world of today. The exhibited material raises questions about the impact of globalization on our lives and the consequences of the present rapid globalization.



The process of the transformation of cultural, ethnological, and ethnographic museums is still underway. While some of them are presently in the process of designing new permanent exhibitions those that have already been modernized all emphasize that their mission is to convey the role of humankind and cultural diversity. Since it is precisely this topic that represents the central recurrent theme of the exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* it comes as no surprise that some museums regard this exhibition concept as a precedent for the evaluation of conceptual changes.

The period between the 2009 opening of the exhibition and the present, when the project, which is naturally constantly updated, is being crowned with the publication of the guide in the English language, has confirmed the lucidity of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum and has firmly installed it on the map of world museums. It can be argued that the exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* is also part of the development process of the installment of museum institutions in an urbanized modern society, and that it considerably contributes to a better understanding of our multicultural world. Such insights are the most we can give, and the most we all need. And the need for them still increases.

## Between Starting Points, Structure, Message, and Incentive

Janja Žagar

The basic design of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum's permanent exhibition, which consists of several parts, was created in the mid-1990s (Smerdel 1996, Dular 1996, Žagar 1996). Its concept included a thorough consideration of the museum as an institution – of the principles of its operation, ways of communication, and the museum's objectives in the modern multicultural society. After our museum had moved to its current location in 1997, we presented to the public its outline in the form of smaller sample exhibitions. One of these concerned the structure of the museum fund (Smerdel et. Al. 1997), another was a thematic exhibition conceptualized on the basis of the collection of missionary F. Baraga (Terčelj 1997); both of them indicated the course of the first part of the permanent exhibition. Adopting the theme of birth and childhood in Slovenia, the third one symbolically presented a model for the later second part of the permanent exhibition (Žagar 1997).

All integral parts of the permanent exhibition were not realized simultaneously. They were presented for critical evaluation both to the professional and the lay public over several years. Titled ***Between Nature and Culture***, the first one welcomed its first visitors in 2006. The following year saw the realization of the introductory film to the exhibition, ***Images of Daily Life in Slovenia's Past***. The film and its specific media language complements both exhibitions, especially when dealing with issues that are difficult, or indeed virtually impossible, to present due to the absence of artefacts and other sources. At the end of 2009, the museum inaugurated the second part of its permanent exhibition under the title ***I, We, and Others: Images of My World***. Each of these three parts is distinguished by a broad scope of interest, research, collecting, and exhibition interpretation, all of which determine museum work.

The two parts of the permanent exhibition, which complement yet to a certain extent even contradict each other, invoke a comparison with a coin. Each side of this coin shows a different image, conveys a different message, and has its own distinct

Banners on the side façade of the Museum. Graphic representations of the two permanent exhibitions and their diverse principles converge in a unified symbolic depiction of the tree, with the title and logo of each exhibition on either side (photo by J. Žagar).



Title screen of the introductory film *Images of Daily Life in Slovenia's Past*. Film script and text by Gorazd Makarovič, illustrations and animation by Irena Romih, directing and editing by Amir Muratović, camera by Bojan Kastelic, Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, and Robert Doplihar, film tricks by Rasto Novakovič, music author and performer Tomaž Rauch. Produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. DVD, 13 minutes.

purpose, narrative mode, selection, and classification of the material/information. The most pronounced difference between the two parts of the permanent exhibition is the type of contextualization and interpretation of museum material. This also determines the contents and the methods of offering the changing social environment what is needed for a better and more tolerant coexistence of individuals and social groups.

Titled ***Between Nature and Culture***, the first part of our permanent exhibition is also presented as “*the treasury of Slovene and non-European heritage of the daily and festive life.*” It is largely based on museum collections and depicts, through museum objects arranged in display cases, an ordered “world of objects”, teaching visitors about their own, and partly also about foreign, heritage as perceived by the authors of individual exhibition chapters who have drawn on the findings of their discipline and science. Cultural elements are interpreted through museum heritage, which is segmented, classified, and typologized in terms of functional, formal, developmental, geographical, and/or ethnic criteria. The authors’ findings and messages are limited to the (presumable) characteristics of the common – of social groups, geographical regions, and historical periods. These interpretations deal neither with elements that are universally human nor with those that are specifically individual. Such an explicitly object-oriented exhibition offers a wealth of information and targets school groups and various domestic and foreign groups. This emphasis on heritage can also serve as an inspiration for modern creativity and the use of leisure time (Židov 2008).

The second part of the permanent exhibition, which we have named ***I, We, and Others: Images of My World***, is “*an exhibition about human beings and their positioning in the world.*” It is designed as a reflection on what it means to be human and how to be Human as part of the World. It explores the question (which has absolutely no comprehensive answer but many partial ones) of how the nature of humanity and a specific cultural environment are peculiar to each person, and how they are reinvented through that person’s agency. This exhibit does not wish to be a poetic narrative about our society,



our culture, or our history. In fact, it highlights the relative nature of the concept of Us and that which is ours, and of the meaning of Other and different. This is certainly the core of the question of social identities and identity processes at the level of personal and group life, and is also indicated by the title collocation of *I-we-others*. The second part of the exhibition title, *Images of My World*, discusses the relation between the actual, wide world and the individual’s subjective perception of it.

The narrative of the exhibition is based on numerous examples from 19<sup>th</sup> - and 20<sup>th</sup> - century Slovenia, complemented by those from other geographical areas and time periods, including those from the modern multicultural world. Neither systematic nor unilaterally instructive about the historical development of one’s own culture, such a variegated mixture of examples can only draw attention to cultural diversity and may sometimes seem ahistorical. Instead of teaching about the history of a given area the exhibition focuses on the relationship between personal, collective, and historical memory. Rather than on the past itself, an important form of personal and collective positioning is based on the individual’s attitude to this past.

Chest of drawers – a symbol of the ordered world of objects and information (logo of the exhibition *Between Nature and Culture*).

Systematically organized world of knowledge on museum heritage in the vitrine layout of the exhibition *Between Nature and Culture* (photo by B. Zupančič).



In this respect, relations between personal, collective, and universal heritage become just as important. In the broadest sense of the word, heritage encompasses everything that has been handed down by previous generations; in practice, however, it concerns only selected parts of the past – not only those that have managed to escape oblivion but, even more importantly, those that each generation perceives and defines as the symbols of that which is “ours.” They are supposed to present us as a distinct community and separate us from “others”, particularly by emphasizing our positive traits. Each time, heritage is therefore a newly defined cross-section of the past that is sought according to the criteria and needs of the present.

It is not the aim of this exhibition to teach our visitors about museum heritage. It is presented only as one of the many possible selections of the past and is therefore neither unquestionable nor self-evident. In order to be able to ask how this material heritage is formed and how its meanings change over time, we have selected it according to different criteria and added new museum contexts to it.

Returning to our previous metaphor about the two sides of a coin, the first side of our museum coin offers (professional and institutionalized) **findings and insights about the different forms** of “ours” and “theirs”; the second, on the other hand, highlights and encourages the need for (professional and individual) **consideration of the relativity and construct** of “mine,” “ours,” and “other.” Nevertheless, both parts of the permanent exhibition are active mediators between the museum (museum heritage) and the contemporary society and its current issues.



The guide to the exhibition *Between Nature and Culture* was published in 2008 (Židov 2008) and its English edition a year later. Containing all texts from the exhibition, the guide was furnished with the pictorial material (which is not included in the exhibition) and supplemented with explanations of the principles and objectives of the exhibition.

The guide to the second part of our permanent exhibition, *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* is finally in our hands as well. Its design tries to capture the elements that characterize the exhibition and indicates the connection between both parts of the permanent exhibitions. Its content, however, veers in another direction. Until its publication the structure of the exhibition, together with all the texts, had been accessible to visitors of the museum’s websites, with summaries available as audiovisual guides in Slovene and English. But instead of publishing the texts from the exhibition, we have designed this guide to include an explanation of our ideas, principles, selections, and aims in order to preserve them in printed, and therefore more permanent, format.

The concept of the exhibition is presented in the light of selected theoretical ideas that deal with the socio-cultural factors that supplement the individual’s biological nature. It explores people’s way of life, agency, and ways of making sense of their world. Explained is the basic structure of the exhibition as well as the building blocks that provide the foundation for the exhibition narrative.



Symbolic ambiance and diversity of displayed items are designed to stimulate reflections (photo by B. Zupančič).

Human figure consisting of seven squares and seven colors (logo of the exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World*).



The authors of the texts in this guide are also the authors of individual exhibition chapters. Their texts aim to explain, through the written word and images, the symbolic elements conveyed by the content: space design, scenic elements, images and museum objects, and the significance of the selected colors, light, sounds, and the content available on touch screens. All of these had been selected deliberately and not for purely aesthetic reasons. The texts highlight ideas and concerns that were of key importance in the process of the selection and application of the available material because these decisions are crucial for its final interpretation. Despite the uniform baseline concept of the exhibition on the one hand and the guide on the other, each author has selected their own path. The decision on the emphasis, material selection, style, and interpretation of the exhibited material were left entirely to their judgement. The responsibility for the content of the text therefore lies entirely with its author.

The texts are followed by a list of the exhibited items. The list is arranged according to each exhibition chapter and the display cases in it, and furnished with visual “views” of objects on display in each showcase. This is followed by an explanation of the strategies of addressing and involving potential visitors by means of additional activities and programs prepared for the exhibition, and of the principal aims of the exhibition.

We believe that we have thus contributed to even greater clarity of the exhibition narrative. In this manner, the main messages of our exhibition may reach the part of the domestic and foreign public that is unable to peruse the exhibition in person.

### Theoretical Guidelines Underlining the Exhibition Design

With its many limitations as well as communication advantages, a museum exhibition is a very specific construct. Attention span and interest of visitors are not limitless, and there is no guarantee that the principal message of the exhibition will be accepted as planned.

As a rule, the concept and the design of each exhibition should be directed by relevant issues in various disciplines and in museology. An exhibition is clearly not the perfect medium for conveying abstract findings and theories. Nevertheless, its basic premises and their materialization can be subtly influenced by reflections and theoretical questions that are closer to the social sciences, the humanities, and museum tenets than to the general public. Such are the aforementioned questions about the relationship between structure and agency; social identities; heritage(s); collecting criteria and interpretation guidelines; the role and the mission of museums in contemporary society, etc. These issues have been engaging many researchers, both at home and abroad, and will very likely do so in the future as well.

Our interpretation of the exhibit basically emphasizes cultural relativism as a way of understanding our multicultural world (Lyotard 1988) and the related perception of reality as a social construct (Berger-Luckman 1988). In explaining the relationship between the individual and the socio-cultural, it is based on the concept of *habitus* and the imprinting of the social and the cultural in the individual through everyday practice (Bourdieu 1977, 1984); at the same time it advocates the legitimacy of different cognitive processes, including personal experience and insights.

The **biological and the cultural evolution** of the human species are not two separate processes but are connected and interdependent. Biological adaptation processes were supplemented with cultural ones (Južnič 1987: 112). However, since culture does not have only one, universal form but many specific variants it is possible to examine human existence through several dimensions: cultural universals – cultural variations; natural (genetic) universals – genetic variations (Eriksen 2009: 57).

The consequence of these two interconnected evolutions (the biological one and the socio-cultural one) is that sociality and enculturation are inevitable imperatives of the individual’s development and take place simultaneously with the development of his or her biological body.

Human beings (human species) are a part of nature. This nature may be perceived as something outside them (ecosystem) or as the inner, human nature. As biological entities, however, human beings are not only dependent on ecosystems but also adapt them to their own needs (culturally transformed environments). Nature is more than an environment in which people can survive; they also develop concepts about their environment and perceive themselves outside it. Although nature exists as a cultural concept of nature, as something outside culture and the society, it simultaneously influences how people live (Eriksen 2009: 63-65).

The human element in people is not solely a matter of human nature; it is also shaped through the learning process and interaction with their socio-cultural environment. Socialization and enculturation processes run parallel with each other and can be understood as a complex and lifelong process of internalizing sociocultural rules and norms and patterns of behavior, skills, notions, and meanings (Slavec Gradišnik 2004: 179, 559). Any behavior, including individual conduct, is socially conditioned. Survival of an individual or a group depends on the socially determined rules of behavior. Although we generally take them for granted, or even natural or innate, they are always socially and culturally conditioned. For example, if some phenomenon in the society is interpreted as “natural” or “innate,” it gains some sort of legitimacy since nature is generally ascribed a greater degree of durability and permanence than culture (Eriksen 2009: 56, 57, 64).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

**Sociality** as a universal trait and the survival necessity of the individual to live within a society is a product of the specific nature of the human species. This is possible only in accordance with common rules, norms, and values, which inform individual societies and make them significantly different from each other.

Each society can be observed in several ways: through its dynamic life (interconnected action or the behavior of individuals and groups) or through the model of social order and specific notions about relationships between people (their positions and prestige, statuses and roles), all of which dictate the strategies and ways of people’s behavior in a given society (Eriksen 2009: 65, 66).



Individual as part of society (Shutterstock).

No society is reproduced solely biologically. Social structures, and thus people’s notions of those suitable for them and of relations between them, are reproduced simultaneously. Manifestation of a particular social structure can be observed through social groups and identity relations. Social groups consist of people who socialize, either permanently, temporarily, or even coincidentally,



and are connected through mutual relations and identity roles; although relating to a group, they may be temporary or are reproduced over a long period of time, and are thus involved in the reproduction of the whole society (Keesing 1981).

On the basis of understanding and defining who and what are We, and who and what are Others, **identities**<sup>1</sup> are formed. The conception of identity includes the concept of sameness and the concept of peculiarity and distinctiveness. Similarity and difference are therefore both important as the two dynamic principles of identity (Nastran Ule 2000: 3). Social identities are not natural formations and do not exist outside concrete circumstances (Brumen 1998: 72; Barker 2000: 165). They are based on the common experience of language, values, norms, practices, and the material world yet could not exist without individual people and their internalized sense of belonging; this is why all group identities are based on the internalization of the individual's adherence to a particular group (self-identification) (Cohen as cited in Muršič 1997: 226).

Constituent factors of identity are the sense of continuity and the sense of distinctiveness. The first refers to transmission of values over time (an illusion of safe immutability and shared history), the second to the (self)definition of **Us**, of that which is distinctively ours, in relation to **Others** – who are different and foreign. As the definition of Us is formed through them, the presence and definition of Others are indispensable. This denotes that identity is constituted through the relationship with the Other. Others, of course, create the concept of themselves in exactly the same way (Muršič 1997: 227; Brumen 1998: 72).

Although such perceived characteristics of identity bind group members they simultaneously exclude all others. Their main elements are aesthetic, moral, and cognitive judgements. These are acquired collectively and are therefore distinctly socially and historically conditioned (Bourdieu as cited in Muršič 1977: 228). While the selected characteristics of the we-groups are generally positive those ascribed to Others, to those who are different, are often pejorative. Since they tend to deny all other characteristics, however positive they may be, they frequently lead to prejudice and to nonacceptance of all who are not Us, and of everything that is not Ours (Harrison as cited in Knific 2008: 96).

We-groups, which can vary in size and character, depend on the respective definition of the criteria that determine the demarcation between Us and Others. In this regard, the term *boundaries* (Barth 1969; Cohen 1994) was introduced; it refers to the differences and delineation between different identities and identity groups. The strengthening of group identity denotes the continuity of maintaining symbolic boundaries between Us and Them and of our attitude toward Others (Muršič 1997: 229, 230; Harrison as cited in Knific 2010: 80).

Experiential affiliation is complemented by a number of imaginary group affiliations, which do not necessitate direct experience of all members of the group; their feeling of shared experience and common history is created indirectly and is based on conviction, loyalty, and solidarity. Benedict Anderson created the **concept of imagined communities** (2003), whose members, although not knowing each other and without any direct contact, perceive affiliated to each other.

The development of mass media (the press, radio, television, and the electronic media) has also largely contributed to the creation of imagined communities and their imagined (imaginary) identities. The media shift boundaries between the personal and the collective, the private and the public, and the local and the global (Vidmar Horvat 2006; Zajc 2000).

1 Identity can be defined as a set of characteristics, behaviors, thinking, and experiencing, in which individuals recognize themselves (self-identification of self as a body and as a person) and others, or decide to belong to a particular group, nation, or culture (Fikfak 2004: 174).

Such identities – personal and group identities, innate, acquired, abandoned, imagined, unrecognized, and ascribed ones, temporary and occasional, strong and weak – are not fixed and do not have a firm, precise form; but they are always defined in relation to Others. Since they are reinvented and interpreted through constant negotiations between the individual and his or her environment, we can speak about processuality as a quality of identities, or about identity processes. This, in fact, is a process of the positioning of each individual generation and person. The feeling of belonging is acquired and reinforced through everyday practices and experiences as well as through the ritualized admittance of an individual to a particular community and the resulting change of their rank and roles (Muršič 1997: 231-233).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Another universal trait of all people is their **enculturation**. Since its variants are specifically culturally conditioned and do not indicate some universal traits of the entire humanity it is better to speak about cultures rather than a singular culture (Eriksen 2009: 60). Each culture namely defines in its own way how to be human (and also how to be Human in the World). Every human society forms its own system of concepts and views of the humanity, nature, and society, and hence the values and notions that regulate and direct people's lives. These values and notions are therefore among the principal elements of culture. Culture is characterized by a marked ideological note and overemphasis on differences; the latter are then transformed into value judgements of (the perceived lack of) humanity in others (Južnič 1987: 25, 26). This is why culture should not be perceived as a value-neutral category (Weber 1989: 47). Depending upon different circumstances, the "adequacy" of humanity<sup>2</sup> and humaneness is constantly redefined, thus determining the fundamental value direction of a particular society and culture.

As a sum of concepts, notions, and meanings, culture is not a given and static but is continuously reinvented through the behavior, agency, and experience of its members, thus bringing them together and uniting them. It permeates all the activities of individuals and social groups. It is really a way of life, a never-ending process of negotiations about meanings. It can also be understood as a determinant of societal behavior and thought patterns and interpreted through the rules and mechanisms of the formation, guidance, and control of human behavior (Geertz 1973). Culture is therefore not something that a society "has" or "owns" – hence the difficulties and problems in dealing with culture through cultural heritage and in emphasizing the "authentic" and "original". Neither are cultures isolated entities; we have to recognize their interaction and involvement in global processes (Pleško 2008: 10).

Every culture operates through **symbols**, which convey culturally specific meanings and relations between them. Acquired through eons of evolution, the capability of the human brain for abstract thinking is a prerequisite for symbolic thinking. It is precisely through such internalization of the language of symbols and their meanings that the individual becomes part of a specific culture. The universal human capability for speech and nonverbal communication is applied in a variety of languages and nonverbal ways of communication. In every culture, people assign a name to specific phenomena, objects, relations, actions, and their symbolic meanings; these are then categorized into some kind of order. The symbolic meaning and name of each phenom-

2 Note the duality of *hominitas* (humanity, defined as affiliation to and developmental variability of the human species) and *humanitas* (humaneness as a "quality of humanity" and the desired model of the Human – a cultural notion of the "real, perfect" human being into which a member of a particular community should develop) (Južnič 1987: 90, 93).

enon are agreed upon and maintained (only) in the speaking community (Eriksen 2009: 58, 61). Similarly, the senses are not solely a characteristic natural feature of the humanity; one's perception, understanding, and interpretation of the world are largely dependent on social and cultural factors, which in turn limit them to a certain extent (Južnič 1987: 22; Eriksen 2009: 64, 65).

The aim of symbols is to represent something or someone else. In fact, this applies to a wider array of signs (icons, indices, and symbols<sup>3</sup>), which all create and transmit meaning in any act of communication. While all of these signs have a "material shape," whether an image, object, picture, or word in the shape of sound or record on paper) their meaning is abstract. The specific feature of the symbols in this group is that they have nothing in common with the meaning that they represent – the linkage is solely a matter of agreement, convention, and usage (Edgar and Sedgwick 1999: 358, 394). Since conventions about them are never completely fixed, even within the same culture or social group, meanings mediated through symbols have a limited validity and are prone to change.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

**The individual** is the point of convergence of three factors: the universal (acquired through evolution as the intertwining of biological and cultural developments of the human species); the specifically collective (acquired in socialization and enculturation processes in a concrete environment); and the individual (the life cycle of an individual human being). Physical body is the prerequisite for the physical existence of the individual; at the same time it is also the starting point for his or her agency and sentience, identification, and distinction.

Continuation of specific social and cultural forms is possible only if each individual internally harmonizes with the current symbolic and conceptual world and all possible norms of behavior, sentience, and evaluation (Južnič 1987: 54; Nanda 1991: 146). In this manner, the individual perceives and recognizes herself or himself as a member of this order. The language and body of the individual are socialized first, and through them evolve the standardized mind-set, the manner of experiencing and emoting, and behavior. The process of inscription of the socio-cultural into the individual is exquisitely summed up by the **concept of habitus** (Bourdieu 1977, 1984): as a multitude of acquired and relatively stable mental, behavioral, and taste patterns it is imprinted in the individual through everyday practices, repeated experience, observation, imitation, and judgement of other people. It acts as a matrix of perceptions, judgements, and actions. Since the habitus produces individual and collective practices that are in line with its laws it acts as a kind of objective framework for all that is subjective. Habitus is the principle of creating and structuring practices and representations, the principle of producing strategies that help the individual cope with unforeseen situations and simultaneously reproduce the same principle. This produces a connection between the social structure and the agency of the individual. Although habitus is also a product of history and is relatively stable and permanent, it does gradually transform due to accumulated experience.

3 Charles Peirce divided the signs into icons, indices, and symbols. The icons are signs that physically resemble what they stand for (drawings, diagrams, models, etc.); indices are signs that are in actual relation with the content that they represent (personal names, symptoms, etc.); and symbols are signs that indicate or represent something on the basis of convention or an arbitrary guide (i.e. verbal signs) (as cited in Musek 1977: 46).

Every body experience contains more than just the functional part of existing or agency; it contains a symbolically comprehensive system and the internal "logic" of the habitus. Related to this is also the **concept of embodiment**, which understands the body as a factor and a place of perception, observation, and experience of the world (Chordas 1990, Muršič 2006). The body and its personal appearance is the place of the self, of perceptions, and of experiences of oneself; it is the point from which it is possible to experience the world and also actively operate in it. Self-perception, which seems intimate and subjective, is largely constructed through the external view – an assessment of how others evaluate oneself. The individual proceeds from every social situation on the basis of his or her personal experience of the societal world.

Social expectations associated with the individual (social statuses) contain a set of rights and obligations to others in accordance with which the individual is expected to act. Social statuses may be ascribed or achieved. While our modern society contains many achieved statuses ascribed ones are more characteristic of traditional cultures. The actual behavior and actions within the expectations of a certain status is termed the role. Yet the status never fully determines all human activity. There are no precise instructions, which is also due to the fact that the role is never completely identical to the status (Eriksen 2009: 66-68).

While the notion of what an individual should be, and how they should act, is socially determined their character and identity are formed on the basis of social and cultural factors, especially the language. The meaning and the value of the individual are a result of societal development and culture. In our civilization, the individual had not been particularly highlighted until the era of the Enlightenment; in traditional societies, on the other hand, the individual almost completely identifies with the environment. In any case, the perception of the individual as an autonomous personality is neither an innate characteristic nor a universal one. Although all groups of people have their unique **concept of the self or of person** these concepts may vary considerably. In European societies, the concept of the self is understood as indivisible, integrated, and sovereign; in many non-Western societies, however, it denotes the sum of all social relations of a particular person (Eriksen 2009: 72, 73).

Even though the social sciences are interested mainly in public and social aspects of the individual they do not deny his or her private, inner part. The public part denotes the ways in which the individual communicates with the environment; the individual self is associated with self-perception. The relationship between public and private aspects varies significantly. Of particular relevance is George Mead's notion of the reflexive self, which combines and harmonizes the individual's personal and social self. The social self denotes the ability to step into someone else's shoes; the personal self is a specific characteristic of each individual and evades complete social determination and total control. The social self includes internalized viewpoints of a particular group and the related value and normative systems. In the form of self-control, social control is already an intrinsic part of the individual. The relation between the two selves is created by the reflexive consciousness (reason, thinking), with which the individual makes sense of her or his own actions and of actions and intentions of others. This is inwardly reflected as an inner social situation and outwardly as an individual agent in the society (Mead as cited in Nastran Ule 2000: 162-166).

The individual may not, or perhaps refuses to, fully identify with certain roles, and discrepancies may arise between their notion of their own role and expectations of others. While they strive for self-cognition, self-expression, and self-fulfillment this also creates a disagreement between these "inner" needs and the demands of the "outer" reality (Muršič 1997: 226).

**Identities of the individual** are partly related to physical characteristics, declarations, and practices (sexual, related to age, physical traits, or sexual orientation, etc.). Other affiliations are related to a place (home, birthplace, place of residence, region, country, confederation, continent, and planet) and various social groups (immediate or broader family; local, class, ethnic, national or international community; the humanity, etc.). Special affiliations may be the result of the individual's choice of life path, social roles, and interests (related to peer communities, friends, profession, interests, social positions, etc.), or of their attitude toward the world (religious, political, and worldview orientations, etc.).

The modern era has radically changed the once traditional, long-lasting social orders. It is characterized by industrialization and capitalist (production and market) relations, and by parallel emergence of nation-states and numerous apparatuses of control. The two major abstract systems of modernity are the money system and modern science, both of which impose an idea of the successful story of constant improvement, progress, and development. Life prospects of most people have changed considerably; spatial and social mobility (lack of commitment to the place of habitation, former traditional values, rules of behavior, beliefs, etc.) are now critical. For the individual of today, life offers an opportunity for a multitude of possibilities (Dahrendorf as cited in Nastran Ule 2000: 9).

Identities of the individual are linked to his or her profession and different roles and positions in public and in private life. Although individuals invent themselves in relation to particular occasions and to Others, their identities remain loyal to their roles of gender, family, and also class and ethnicity. (At least) since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it has become unclear how to combine such partial identities in order to create a complete person with a clearly defined central, or leading role (Luhmann as cited in Nastran Ule 2000: 20-22). The former social coercion of premodern, “traditional” societies has been replaced by inner self-discipline, starting with the discipline of one's own body, and life choices and decisions have become of crucial importance for the individual (Weber, Elias as cited in Nastran Ule 2000: 31).

In the modern world, the so-called popular, or mass, culture plays the most significant part in socialization processes. It is both local and global, and equally attractive and accessible to all social strata and groups (Muršič 1997: 230, 231); it also has a considerable influence on the individual's identity structure. After the mid-1950s, an increasing number emerged of temporary identifications related to leisure activities and interests and to the people and meeting points (including imaginary ones) connected with them, where views and opinions can be exchanged. Variable identifications also occur in connection with consumption, leisure time, family planning, etc. (Nastran Ule 2000: 277).

Due to these constantly changing living circumstances certain identities are more durable while others may be soon replaced by new ones. Rather than a “property” or “acquisition”, the resulting mixture is a changing construct based on past concepts of oneself and of their installment in the desired future (Muršič 1997: 232, 233; Nastran Ule 2000: 302-319).

Although equipped with a number of identities, the individual tries to maintain a positive and harmonized self-image and preserve the sense of personal continuity in space and time. Despite the continuing variability, both of body and of personal history, people maintain the feeling of their lasting and indivisible individuality as something private, separate, and distinct. Through their unique organization of memories and experiences they construct their own more or less meaningful life stories that become part of common history. Everybody perceives his or her personal story as incomparable, unrepeatable, and inti-

mately separated from external historical circumstances. This creation of one's **life story** with its highlighted segments and interpretations of various events represents one of the important ways of forming a unique, distinctive identity.<sup>4</sup>

## Structure of the Exhibition and Modes of Communication

To a certain extent, the structure and design of this exhibition have been influenced by certain post-structuralist and postmodernist concepts. For example those that emphasize the value of cognitive pluralism and highlight the many valid ways of reflecting the world (Lyotard 1988); or those that examine power relations in a given society and the privilege of science and various institutions to define knowledge (Lyotard 1988, Foucault 1991) – in our case, the knowledge about heritage and about what, and how, is worth remembering and safeguarding. Of considerable importance were also theoretical ideas that stressed the indeterminacy, instability, and incompleteness of the meanings of things – as opposed to the things themselves – which are fairly impossible to observe outside their contexts (Derrida 1994). Instead of proceeding from significant stories of our shared history, more relevance should be given to small, personal stories that so aptly reflect this shared history.

The permanent exhibit titled *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* is composed of seven exhibition chapters. Its narrative is like a journey from narrow to broader social groups and spaces to which the individual may belong in the course of her or his life; these groups and spaces are also fields of negotiation about the expected, possible, or probable roles of the individual. The exhibition **communicates** with its visitors **through questions** that introduce the content of each exhibition chapter. Although they may seem purely rhetorical, these questions are designed in the first person singular so that visitors are actually able to pose them to themselves. In this way, they can form their own answers, which can never be wrong; their correctness, however, is inevitably subjective and determined by the society and culture to which each visitor belongs.

### ■ I – the individual

What am I? Who am I?

### ■ My family – my home

What is my family to me? What is my home to me? What roles do I play in the family?

### ■ My community – my birthplace

Where am I from? Which people are close to me? With whom do I spend my working days and with whom do I share festive days?

### ■ Beyond my birthplace – my departure

Leaving home – where to and why? Do I remain who I am?

### ■ My nation – my country

How do I experience the country I belong to?  
Which nation do I believe to be my nation?

### ■ My otherness and foreign otherness – the wider world

What makes me travel to foreign countries and live among strangers?  
How do I judge otherness? Where do I see sameness?

### ■ Me – my personal world

Who, then, am I? Where do I come from and where am I going?

4 Many theoretical aspects highlight the importance of personal life stories, for example those that perceive identity as a story (see Nastran Ule 2000: 196-202); as an autopoietic process (see Nastran Ule 2000: 203-209); or as an autobiography (see Harré as cited in Nastran Ule 2000: 209-216).



The authorially designed exhibition chapters, each written by a different museum curator, thus integrate a single conceptual idea and a uniform concept of design. One of the elements connecting the seven chapters is *An Individual's Journey*, a “fragmented story” in literary form. It follows the concept of the construction of a personal story; personal and shared memory; and heritage as a selection of the past. *Vesna: a mosaic video portrait*, has a similar task. It provides an insight into a fragmented personal story available to visitors on the touch screen situated in the final part of the exhibition. In this way we wish to emphasize that there are several possible paths leading to life wisdom and insight: in addition to science, we need to mention art (in our case the literary narrative) and personal experience.

The structure of the exhibition in seven parts, with the individual as the pivoting and connecting theme, is also indicated in its logo, which depicts a stylized human figure composed of seven squares in different colors. Like the exhibit itself, this composite, minute “human” is a supplement to the logo of the first part of the permanent exhibition (a multicolored dresser), which illustrates the systematization of knowledge about cultural heritage and an identical exhibition principle.

## Building Blocks

The individual depicted in the exhibition bears a symbolic image of **David**<sup>5</sup> and is inspired by Michelangelo's sculptural representation of the biblical David (1501–1504). It has been selected as an illustration of the growing interest in the individual, first in antiquity and then in the Renaissance; both periods have had a significant influence on the modern perception of the individual. David was also chosen because it symbolizes a biblical motif of struggle, which can be perceived as a relationship between the individual and the world. Our stylized image of David has many shapes. In its three-dimensional form, as a hollow human figure made from metal mesh, it is placed in the introductory room. As a two-dimensional mosaic silhouette of lighter color it is applied on pillars in the first, introductory room, and in the final room (representing the biological and physical composition of the human on the one side and a multitude of social roles and cultural variants that mold a human being on the other). As a silhouette furnished with a graphic texture of personal identities and applied on a panel with depictions of group identities, David represents a visual summary of the exhibition. In one of the first images, David in the form of a red figure is placed among a variety of plant and animal species; and in the final part of the exhibition he can be found among the many images of the Earth's sphere (i.e. one's conceptual world) as part of the animated content.

As an analogy for the human being and his or her installment in the world, the **motif of the tree** with its symbolic meanings was repeatedly used in the exhibition: while the roots symbolize the past and ancestors, the trunk and branches represent the present and contemporaries; the annual twigs with seeds/fruit imply renewal, growth, and descendants. The motif of the tree with exposed roots was also used on the leaflet and on the invitation to the opening of the exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World*; in the audiovisual content available on the touch screen that addresses and invites the visitor to examine the exhibition; and as a symbolic image on museum websites. This is why it is also depicted on the cover of this guide.

<sup>5</sup> When the gender of the person referred to is unknown or indeterminate, the third-person pronoun *he* may be avoided by using gender-neutral alternatives – possibilities in English include singular *they*, *he* or *she*, or *s/he*. According to most references, *they*, *their* and *them* have long been grammatically acceptable as gender-neutral singular pronouns in English.

Since the relation between the symbolic and the material, which is determined by social and cultural factors, is a constant of our observation and examination of life, and the intertwining of the three temporal components in human existence an important and regular feature of museum interpretations, the symbolic motif of the tree is used as a graphic connection between both permanent exhibitions and is also depicted in the entrance lobby and on the museum's façade banners.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The desire that our initial thoughts about the human race and society, nature and culture, the present and the past, heritage and museums acquire an adequate form at our exhibition, forced us to ponder upon additional possibilities of communication. We have deliberately used museum objects, pictorial, and audiovisual material in less conventional ways, and also refrained from some traditional presentations of museum heritage.

Postmodernist conceptions of fragmentation, fluidity, and variability have acquired their visual and structural expression in our exhibition as well. Individual selection and choice can also be perceived through the concept of *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss 2004), which involves a continual combination of elements, thereby creating new meanings. This notion is close to the individual's actions and behavior in the process of shaping their own world. For visualization, the idea of the so-called “quilting points” (Bourdieu 1984), where the symbolic and the realistic meet, seemed to be particularly useful; just as useful was the concept of life engaged in a network of signs and unresolved meanings (Derrida 1994).

The design of our exhibition has not been guided solely by the principles of aesthetic and technical organization of all involved elements. In accordance with its principal concept, the light, sound, graphic, spatial, and scenic elements were given new symbolic meanings and tasks. The resulting visual solutions are the product of an intense exchange of ideas between the exhibition's authors and external collaborators. The findings of various professions were naturally complemented by our personal and subjective views of the world.

**The layout of the exhibition** is supposed to express the idea of circulation and the principle of the dynamics of life. In the first room, the emphasis is on the starting point in the circle – a rounded space, surrounded by panels, with a column in the middle. The starting point illustrates the individual, who has both the potential characteristics of the human species as well as the influential elements of a given environment and the uniqueness of the course of their life. The tunnel, which connects the first space to the following one, symbolically depicts creation and the birth of an individual. The five central spaces have diverse ground plans that indicate the dynamics and the socially and culturally conditioned diversity, both geographically and socially, of groups. The last exhibition space narrows from the outer square area to a round inner space with a column in the middle, which indicates that once again, the individual and his

As a symbol of Everyman, David is depicted in several ways; each of them tells of a specific part of the exhibition story.



The motif of a well-branched tree with roots symbolizes humans throughout the exhibition and also announces in the entrance hall both parts of the permanent exhibition (photo by B. Zupančič).

or her unique experience of the world is in the focus of attention. The exit takes the form of a tunnel, thus illustrating a symbolic exit from the cycle of life.

The colors used in each exhibition area do not only serve to delineate individual exhibition chapters but also illustrate the daily cycle, the exchange of night and day. The first and the last area are therefore dark (indicating night) while each of the five spaces between them is characterized by a different color of panels and the ceiling lighting. They symbolize the rainbow spectrum of daylight. A similar concept of time is reflected in the connecting text titled *An Individual's Journey*, which is depicted on a dark panel in the introductory room and at the end, and on a white canvas panel in each intermediate chapter. In this way, it illustrates the linear passing of time and personal and common histories that are its integral part.

In every exhibition area, all colors of the rainbow are likewise present as color tints for the displayed pictorial material. A special, symbolic role has the color orange, which characterizes the elements that connect all exhibition areas and is also present within the individual exhibition chapters.



The key building blocks of every exhibition chapter are the ambient design of the area with a central symbolic element and recessed display cases incorporated in the panels. Acting as “viewing windows,” they enable the visitor to examine and study the displayed items.

Various elements of the exhibition are applied on the panels in several layers. Symbolic graphic foundations are overlaid with titles, cut from foil, and laminated square tiles furnished with the pictorial material, interpretative texts, mirrors, etc. These **layers of information** are supplemented by openings in the panels that enable the visitor to gaze at the displayed material heritage, the so-called “grains of past reality.” The layers of exhibited material may be symbolically understood as an expression of sequence: experience, oblivion or memory, selection, and (re)interpretation.

The **central symbolic elements** situated in all exhibition areas are constructions made of welded, bound, glued, crushed, or curved metal mesh, representing a human figure, vessel, tunnel, nest, door portal, tree, signpost, pyramid equipped with attributes of power, pendulum, and chair, whose symbolism introduces the central theme of each exhibition space. Instead of industrial mesh of various shapes, densities, and thicknesses, the less standard structures are sometimes made of interlaced metal threads or bars. Translated into solid material, these elements illustrate the sociocultural networks of signs and unresolved meanings in which the lives of individuals and groups are entangled. Some of these wire mesh elements also feature **human figurines** in various poses, which are **made of metal wire** and infuse some humor in the exhibition narrative. They indicate that a person observes, imitates, and as-

sesses other people (is therefore an observer), and is at the same time also exposed to the very same treatment by others (is being observed).

The entire floor – the display rooms and the areas for educational programs – is encircled by orange **human silhouettes made of foil**, which are applied in an endless line on the panels, walls, and window panes. They symbolize the presence of people and their diversified activities and life dynamics, which is impossible to capture in a static museum exhibition. In accordance with the often quoted museum saying “people – about people – for people”, they link three groups of people: those who study people; those who are the research subject of this exhibition; and the target audience.

The exhibition thus combines a whole range of information, interpretations, associations, feelings, etc., which provides an opportunity for a more complex experience. Visitors’ response is supposed to be more intuitive, even emotional, and less rational. The exhibition narrative is naturally built on the presentation of expressive museum objects, pictorial and film material, and sound background.

The layering of information on panels and in display cases inserted into the panels: from panel textures to mosaic application of images and texts, and to exhibited objects (photo by J. Žagar).

### Museum Objects

Our exhibition features approximately 500 units of museum objects, varied both by age and geographical origin; other criteria for their selection were the social affiliation of the object’s owner and of the basic function of the object. The principal aim of such a mixture of artefacts is neither a geographical or social comparison of forms of objects similar in function nor of their variants. Our purposeful selection of the diversified cultural, temporal, and semantic contexts of the exhibited objects goes beyond the conventional museum framework. This heterogeneous material primarily has the task of presenting the concept of the exhibition in the light of cultural relativism.

According to their origin, these items may be classified in three basic groups. The largest consists of historically documented objects from museum funds (in particular from the Slovene Ethnographic Museum), among which are also several museum replicas, copies, and illustrative examples.

The second group of items comes from private and family collections, or even from the collections of various societies. Their owners, who have also outlined their use through history and the developmental range of their ascribed meanings and values, have been kind enough to loan them to our museum for a longer period of time. Strictly speaking, these items do not belong to actual cultural heritage but they do represent a potential source for it because they have more than merely a utilitarian or status value. A historical document of concrete personal or shared memories and meanings, they also convey the spirit of a certain era or culture.



Central elements in each exhibition chapter are made of wire mesh, intertwined metal threads, or rods (photo by J. Žagar).

The layout and the illustration of the color and content structure of the *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* exhibition. The colors used in individual exhibition chapters, which illustrate the exchange of day and night, are also indicated by the color scheme in the introductory room of the exhibition.



Both groups also contain a number of contemporary items that were either collected from nature or selected from a great variety of items currently on the market. The selection of a particular object from the extremely large, chaotic, and diversified offer shifts it to the field of personal/shared use and meaning. These items, which may be new or discarded and have no documented usage and meanings, function as illustrative examples that are displayed alongside other types of objects for the sake of clarification and easier understanding of the exhibition.

Such a variety of museum material, either from museum funds or in private possession, domestic or foreign, old or contemporary, valuable or trivial, has not been selected according to the criteria of “old,” “beautiful,” “domestic”, or “foreign and exotic.” It is not the purpose of this exhibition to glorify heritage. Rather than that, we wished to underline the self-evident nature (or a lack of it) of heritage, its origin, meaning, and possible interpretations. Each object is characterized by a number of connotational and denotational meanings ascribed to it first by its manufacturers, users, and observers, then by research-



Stylized human figures made of wire are added to some central elements (photo by J. Žagar).

A series of reduced human silhouettes made of foil links all exhibition chapters and extends to areas intended for educational programs, where they are applied to glass and thus visible also from the outside. In this way, they form a connection between museum events and the actual life beyond its walls (photo by J. Žagar).

ers and by museum visitors. The fact is that the exhibited items could be easily replaced by others without interfering with the basic concept of the exhibition.

Museum objects are generally housed in smaller showcases or in larger display areas, and only exceptionally on the panels or in the middle of the exhibition space. Each display case highlights one of the linking properties of its exhibited items, which is not necessarily their applied function; as an aid to the visitor, the case is furnished with a title interpreting the connection among the displayed objects. The display cases and areas are largely recessed and incorporated in the panels, so that the displayed objects can be viewed only through small openings that guide the visitor's glance in the desired direction.

### Pictorial Material

This type of material complements the exhibited objects or functions as a substitute for longer explanations. Its language may be symbolic or documentary. Symbolic pictorial material is relatively easy to understand when it comes from a familiar cultural environment; the situation is quite different when it concerns symbols taken from other cultures. In any case, the exhibition stresses the symbols that function as culturally conditioned/perceived communication.

In its documentary function, the exhibited pictorial material serves as an illustrative example of the relevant topic. The origin of this type of material is just

as diverse as the origin of the exhibited objects. The pictorial material from the archives of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum or from other museums is supplemented by the material from private archives and personal/family albums. We have also included many images from Shutterstock, an online stock photography library, where individuals from all over the world can contribute or upload a wealth of images. In spite of initial concern that the same images may appear in different parts of the world, media, and contexts, we have realized that this might also be an advantage since such visual communication is based on the already established and generally understandable (symbolic) images. In doing this, we have renounced the institutional “need for exclusivity,” which is actually contrary to the universal theme of our exhibition.

The exhibited pictorial material depicts examples from various cultural environments and temporal dimensions. Included are several examples from the plant and animal world, which do not serve for direct comparison but merely encourage reflection on the similarities and differences within and outside their own species.



The material is used in several ways. Larger introductory pictures and panel textures symbolically enhance the exhibition themes. The concept of the mosaic image of the world, which each individual constructs as a puzzle made up from selected memories, bits of information, events, and roles in them, is designed as a series of images cut in squares. This creates an impression of a seemingly organized yet unfinished and incomplete network of “images of my world,” which represent the framework of the individual's perception of the world. The network of viewing niches and fragments of text follows the same principle. Since individual people, various social groups, and different cultural environments can perceive and assess things, phenomena, and events in different ways we have tried to capture this diversity by tinting the pictorial material in several colors.

### Audiovisual Material

This type of material performs several tasks. The image and the sound may be used as a supplement, a sound background, or as documentary or partly documentary sound and film records that enhance different topics. Similarly to other types of the exhibited material, it is a mixture of the material kept in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum and in some other institutions, and the audiovisual material owned by individuals. Among other things, it contains audiovisual records of family life, shared work tasks, celebrations, pilgrimages, professional groups, life stories and experiences, film recordings of Others, and sound recordings of national anthems and other songs that are perceived

A showcase may display a variety of artifacts with different primary functions, provenance, and usages. They are linked by their secondary function and the common heading (photo by J. Žagar).

Extraordinary power of images: human hand(s) symbolically illustrate human history; evolutionary acquired abilities of our species; individual uniqueness; culturally specific forms of communication (by gesture, handshake, and decoration); work procedures; writing; and co-existence of several generations (Shutterstock, SEM Documentation).

as “ours.” The content available on touch screens has a different nature. By showing images and animated material they enhance the messages of the exhibition about the universal within the individual (*Faces*) and about choice and creation (*My world through media images*) (see Valentinčič Furlan 2010). Most of them can be selected individually. Some exhibition areas are furnished with background sounds (such as the dripping of water, a clock ticking, sea waves, heartbeat, a crackling fire, wind, sounds of work processes, conversation, singing, footsteps, etc.). They evoke associations, emotional response, and memories.

## Exhibition as a Message and a Starting Point for Further Research

The exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* is conceptualized as a form of public mass media that displays more than mere heritage. It offers a simultaneous perception of the universal characteristics of humankind, cultural specifics, and individual uniqueness - and interprets them as the basis for similarities and for distinction.

The modern world is not only the world of prestigious and nostalgic attitude to the past but also a place of painful and bitter memories. The world in which we live is not a place of isolated, delineated spaces but an area of intercultural encounters, exchanges, and global connections. It is not only the world of enthusiastic tourists and adventurers but also of forced migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, endangered minority groups, and individuals shunned by the society. It is not solely a place of joy and delight, success and progress, but also one of sorrow, pain, intolerance, exploitation, avoidance, and exclusion. Our visions of the future are not filled with exclusively exciting and happy expectations but also with dark anxieties and fear.

There are many aspects of the modern world that the exhibition does not touch upon directly. Its narrative has been designed as a framework that requires additional, educational programs. It is but a starting point for our work with visitors, which necessitates the involvement of individuals and/or social groups so that they receive an opportunity to speak about themselves and their life, and participate in highlighting issues that are important to them. The fundamental, long-term objective of such an exhibition and indeed of the entire museum is not to proffer information and educate others but rather to invoke reflexive insights and responses of our visitors, mutual respect, and the will to peacefully coexist not only with those who belong to Us or are similar to Us but also with those who are different, who are the Others.



Self-presentation of the YHS association through the 2013 exhibition *Personal Assistance Is Our Assistance* and an awareness-raising workshop on how visually impaired people experience the world (SEM Documentation).

This orientation broadens the scope of the museum to include permanent research and encourage self-exploration. It is about new and more extensive dimensions of museum work in the area of direct exchange and communication with its visitors and the broader society. At the same time, this is a long-term process of recording and collecting what the society and individuals define as collective and as personal heritage.

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# Exhitation Chapters





## In Lieu of Introduction – A Welcome Area for Our Visitors

Janja Žagar

Every exhibition has to start somewhere. Ours starts at the entranceway to the exhibition, in an area where we welcome our visitors. Announced groups are briefed about the content they are about to view, and individual visitors can peruse introductory texts and specially designed graphic elements that introduce the exhibition, its aims, and its conceptual ideas. In this way, it is possible to underline its inner structure and certain features of the specific exhibition language in order to better convey the messages the exhibition wishes to impart.

The principal concept of the **exhibition**, which **focuses on the individual and his or her positioning in the world** and combines many aspects of their existence, perception, and agency, is explained to the visitor in several ways. One of them is through symbols: the exhibition logo; the graphic representation of its structure; and the connecting cohesive thread, the story about *An Individual's*

Reception area for visitors designed for the presentation of the exhibition's structure and specific language (photo by J. Žagar).



Graphic introduction to the cohesive thread, the story titled *An Individual's Journey*, through three sets of images: a human face (life cycle), a tree (yearly cycle), and the position of the sun in the sky (daily rhythm) (photo by J. Žagar).



*Journey*. Since the phrase “positioning in the world” may denote everything, or nothing, the concept is better explained through graphic interpretations of people’s positioning among others, in space, and in time. These are the three coordinates of the individual as a social being in constant interaction with the environment; this, in turn, determines his or her subjective (rational, intuitive, emotional, etc.) perception of space and time.

One’s **positioning among other people** is not only a matter of long-lasting relationships between people and identification with certain groups on the basis of more durable roles and statuses but may also be a result of specific circumstances and encounters. In order to visually distinguish it from the positioning in space and in time (this separation is possible only at analytical level), the theme of positioning among others is illustrated by a large image of a typical meeting point of people from all over the world – an airport passenger concourse – which can be found anywhere in the world. This selection underlines that the world is a place of many cultures who, upon meeting and perhaps establishing contacts, perceive how similar to, or different from others, they may be – but only temporarily. Part of this image is also an inscription in the form of questions that – in the manner of the entire exhibition – the visitors ask of themselves:



### People

Who am I?  
Who are we and who are others?  
What is ours and what is theirs?

Although the slight blurring of the static photograph on the panel obscures the connection with the actual space and time the images in motion indicate the dynamics of life yet also the short duration of people’s affiliation to various groups of people. It is in this very context that our exhibition addresses this topic.

A screen with an audiovisual depiction of **Faces** is installed into the image of the modern airport concourse. A series of interchangeable photographs of female and male faces of different ages and from various historic and cultural backgrounds enhances the universal idea that each person experiences the world around them in a distinctively unique manner.<sup>1</sup>

The exchange of faces is accompanied by a repetitive sound of dripping and ticking, which are depicted as animation across individual faces in the form of a falling drop and concentric circles on the water surface, and a swinging pendulum. The sound background symbolizes the rhythm of time and the associated impermanence and transience. This introduces the theme of people’s **positioning in time**, which underlines the culturally conditioned perception of time and notions of how time is manifested and how it can be measured. Several questions have been added to a series of square images showing details of a sundial and an hourglass; the clockwork and the dial of a mechanical clock; and one of the calendar number systems. Seemingly childishly simple, these questions nevertheless challenge the misleading self-evident nature of time.



Screen with the audiovisual content *Faces*: a concept of personal/subjective experience of the world. The images onscreen are complemented with the sounds of dripping and ticking, which illustrate the symbolic rhythm of time.

### Time

Does time run? Does it go in circles?  
Does time grow? Does it stand still?  
Or does it only appear so?



In order to illustrate the topic of **positioning in space** we have selected and slightly altered a photograph, thus trying to draw attention to people’s perception and understanding of reality, in contrast to what their physical senses perceive. A panoramic photograph of Lake Bled and its island in the middle has been divided into five parts that are spaced apart. How we “construct” the whole from individual fragments is a matter of prediction and/or learned logic. Our recognition of the specific island in question is a matter of experiential and/or learned knowledge. However, our understanding and perception of the symbolic significance of the central image as an element of “Ours” is the result of internalized positioning in the environment. Further questions for reflection have been added to the series of five images, with the central one (depicting the island with its belfry) in more intensive colors:

### Space

Where am I and what am I looking at?  
What am I looking at, and what am I seeing?  
What am I seeing, and what am I perceiving?



1 **Obrazi / Faces.** Concept Janja Žagar, realization Peter Gruden, SEM production, 2009. The clip is available at <http://www.etno-muzej.si/jaz-mi-in-drugi-podobe-mojega-sveta>.

An important element of the exhibition is the **mosaiclike** nature of what we perceive as the world. This perception of reality as a seeming whole consisting of more or less clear, tangible, real fragments as well as a multitude of missing particles is incomplete and distorted. Such a misguided notion is the concept of the common past and common heritage... a notion about Us and about the basis on which we construct our common identity. Since this identity is supposed to separate Us from Others, from those who are different, it is, irrespective of the past reality, an essential component of every community. It is within such a community that the individual is trying to position themselves in accordance with their abilities; this is why our exhibition speaks about the “images of my world.”

### Mosaic

In the mosaic image of the world,  
Between the near and the far,  
Between the past and the future,  
Between the known and the unknown,  
Between the real and the imaginary...  
I seek my place.

The layout of the entranceway enables visitors to enter the exhibition from two directions. The main one leads from the staircase, the additional one from the extension where the elevator is located. In order to welcome and direct the visitors a semicircular panel furnished with the exhibition's title has been installed in front of the elevator, and a **human figure** made from a curved metal mesh placed in front of the panel. The mesh indicates the intertwining of signs and meanings among which individuals from different backgrounds operate.

Observation of people and explanation of their behavior and actions, be it as individuals or as members of a particular social group, is one of the key tasks of our museum, and the mesh figure symbolically illustrates the principal concept of this exhibition: cultural relativism as a way of comprehending our multicultural world and the related perception of every reality as a construct. This is why the aims of the exhibition have been written in differently accentuated indefinite verbs on the panel behind the mesh figure. Among them are also

*... to feel, to ask, to position, to comprehend, to coexist ...*



A mosaic notion of reality as a seeming whole includes the concept of the common past and common identity.

A directional semicircular panel with a metal mesh human figure illustrates the focus of the exhibition and its interpretation (photo by J. Žagar).

## I – The Individual

Janja Žagar

What am I? Who am I?





## I – The Individual

**T**he first exhibition chapter discusses the individual, the smallest unit of humanity. Each human being is a combination of the nature of the human species and the specific sociocultural environment that guides them and develops a set of rules and norms to live by; in turn, the individual also creates and co-creates that environment.

As a person, that it to say a physical and mental being with self-awareness, the individual cannot survive without others, as sociality is a part of human nature. Through one's own body, which enables the experience of oneself and one's environment, people can experience and become aware of their social roles and their sense of belonging to other people. Comparison with others enables self-determination and provides answers to the questions *What am I?* and *Who am I?*

The first exhibition chapter indicates a series of personal and group identities that do not simply originate from the biological body but are based on the sociocultural experience of one's own body and on the judgement of bodies of others: of their physical characteristics, physical condition, social standing, gender, age, class, etc. It also highlights the difference between experiencing the individual and the collective, and therefore the difference between individual and shared history.

### Of Symbolic and Formative Building Blocks

Since this exhibition chapter is designed as an introduction to the following chapters it does not refer to a concrete society and culture but treats the individual as the point of coexistence of the universal (acquired during the revolutionary process as a combination of biological and cultural development of the human species); the common (acquired in socialization and enculturation processes in a concrete environment); and the individual (acquired throughout the life cycle of an individual human being).

In order to translate this concept into the language of a museum exhibit we made use of some general symbolic elements that have become part of our cultural heritage to such an extent that they will facilitate the visitor's "intuitive" understanding of the exhibition narrative.

The visitor enters the circular dimmed exhibition space through a black and white threaded curtain, which symbolizes the transition to a new circle of the exchange of day and night. The round room represents a completed unit, and in our case this unit is the human being – the individual. As the central theme, the human figure has been placed in the very center of the room. The circular wall around it indicates the individual's life cycle. Cyclicity can be imagined as revolution. Although the life cycle of a single human being lasts only one

(circular) journey it also takes place in shorter rhythms – in yearly, monthly, and daily cycles.

The universal property of culture is its agency through symbols. As an enculturated being, the individual perceives the world, as well as themselves, in a symbolic way. Nevertheless, the specific significance of symbols is always confined within the culture that creates and uses it. Such a culturally embedded "normality" and a "natural logic" usually attract our attention only when something is not completely consistent with them. Such an example is the direction of viewing in this circular room; it is namely designed from right to left, which is the opposite direction from the one perceived as "usual" in our cultural environment, as indicated by the direction of reading a text or of interpreting the time through the circular route of clock hands. A number of examples from other cultures and social environments highlight the boundaries of the way people understand symbols and their meanings.

A human silhouette is placed on the **central pillar**. The symbolism of the pillar speaks about the connection between the sky and the earth, between the potential and the manifest, and between the concept and its materialization. Human beings carry the same parable. While the sky is depicted by a dark material attached to the circumference of the panels the earth is represented by dark flooring composed of square parts forming a mosaic.



Most visitors recognize in the stylized image of the human body on the pillar the typical depiction of the biblical **David**, made by Renaissance sculptor Michelangelo Buonarroti (1501-1504). The choice of motive was not accidental. On the one hand, it depicts the symbolism of a Christian story about David, a young shepherd, whose faith and cunningness vanquish the mighty warrior and conqueror Goliath. The fight between the seeming weakness and power can also be interpreted as a parable of the relation between the individual and the world. On the other hand, it demonstrates the Renaissance (and previously antique) interest in human beings. Every culture creates a model of the ideal Human, which is then used as an example and serves for comparison. This ideal, captured in the image of a male (boyish) body, thus symbolizes aspirations of the individual to approach the social ideal.

The central element of the exhibition space is the mosaic image of Michelangelo's David on the pillar, surrounded by a myriad of small mirrors, and next to it the key issues explored in this chapter: *Who am I? What am I?* (photo by J. Žagar).

The physical body, a prerequisite for the individual's existence, is his or her vehicle for agency and feeling, for identifying with some and for distinguishing from other people. Physical and mental experiences are being “written” in the body of the individual, both on the level of synchronous experience and on the level of memory. The mosaic that forms the silhouette symbolically indicates answers to two major questions: to the first, asking *What am I?*, in the sense of physiological and biochemical composition and agency, and to the second, wondering *Who am I?*, in terms of multiple social affiliations and roles.

Small mirrors around the human silhouette, in which the visitor may glimpse partial reflections of their own image, indicate the dynamics of mutual interactions: the influence of the environment on the individual through socialization processes, judgement, and labeling, and the impact of the individual on the environment around them through their choices and actions. This illustrates the concept of the human being as a cumulative and creative creature, which is of fundamental importance to our exhibition.

The exhibition highlights the limitation of physical senses and the cultural conditioning of perception (which is specifically focused and interpreted) and experience. Several pictorial examples of optical and rational tricks on the back side of the pillar demonstrate how easy it is to mislead the senses, and how the mind shaped by culture may become limited in experiencing “reality” (i.e. the fata morgana; a window cleaner cleaning extremely large window surfaces which reflect the sky; the names of specific colors written in colored letters that differ from the color that they actually depict, and so on).



A mixture of plant seeds in a wire mesh bowl illustrates the relationship between natural laws written in the genetic code of the cells and environmental conditions represented by the wire mesh. It provides an opportunity for reflection on the relationship between the natural and the socio-cultural in humans (photo by J. Žagar).

The interlacing of natural features of the human species and of the concrete sociocultural environment of each subject of the same species is illustrated with a parable from the plant world. Next to the central pillar is a wire mesh bowl with a **mixture of different seeds** (beans, corn, lentils, soybeans, etc.). Among the seeds is a small sign bearing the question *How does each seed know in what to grow?* As most visitors are familiar with the answer we did not see fit to provide information about biochemical genetic instructions that are a component of the cell

nuclei of all living species. The visitors are also aware of the influence of the environment and concrete conditions that affect the growth and development of each plant, which is illustrated by the wire mesh under the seeds. Analogy with individuals and groups of people is self-evident.

## Content of the Exhibition Narrative

Various topics dealing with the central theme from several angles are discussed on circular panels. The panels are divided into two parts. To the right of the entrance the presented material speaks about some selected aspects of human nature (*Variety and Unity; Diversity of Human Species; Uniqueness of an Individual*). To the left, it discusses society and culture, which direct and mold the natural conditions of the human species (*How to Be Human?; Socializing the Body; Personifying the Environment*).

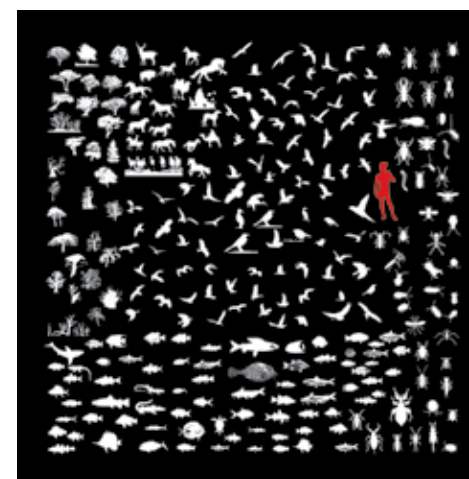
There are many aspects to the human being, far too many for the capacity of a single exhibition space. We have therefore singled out three elements of the human species, and simultaneously of the individual, which represent the recurrent theme of this chapter: the human figure, the head, and the hand. This was not a random choice. It is based on three key results of the evolution of the human species: erect posture and walking, cerebral capabilities, and physiology of the hand. On the one hand, these characteristics universally define the human species and separate it from all other living species on Earth; on the other, they can be also observed from the aspect of a specific culture that has conditioned them, and at the same time from the individual point of view.

As the cohesive thread in the exhibition narrative, the selected three elements acquired a different emphasis in each of the two sections. Epitomized by large graphic textures on the panels, they refer to the biological aspects of the body, the head, and the hand when discussing nature, and the symbolic designations of the human being, the decorated face, and handwriting when dealing with culture and the society.

We shall now proceed to the three corresponding pairs, taken from each section, which in this part of the exhibition are generally placed opposite one another.

## Variety and Unity : How to Be Human?

The first pair is linked by the aspect of the universally human and by the aspect of the human body.



The segment titled **Variety and Unity** tries to spark admiration of and wonder at nature, which has imprinted its universal principles in every cell of an individual organism. Sharing the same basic laws of life, all living beings are similar from the aspect of cellular and biochemical processes. Despite a number of extinct species, the abundance and diversity of living species on Earth is overwhelming, and humans share the evolutionary history and the planet with a colorful variety of them. The realization that each of us contains the record of the history of its kind, and in a way also the history of all living species from which we have evolved, is quite fascinating.

Throughout evolution, the human species experienced many different forms. In the last five to seven millions of years, twenty species of hominids have added their share to the evolutionary history of humanity and the world. For the last 30, 000 years, this is just the history of Homo sapiens (modern-day thinking human), as other hominid species are already extinct. Homo sapiens sapiens is believed to have originated around 200, 000 years ago in Africa. Modern genetic research confirms that 100, 000 years ago, and then again about

The human species as only one of the many species populating the Earth, and the individual as the carrier of the genetic record of the history of its own and also of other species (Shutterstock).

Although expressed in specific male and female body features, biological differences between the sexes involve but a small part of the common genetic code; “masculinity” and “femininity” are primarily a socio-cultural construct (Shutterstock).



60, 000 years ago, homo sapiens started to journey to other continents, even though he was not the first hominid to disperse beyond Africa. It is believed that the great dissemination of the humankind across the continents completed 13, 000 years ago. The number of people has extremely increased since, and officially the seven-billionth human on Earth was born on October 31, 2011.

Characteristics of the human species developed gradually, and older hominids possessed certain individual characteristics as well. The human species is characterized by several physical features that distinguish it from other primates: permanent upright posture and bipedal walk; evolvement of the hand into a precise work tool; and highly advanced brain and associated behavior, which also includes communication by speech. Biological difference between the male and the female sex involves an extremely small part of the common genetic code that concerns only sexual organs and secondary sexual traits. This small genetic difference enables biological reproduction and is also expressed in the outward appearance of the body. Other dimensions of “masculinity” and “femininity”, however, are the result of cultural gender construction rather than the biological one.

By placing some solid remains of living creatures such as snail and crab shells, cockles, fossilized remains, etc., among grains of sand in the display case titled *History of Living Species, Reconstructed through Fragments*, we tried to draw



*History of Living Species, Reconstructed through Fragments: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*

The human hand with its pincer grasp has the ability to perform high precision tasks (photo by J. Žagar).



attention to the absence of much of the material remains of life in the past, which throughout the millennia gradually crumbled into dust and elemental particles. Even inorganic products of past human cultures do not escape these natural disintegrative processes. Due to some exceptional, random circumstances, a mere “handful” of material evidence has been preserved, on the basis of which scientists have reconstructed past development. Through the story of a common evolutionary history, it offers humanity one of the (possible) foundations of our common identity – belonging to the human race in all its temporal and spatial dimensions of existence and agency.

During the past 30, 000 years, human physical development did not change significantly. What was being developed was its cultural nature, and the human ability of self-awareness and self-reflection, the ability of abstract and symbolic thinking, exchange and accumulation of experience and information, and long-term memory were crucial. Of utmost importance was the ability to adapt to the environment, with behavior based on observation, judgement, and planning. On the other hand, humans have become more vulnerable and less capable of independent survival. As a result, sociality has become part of the human nature.

The findings about sociality and enculturation as a universal building block of each individual member of the human species introduces the topic entitled *How to Be Human?* Every individual is subjected to biological processes of their organism and the nature of their species. There is no human in the sense of a purely biological being. Each person is part of a concrete place and time, society and culture. The environment into which an individual is born is a pre-coded place; for them, it denotes subjective reality and “second nature.” These factors transform the universal characteristics of human nature into specific abilities, skills, experience, and knowledge – as well as understanding what is right, good, just, decent, healthy ... and what is not. In this, sociocultural environments and their members differ among themselves.

Community integration is possible only through common values, norms and rules, rituals, and communication modes (language, writing, symbols, body movements, and gestures as a form of communication, greetings, etc.). Group rituals significantly mark and accompany many of people’s changed statuses and roles, consolidate social relations, mark important events, and strengthen feelings of belonging. They create a sense of order, safety, and predictability. They consist of prescribed, or at least predictable, forms and sequences. They may emphasize the importance and permanence of the group in comparison with the individual and his or her transience; some rituals are used to organize and monitor time.

The immense diversity of these culturally conditioned symbols is depicted in this segment of the exhibition with select words, characters, and designations, which in different languages denote the human race and its gender and age variants: man, woman, child, boy, girl, young man, young woman, old man, old woman. Different writings and nonverbal body language with specific cultural meanings are illustrated with select photographs that depict various rituals (i.e. Christian rites, initiation ceremony of Brazilian girls, the modern street quadrille performed by high-school graduates in Ljubljana). Rituals are extremely diverse in external form and internal meanings and vary in different cultural environments.



*Hand gestures as part of the nonverbal language of the body (Shutterstock).*

Culturally conditioned are also notions of which key elements constitute a human being, and what can endanger his or her health and life. This concept is conveyed by several photographs depicting various “traditional” anatomies and medicinal systems; these are supplemented by a depiction of a human figure, which consists of several partial X-ray photographs and illustrates a modern physical perception of the human being. The display case entitled *What Harms and What Helps?* exhibits a mixture of tools and implements from various periods and cultures believed to eliminate disease or prevent the effects of harmful factors (i.e. Egyptian amulets for the protection against evil from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.; depictions of diseases and remedies for them from the 18<sup>th</sup> century; Christian relics, holy cards, and votives from the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century; modern natural and chemical remedies and aids; and modern talismans for good fortune).

## Diversity of Human Species : Socializing the Body

The second corresponding narrative pair discusses why we are more similar or less similar to others. The answer to this question is that the human species is internally diverse, which is expressed in group similarities; however, these do not mean unification. They may also be perceived as individual manifestations. This pair focuses on the head, especially the face.

Since the human species is extremely diverse, both from the point of view of the individual as well as groups, this segment of the exhibition, titled **Diversity of Human Species**, discusses this aspect. Although specimen of each species and their groups slightly differ from one another polymorphism is not equally manifested in each of them. More pronounced differences within the human species are relatively recent, younger than 30, 000 years. They are not the result of a separate evolutionary development. Differences developed gradually and were due to many factors: migration; adaptation to different climatic conditions; and especially due to geographical isolation of various groups, which resulted in mating constraints. Over time, all of this evolved in adapted forms and greater similarities within each group. Physical properties may namely be inherited and thus become more frequent within a limited population and geographical area.

People differ in height, weight, color of skin, hair, and eyes, length of limbs, blood groups, etc. However, classification of people in different types on the basis of such physical differences has no foundation. Visible recognition of diversity enables mutual recognition but does not refute the fact that all humans on the planet Earth belong to the same biological species. Diversity has to be understood as the natural state of the human species, and its enrichment. It is of no crucial importance in the genetic language, as all human diversity is encompassed in a mere half percent of the human genome. In other words, at least 99, 5 % of the human genetic code is common to all people in the world.

The human face has a particularly prominent role in the recognition of another person. Since people do not see their own face directly its main role is to communicate with others. We determine another person's sex and age, including their geographical origin, by their face. Of crucial importance (perhaps even for survival), however, is the detection and interpretation of the correct mood on the faces of other people. Expressing various moods with facial expressions is also a trait of some types of primates and is not an exclusively human one. Certain facial expressions are common to all people, for example those expressing fear, sadness, joy, surprise, anger, and disgust. But the circumstances and intensity of this non-verbal manner of expression are determined and dictated by each culture.

These six universal expressions are depicted with six photographs of the same person; we have also added a mirror in which the visitor can observe these expressions on his or her own face. The variety of the human species on the level of individuals and groups is illustrated with the graphic texture of the panels in dark blue: a tinted mosaic of faces of different age, sex, and cultural as well as temporal origin. The same mosaic of faces is used on the applied picture, but here the faces form a single, large face. It could have been anyone's face, but due to his universal recognizability we have selected the face of the renowned physicist and mathematician Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955). Composed of a myriad of faces, his face conveys the fact that the predominant part of the same genome marks and links all people on Earth, whether they are well-known personalities or just ordinary people anywhere in the world.

The body is a physical vessel for our personality, and we use it to communicate with others. Biological properties of the human body and some of its conditions may be visible to others yet only to their naked eye; the society not only

observes the individual's appearance but also scrutinizes and assesses it. Each individual therefore modifies their body to correspond to the ideal prescribed by the environment in which they live. This is the subject discussed in the segment **Socializing the Body**.

Various sociocultural environments have transformed small differences between biological sexes into specifically constructed ideas about "femininity" and "masculinity" in terms of the desired physical and psychological traits. Each culture thus cultivates a particular "male" and a particular "female" way of grooming, decorating, emphasizing/concealing individual parts of the body, and gesticulating with them. Since the culture in which people live assesses their suitability they try to modify their bodies in order to approach the prescribed male or female ideals of beauty as much as possible.

When we modify our body in accordance with the prevailing ideals of a specific culture or observe the bodies of others, we therefore form, perceive, and judge the so-called sociocultural body. Such a body is expressed through movement (gestures, positions, and expressions) and through beauty and status improvements (redesigning people's figures, clothing style, scent use, painting, tattooing, cutting, piercing, scarring, etc.). These are all forms of nonverbal communication and, in relation to words, convey more than half of information a person tries to impart. People's assessment of what is beautiful, reputable, prestigious, desirable, appropriate, etc., may vary significantly from culture to culture. Since the head, and in particular the face and hands, has a strong communicative role, it is not surprising that the most frequent and obvious decorative and symbolic modifications of the body can be found on the head;

Diversity of the species is illustrated with images of six universal facial expressions and with mirrors that beckon visitors to examine their own face. The facial expressions of primates may seem similar to human ones but do not necessarily indicate the same frame of mind (photo by J. Žagar).



several illustrations of these techniques are depicted on the photographs on the panel. By examining these photographs, visitors can quickly realize that their assessment of beauty in their immediate and familiar environment can be swift and natural in the case of, for example, the face of a young woman with fashionable makeup and earrings, painted faces of sports fans or Carnival masks, tattoos and piercings fashionable in urban environments, etc. On the other hand, they may feel differently about modified bodies from other time periods and environments, for example the ornamental extension of female earlobes with metal rings on Borneo, Indonesia; lip plates worn by the Mursi

Composed of numerous faces, this face illustrates genetic unity and, at the same time, the great diversity of the human species.



women in Ethiopia and men in the jungles of Brazil; the extension of the female neck with brass coils in Northern Myanmar; the specific shaping of women's teeth in Laos; or perhaps the tattoos and facial expressions of a Maori man from New Zealand.

This topic is depicted in two display cases, which both carry the title *Construction of Beautiful and Significant*. They contain a mix of contemporary illustrative examples, older museum artifacts, and objects from private collections, all from different environments. Focusing on body decoration, the first showcase displays hair decorations, body dies, modern fragrance bottles, a scarification needle from Sudan, and a female figurine, adorned with decorative scars, from the Ivory Coast. Artificial nails and eyelashes are displayed as examples of contemporary fashion trends. And since decorative objects can convey the status of their user we have also added several status items (Chinese mandarin headgear; girl's headband and "bride's crown", both from Bela Krajina). The other showcase displays select body decorations of various age and origin: bracelets, earrings, and nose ornaments.



Using images, objects, and texts, the section *Socializing the Body* demonstrates the variety of shapes and forms that influence one's assessment of what is beautiful, significant, reputable, prestigious, etc. (photo by J. Žagar).

*Construction of Beautiful and Significant*: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).

### Uniqueness of an Individual : Personalization of the Environment

Let us now discuss the third pair of selected elements, which highlight the aspect of the individual in each human being. The symbol of this topic is the human hand, which is universal but also contains aspects of the group.

The segment titled *Uniqueness of an Individual* speaks about the biological identity of the individual that separates them from others and makes them unique and distinctive. Individual people differ from one another more than groups of people do. Population growth results in an increase of possible gene combinations, which is why the human species has so many variations. Individual differences are much more noticeable within "our" family, local, or wider geographical group because we are conditioned to perceive and understand them. Biological identity of the individual is the result of a unique genome, which is partly expressed in external appearance (facial contours, body features, and anomalies) and also forms predispositions for certain personal traits, tendencies, and talents. In addition to the common genome shared with all people, an exceptional characteristic of every individual is the unique hereditary line of his or her ancestors. Last but not least, there is another key feature of the human individual, namely an awareness of being an indivisible whole, separated from others.



In addition to other physical markers of individuality, for example the iris and cornea of the eye, the outer part of the ear, the jaw, the position of teeth, and the timbre and melody of the voice, this segment of the exhibition particularly highlights the palms and fingerprints. Impressions of the entire hand and of fingertips are among the unique physical properties of a person. The typical configuration of the fingertips is formed already in the fetal stage and remains the same throughout adulthood and old age, regardless of possible damage or illness.

Recognition of other people based on facial, eye, and voice characteristics is a matter of recurring experience and memory. Many unique body markers can only be detected through exact measurements and precise comparisons, and are therefore the tool of the state-of-the-art identification methods. They may become an integral part of personal documents, files, and records, which is illustrated by items displayed in the showcase titled *Biological Markers of Individuality*. Included are some tangible memories that emphasize individual bodily characteristics, including those that mark the transient phases of an individual, for example keep-sake impressions of children's hands and feet; milk teeth as a reminder of childhood; gypsum molds of the lower jaw and teeth as the basis for making braces, etc.

Although most people do not differentiate, for example, between individual animals in a group of chimpanzees on the basis of their facial characteristics, or between individual zebras in a herd according to their unique striped patterns, this does not indicate that individual animals of the same species do not recognize each other. More or less evident biological uniqueness of members of the same species is namely not characteristic only of humans but also of other species, as can be perceived on several eloquent photographs that are much more convincing than words.

*Personalization of the Environment* draws attention to those markers that indirectly define an individual and serve as the basis for some personal identities: name and surname, personal data, signature or sign, and handwriting. These are some of the symbols of the individual that are also recognized by other people, and sociocultural markers that supplement biological ones.

A person's name is one of the basic characteristics of personal identity. It may be supplemented by other, group markers, such as the family name. Since the topic discussed here is related to the hand and hand gestures special attention is paid to a person's signature, which combines the symbolic role of the personal name and individual psychophysical gesture. The signature is therefore a means of verifying a person's identity. Almost as important as fingerprints, handwriting reflects personal traits as well. The principal difference between them is that fingerprints are permanent while the handwriting has several versions and changes over time.



Certain physical markers of individuality are instantly discernible while others require comparative measurements. The uniqueness of each individual is a characteristic of all living species yet may not be instantly recognizable in all of them (photo by J. Žagar).

The signature and handwriting are intrinsically linked to the language and the handwriting style of a particular environment. An interface between the common system and individual expression, handwriting is depicted with the pictorial material that further illustrates the objects in the showcase titled *Template and Handwritten Inscriptions on Objects*. These are various seals and other marking templates; teaching aids for reading, penmanship, and embroidery; written documents; and objects of everyday use with engraved, carved, or embroidered personal names or monograms.

An individual can be recognized by his or her handwriting or signature, which is illustrated with the handwriting of the Slovene writer Ivan Cankar and the signature of the poet France Prešeren. An inventive use of physical and personal symbolic markers represents a photograph of the famous Hollywood Boulevard in the U.S.A., where celebrities from the entertainment industry have left their handprints, footprints, and signatures in the concrete.

*Personalized Objects: a glimpse into the display case (photo by M. Habič).*

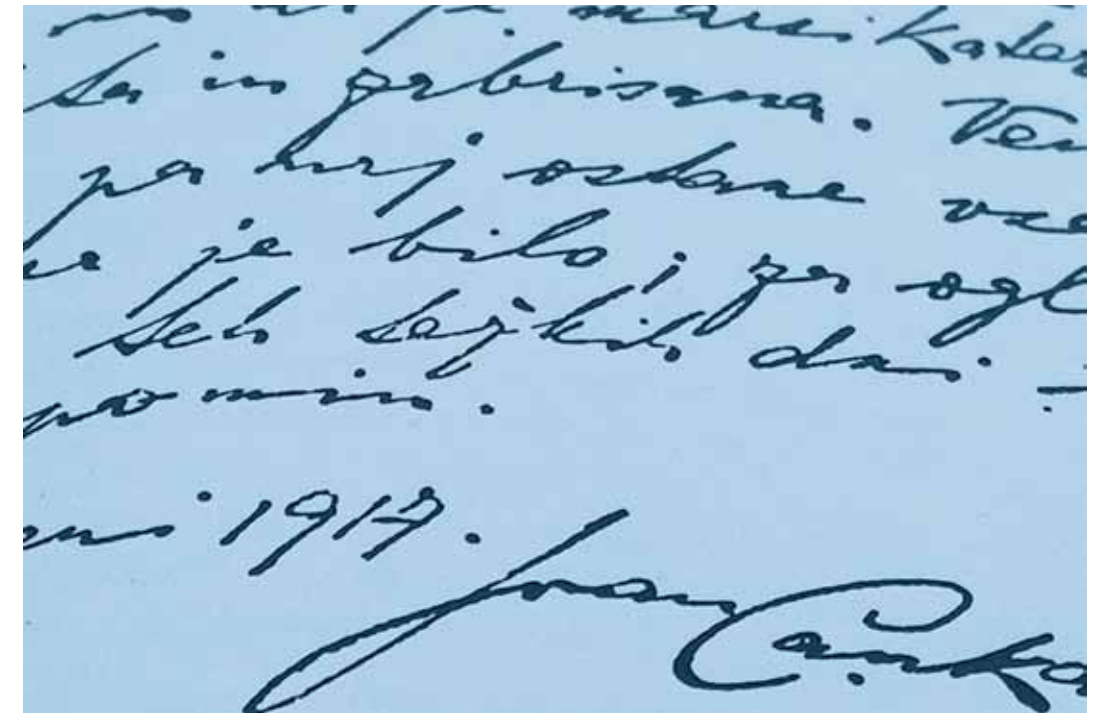


A person can leave their mark through personal symbols and other tokens even when physically absent. Several pictures illustrate examples of conveying information about ourselves and the space that we consider our own, for example a trade or craftsman's insignia with the name of the owner, a family tombstone, etc. A slightly different way of personalizing things is the marking of various objects. These are always an expression of culturally conditioned ideas and skills of their makers as well as real or imagined user needs. If they are also equipped with an individual mark, such as the name, monogram, sign, etc., their presence denotes an attempt at symbolic personalization and control of space. What, how, and why it is deemed worthwhile to mark certain objects largely depends on the general habits in the cultural environment of each individual. Several objects of this kind, with different purposes (spoons, iron, whetstone holder, several pieces of cutlery, ring, etc.), can be examined in the showcase titled *Personalized Objects*. All of them display visible marks made by their manufacturers, owners, or holders.

## Additional Themes and Elements

The two main parts of the exhibition are linked by the theme of the **Tree**. It illustrates the coexistence of nature and culture, of the material and the symbolic, and is based on a symbolic comparison between a leafy tree and the human being. As the tree is rooted in the soil from which it draws food and support for living the human being may be symbolically perceived as rooted in a specific culture – along with the accumulated experience of previous generations. The cyclic renewal of the growing tree symbolizes the exchange of life and death, but also human agency and growth into next generations.

Since the first tree-like plants with a large single stalk appeared approximately 380 million years ago the history of tree species is much longer than the history of the human one. Each tree has its own individuality that separates it from the trees of the same and of other species: every tree is rooted in a con-



crete environment, and its height and crown shape may vary; it may be healthy and mighty, solitary, or specially adapted to growing in a clump of other trees, where it seeks its place under the sun by growing as high as possible. While the cross-section of each tree reveals its growth its annual rings and their widths show its adaptation to the space where it grew and the annual conditions that modified its growth.

In addition to the many ways of utilizing trees various cultures ascribed symbolic meanings to specific kinds of trees, for example the oak, linden tree, ash, olive tree, fig, and so on. The tree of a particular species may acquire different meanings in different cultures. It may be celebrated as the tree of life, of knowledge, of death, of suffering and redemption; the father or the mother tree; ancestor's, family, or lineage tree; the tree of a particular place, people, or ruler; the world or the cosmic tree, etc.

This topic is depicted in the display case titled *The Tree between Nature and Culture*. Tree species and individuality of each tree are illustrated with seeds and dried leaves from different types of trees; the culturally conditioned utilization of trees and their wood with a lidded wooden container from the do-

*Ivan Cankar's handwriting and signature are publicly recognizable markers of the notable Slovene author even after his death.*



mestic environment; and the symbolic meanings of trees with a Mexican clay candle holder depicting the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden.

The last panel, titled ***Between Personal and Collective***, discusses the difference between personal and shared history. The world may encompass the entire planet but there are as many small, individual worlds as there are people. The entire world is mirrored in their small, partial images that nevertheless seem real and perfect. The images of our worlds and experiences are namely not based on what we see but on what we have been conditioned to see.

We are used to reflecting upon our shared history as a long, continuous timeline encompassing events of great importance, breakthrough social changes, and continuous technical development. Yet the majority of human history is in fact composed of a myriad of complex personal stories, small events, thoughts, desires, and emotions. They follow the recurring rhythms of day and night, of the seasons, and of the arrival of incessantly new human generations.

An individual experiences his or her life as an unparalleled unit that cannot be repeated and is intimately separate from the common course of history and from events and circumstances shared by others. This is more than just being

*The Tree between Nature and Culture: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*



aware of oneself; it is awareness of one's continuity and identity, which separates one's life from the lives of everyone else. This concept already introduces the cohesive thread that accompanies every chapter of this exhibition. Translated into literature and titled ***An Individual's Journey***, it deals with installing an individual in the shared course of history. While the individual is symbolized with a drop of water the dynamics of the family, place, and the state are represented by a river, an "eternal" river along which the story of a particular family unfolds.

The sounds permeating this segment of the exhibition simulate the same symbolic relationship: the dripping water is occasionally replaced by the sound of waves, which people, due to their relatively short life span, experience as an eternal and unchangeable element of nature.

Passing through a narrow passage, where the (potential) biological beginning of a human being is depicted with a greatly enlarged picture of the ovum and sperm, the visitor proceeds to the next exhibition room. The passage between the two is shaped like a semi-circular tunnel symbolizing the birth canal. The softly falling fabric in it indicates darkness, safety, and the softness of the space in which a new being unconsciously grows and develops. Due to the narrowness of the passage, each visitor has to pass through this seeming experience of development and birth by themselves.

Part of the sound background in the tunnel is the beating of the human heart – a unique rhythm that will accompany the individual from the beginning to the end of their lives. It is occasionally interrupted by the sounds from the introductory and from the first part of the exhibition area (undulation of the sea, ticking of the clock, dripping water). The sociocultural aspect of pregnancy and reception of a newborn human to the community is diverse and therefore depicted with an uneven mesh on a metal framework. It is possible to see and hear elements of the environment awaiting the newly-born infant: red light, symbolizing the dawn as an announcement of a new day and a new life; the nest and the fire as symbols of family unity; and the sounds of home.

*The entrance into the display area through white string curtains and the exit from it through black ribbons converge so that the topic of this exhibition chapter encompasses the entire circle. The last panel before the exit depicts*



Just before leaving the exhibition, the visitor gets a glimpse of the first part of the biblical story of creation inscribed on the tunnel wall:

*For every human being, birth is like the creation of the world: whether he is born or the world is born, it is all the same to him...*

*the dynamic relationship between the personal and the collective, between the droplet of water and the river (photo by J. Žagar).*

*A droplet and concentric waves on the water surface represent the individual as a brief moment in the shared history and the rippling effect of his or her agency around them (Shutterstock).*

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## My Family – My Home

Polona Sketelj

What is my family to me? What is my home to me?  
What roles do I play in the family?





## My Family – My Home

The family is the basic unity of society. Generally providing shelter and security, the family is where the newborn acquires the skills necessary to satisfy its basic physiological needs, and where it is first introduced to the basic norms and values of the society to which it now belongs.

Home is the smallest and the most basic living space. People designate their home as their own and define its limits in order to separate it from its surroundings. Since the newborn's first encounter after birth is with its family as the basic community, and with the home as its first living environment, the

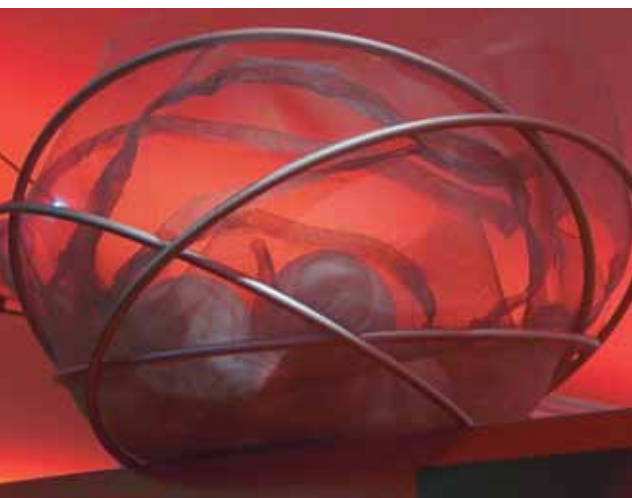
second exhibition chapter of the permanent exhibition addresses these two topics. It traces the human being as an individual, and at the same time as a biological and socio-cultural being. Entering the exhibition space through a tunnel that represents the birth canal and birth, visitors find themselves in a space lit by red light and are faced with questions relating to their perception of the family and home, and with the roles that they have in them.

Symbolizing the family and the home, a **wire nest** introduces this exhibition chapter. Taken from nature but made of metal, the motif illustrates the fact that while the human need for family and home is innate people mold their family and home in accordance with the cultural and social norms of the day.

### Symbolic Elements and Design of the Narrative

Having a **square floor plan**, the first part of the exhibition area is diagonally divided into two sections, depicting the family as a community and the home as a place of residence. Both are symbolically linked by the hearth (symbolized by a **screen projection of a burning fire**), which is therefore placed in the very center of the room. The hearth is surrounded by **seating cubes** beckoning the visitor to pause and ponder the symbolic meaning of the fire in the home and the family, and to reflect on this particular segment of their lives.

The last section of the exhibition space is introduced by a **metal gateway** that symbolizes the front door (house portal) through which the individual enters the wider community, and the threshold where a person encounters other members of the community. The gateway heralds the theme presented in the next exhibition room (*My Community – My Home Place*). While one side of the



Wire mesh nest with spheres of different sizes symbolizes affiliation with other people (one's family) and space (one's home) (photo by J. Žagar).

Photo on the previous page by B. Zupančič

gateway depicts themes associated with passages, both in space and in time, the other explores how the family and the home function in the wider community. The act of stepping across the threshold is illustrated by wire figurines ascending the gateway and gazing at the world beyond it.

As indicated, this exhibition chapter features three central symbolic elements associated in different cultures with the family and home: the **nest**, the **hearth**, and the **gateway** (as a symbolic door leading from the constricted space of home into the world).

Introductory texts with photographs that differ graphically from other pictures and texts address the themes presented in this exhibition chapter. The photographs have a documentary as well as symbolic meaning, i.e. the photograph of hands belonging to four generations of men from the same family in the segment titled *From Generation to Generation*. In addition to the continuation of the lineage, they symbolize transmission of knowledge and values and therefore the continuation of the bloodline, both in the biological and in the cultural sense.

Certain themes carry a special meaning and are therefore presented on distinctive, red panels. Other panels, in neutral colors, are supplemented by graphics that indicate the main topics discussed there: a silhouette of a family, a family tree, a votive figurine of a baby, the most common Slovene names and surnames, tree roots, floor plans of houses, etc.

This section features museum objects from Slovenia, Europe, and non-European countries; illustrations; and items from private family collections. Family heirlooms were handed over to the Museum in order to preserve specific family histories and memories. Although they may differ in form, objects from different cultural backgrounds indicate that items with a similar purpose appear in other cultures as well.

In addition to the material exhibited in smaller display cases, visitors can also examine two larger showcases, the first of which symbolically depicts the central living area, the so-called *hiša* (house). As the central and the most important part of the home, the *hiša* was a place where members of the family spent time during the week and on festive days. Here they shared meals and prayers, sang and recounted stories, and in winter performed various household chores; on occasion, some of them also slept there. The items exhibited in this showcase, which also indicate different positions of individual members within the family, include a table, bench, chair, God's Corner, the Bible and other books, and the crèche. The setting is supplemented with photographs of different spaces of primary importance in the home (i.e. the room with the hearth, the living room). The second showcase contains objects associated with family self-sufficiency.

### Exhibition Narrative

This exhibition chapter consists of three major segments: *Family*; *Home*; and *Between the Family and the Wider Community*. The first two are linked by the hearth as the heart of the home and the meeting point of family members. Family members gathered around the fire and also shared the responsibility

Backward view of the exhibit chapter titled *My Family – My Home* shows all three central elements: the gateway, the nest, and the fire / hearth (photo by J. Žagar).



for tending it; as a result, the room with the hearth determined the ground plan and the design of the home. The segments titled *Home* and *Between the Family and the Wider Community* are symbolically linked by a gateway (which functions as a doorway), which on the one hand protects the home and on the other enables family members to proceed forward, into the wider community.

## Family

The first segment focuses on the family. It is introduced by a collage of photographs of human families from different time periods, social backgrounds, and cultures, as well as of those from the animal kingdom. Highlighting the diversity of families, this pictorial mosaic invites the visitor to pause and reflect on what defines a family, on the many types of families, and on their structure. In



The segment *Family* is introduced by a graphic representation of the relationship between the many types of family and the socio-cultural concept of what is supposed to be the “real,” “ideal” family (photo by J. Žagar).

Hands as a symbol of cohabitation and interdependence of several generations (photo by P. Sketelj).

the middle of the mosaic is an illuminated silhouette of a modern - or rather of the current stereotype perception of it - family. Since its many variants are based on a myriad of motifs and circumstances this is definitely not, nor could it be, “the only true” form of the family community.

The section titled ***The Need to Belong*** presents a more detailed look at the basic and most common forms of family communities from different social settings. A universal human need, the need to belong is directly linked with the desire to start a family. In all parts of the world, the form and structure of family units are strongly influenced by the secular and religious authorities. Although many other family forms exist outside the generally recognized frameworks this section presents only the most common socially recognized family forms. The family changes over time, and in the course of her or his life, the individual usually belongs to different family communities. People are linked with other family members in a number of ways: through the bloodline or through non-blood kinship; cohabitation in the same household or home; shared management of the home; and through the institution of godparents. The family is usually a long-lasting and close-knit social unit. While typically based on emotions, sexuality, the feeling of belonging, and the need for shelter and security its creation may also be driven by motives such as the preservation of property, prestige, perpetuation of the bloodline, etc. Family members are often linked by survival strategies, mutual assistance, and their commitment to the shared past, values, and norms.

Although family communities may be extremely diverse and can be understood only in the light of their wider social and cultural background, the family represents the basic social unit and has a similar meaning irrespective of its many variants. This section is introduced by a photograph of hands of different

generations of the same family, which symbolize the continuation of the lineage in both the biological and the cultural sense.

The principal purpose of the family community is perpetuation of the human race and education of the young. The family significantly contributes to the shaping of the personality of its members and to the practices consistent with the wider social and cultural environment. The segment titled ***The Fundamental Cornerstone of Society*** is divided into several themes: *Continuation of the Lineage*; *The Desire to Have Children*; *Regulation of Fertility*; *Choosing a Name*; *In the Records of the Church and the State*; *Rearing and Nurturing*; *Working and Learning*; *Play*; *Introduction to the Wider Community*, etc. The photograph of a breastfeeding human mother and a nursing monkey mother illustrates that this manner of feeding the young is common to all mammals, and the care for offspring is a task shared by all living creatures. Next to it are photographs depict-



ing the rearing of offspring through socialization, which is how parents raise and prepare their children for their future life in a concrete social and cultural environment. The two display cases titled ***Fragments of Childhood*** exhibit numerous toys that were intended not only for play but also for the acquisition of fundamental social skills and knowledge. On display are also a baby walker from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and baby shoes preserved by the family of a teacher from Novo Mesto, who wished to retain the memory of their children’s first baby steps.

*The Desire for Children: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*

*Fragments of Childhood: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*

## Fire and Hearth

The fire, plainly visible even before the visitor enters this exhibition chapter, thematically links its two principal themes. In different cultures, the hearth symbolizes the home and the family; the union of woman and man; the warming glow and light of home; and the warmth of interpersonal relationships among family members. Its position in the central part of the exhibition space symbolizes the importance of the hearth in the family and in the family home. Around the projected image<sup>1</sup> of the fire, which symbolizes the fire in the furnace, the hearth, the stove, etc., are addressed the following topics: tending the fire; the bonding power of fire; and fire as part of family rituals, the pivot of family community, and the heart of the family home.

The “domesticated fire” significantly occupied family members. In many cultures, the skill of kindling and tending the fire in the hearth was handed down from generation to generation. Family members lingered by the light

1 **Ogenj / Fire.** Photography Darko Furlan, SEM Production, 2009.



and warmth of the fire, which also served as a means of food preparation. Preserved to this day, the special bonding quality of fire is illustrated by a recent photograph of a family enjoying their supper by candlelight.

The importance of the domestic hearth is also reflected in various customs and practices. For example, a newborn was symbolically welcomed into the family by being placed on the domestic hearth. If a medieval family was excommunicated its hearth was demolished as well, thus symbolically indicating the termination of the family community.

A heated, and as such the warmest, room is generally the central area of the home. Over the years and hand in hand with economic progress, other rooms gradually emerged. In conjunction with the hearth, the exhibition depicts the evolution of the family home and its gradual segmentation from one to several rooms. In addition, the visitor can learn about the development of

Projected image of fire connects the themes of family and home. It also enables visitors to experience a museum representation of the domestic hearth (photo by J. Žagar).

*Domesticated Fire*: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).

*Food Preparation*: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).



heating methods, food preparation, and the transformation from a single-room house furnished with an open hearth to the so-called smoke kitchen house, and finally to the house with a modern kitchen fitted with cabinetry. For the purpose of comparison, several photographs show examples from other cultural milieus.

## Home

The home is a residential space in which events of the daily life take place. Since humans have an innate need for their own space they wish to make their home, where they seek shelter and safety, more personal. The feeling of belonging to one's home is one of the most stable and deep-rooted feelings of spatial affiliation. Over the course of one's life, a person may have several homes with which they strongly identify.

Just as there are diverse families there are also different homes. People design their homes in accordance with their abilities, the surrounding natural and cultural environment, and the norms of the social group to which they belong. The topic **Variety and Diversity of Dwellings** is illustrated by a collage of photographs of various animal and human dwellings from different locations and periods. Its center is overlaid by a translucent silhouette of a stork and its nest. The collage is placed directly beneath a metal nest, one of the central

The section *Home* begins with a mosaic image of different homes symbolically linked with a silhouette of the nest and stork. It complements the diverse pictorial material on display (photo by J. Žagar).



elements in this exhibition area. The principal types of homes are depicted on photographs and in texts with the following captions: *Reflection of the Natural Environment*; *Indicator of Social Status*; *Means of Subsistence*; *In the City and in the Countryside*; and *Temporary or Permanent Residence*.

The following themes are arranged according to the basic functions of the home: *Segmentation of the Home*; *A Place for Socializing*; and *Shelter and Security*.

**Segmentation of the Home** investigates how people organize their space in accordance with the basic meanings ascribed to the home as a place of residence and a location where people can fulfill their vital needs. The home is where people prepare and consume their food, where they are provided with warmth and light, where they store their necessities of life, and a place that meets their basic needs such as sleep and personal hygiene. This segment of the exhibition invites visitors to reflect on the role and functions of the home, regardless of its original social and cultural background and type.

Along with the gradual segmentation of the home in accordance with its basic functions the development of the dwelling culture gradually resulted in in-



creasing specialization of items necessary for livelihood. While a single item initially had multiple purposes the number of objects used in the home later increased, and each of them started to be used only for specific usage. This development is illustrated by the exhibited multi-purpose objects as well as those with a very specific purpose. The display case titled *Necessities of Life through Applied Objects* contains, among other things, a wooden kneading trough as a multipurpose object and a porcelain soap dish as an example of a utility object for specific usage.

The topic titled **A Place for Socializing** discusses the home as a meeting point of family members. People's feelings of belonging to their families and home are reinforced by different customs and traditions, both everyday and festive ones. Family members practice them together, in the traditional manner, often in the same period of time, and frequently in the same section of their home. These rituals reaffirm the prominent role of certain members of the family and highlight important events in family history and special days in the lives of individual family members. The family accompanies its members throughout their life and pays special attention to the significant moments in their lives. Equally important is the celebration of certain customs of the yearly cycle and of those related to work. Family meals have an especially important role in the consolidation of the family.

*Segmentation of the Home and A Place for Socializing with large areas that can be viewed through several display windows (photo by J. Žagar).*



*A Place for Socializing: a partial glimpse into the display area (photo by J. Žagar).*

*Roles of Family Members: a partial glimpse into the display area (photo by J. Žagar).*

Each home has a central room, which is where family members most frequently socialize and spend time with one another. A large display case features the "house" furnished with selected objects that illustrate such gatherings: a bowl with several spoons symbolizes shared meals; a God's Corner with religious pictures painted on glass as a symbol of common prayer; the manger, which illustrates shared rituals on feast days; and a table with benches and chairs that represents the daily gatherings of family members. It is accompanied by photographs of the most common central spaces in the home, ranging from the room with the hearth to the modern living room.



Another large display case links the previously mentioned theme of the central area of the home and the topic that explores the roles of family members. An artefact of special significance is the chair, which symbolizes an object that in the past could be used only by select family members. In the rural areas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and sometimes even in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such a chair was the prerogative of the farmer as the head of the farming family; in urban areas it belonged to the master and mistress of the house. An example of another special seat is the stool that once belonged to an African tribal chief from Ghana.

While in rural areas the chair belonged to the master of the homestead the mistress was the keeper of the key to the chest, to the store cupboard, or to the front door. The importance of the key as an object within the competence of the mistress of the house is depicted by a single key displayed in a small glass cabinet; next to it is a picture of St. Martha, the patron saint of homemakers, with a key attached to her belt. The struggle for the leading position in the family is depicted on the beehive front panel titled *Fighting for Pants*. It shows several women with keys in their hands struggling for a pair of man's pants, which symbolizes leadership within the family. The position of individual family members is also reflected in tombstone inscriptions, on portals above the front door, and on certain pieces of furniture, all of which are depicted on the photographs on a nearby panel.



The position of individual family members depends upon the prevalent cultural norms of the day that determine the role of women and men, of family members, and of godparents; the significance of kinship; whether a person lives with others under the same roof or far from home; and whether she or he contributes to the family economy. Parents' attitudes to their children and relations among siblings are affected by the age and sex of the child (sons vs daughters, the first-born vs the youngest child). The family is a place where relations are molded between partners, the parents and the children, the grandparents and their grandchildren, and many others.

The home provides shelter as well as physical and symbolic security. This is illustrated by the introductory photograph of a door with a handle, which introduces the theme under the heading **Shelter and Safety**. The objects in the display case titled *Protecting the Home* and the photographs on the panels show various forms of physical and symbolic protection of the home, on both its exterior (windows, doors, façade niches with statuettes of saints) and its

*Introductory photo of the door and key symbolically indicates the boundary between the private and the public (photo by P. Sketelj).*

*Protecting of the Home: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*



interior (the so-called God's Corners, the house blessing, etc.). The content of this part of the exhibition is spatially related to the metal gateway, or a symbolic gate, which is closely associated with safety and a sense of privacy and security of family members.

### Between the Home and the Wider Community

The narrowed section of this exhibition area deals with themes associated with transitions in space and in time. The inner side of the passage focuses on the awareness of family members of the link between generations, and on the significance of the threshold. The outer side depicts the relationship between the family/family space on the one hand and the local community and professional and interest groups on the other.

The passage through time is addressed in the segment **Awareness of Shared History**. In addition to photographs, the visitor can examine items that have been passed down from generation to generation and perceived by family members as the main perpetrators of family memory (in the display case titled *Materialized Memories and Ties*). Well aware of their mortality, people need a sense of uninterrupted continuity of their lineage and the family to which they belong. We all search for our roots in the past and through our descendants

*Materialized Memories and Ties: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*



The wire mesh gateway in the exhibition space symbolically separates the content on the family and home, which focuses inward, and themes that connect the family and home with their surroundings, thus introducing the next exhibition chapter titled *My Community – My Birthplace* (photo by J. Žagar).

direct our gaze toward the future. We celebrate holidays with other family members; maintain family traditions, values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills; preserve family symbols; and cherish family heirlooms. All of these transmit and convey a shared family memory, which is the part of family history that, according to family members, is worth preserving and consolidating into a shared memory. The memory of ancestors is preserved through oral tradition, written records, and material objects, and is symbolized by stylized tree roots applied on the panels' background.

The theme presented on the opposite side is crossing the **threshold of home**. Like the hearth, the threshold is an important symbol of home. Depicted are daily departures from home, the crossing of the threshold on important milestones in people's lives (such as birth, marriage, and death), the manner of welcoming guests, and contacts with those who appear on our doorstep. The theme is introduced by a photograph of a barefoot child stepping across the doorstep and by a small photograph of dandelion flowers whose fluffy seed balls are carried away by the wind.

The various themes depicted beyond the symbolic gateway can be classified under the common heading **Positioning in the Wider Community**. They explore how people's identification with the family and home is manifested in their surnames, house names, family coats of arms, and other visible signs of affiliation. The photograph introducing this topic depicts an entrance door in Ljubljana with a portal and the façade with a rendition of the master and mistress of the house, the family coat of arms, and the guild to which the family had belonged. This illustrates how families express their affiliation and designate their residence. At the same time it also shows how the family interacts with the wider community, and how the symbolic language of stately entrances and portals conveys (as well as establishes and maintains) the family's worth and social standing. The final part of this display section shows boundaries of the home/homestead, for example the front door, fences, geographical features, and boundary stones, all of which are tangible tokens indicating where the home/homestead begins and where it ends.

The section named **Struggle for Survival** addresses how family members come into contact with the wider social environment. A common concern for the survival of the family comprises the principal economically viable activity; supplementary activities; home maintenance; housekeeping; management of common property; and the care for family members. Holders of these activities may be all or only some family members. Certain economically viable ac-

*Struggle for Survival is symbolically represented by a photograph of hands kneading bread dough. Various means of subsistence are illustrated with photographs and items displayed in a larger display area (photo by J. Žagar).*



tivities are passed down generations exclusively through the male, or else only through the female line. Depicting the family as a self-sustaining community, the display case titled *Means of subsistence* exhibits items (e.g. a loom, a hoe, a plane, and knives for toothpick making) that symbolize some of the principal as well as supplementary viable activities.

Other topics addressed in this section are the division of labor; the most common means of transferring property to the next generation through both the male and the female line; and the dowry as the type of inheritance through the female line. A hope chest placed in a position that allows examination from two different standpoints can be perceived either as an important part of the bride's dowry (in the section dealing with **the dowry**) or as an important object that is inherited through the female line (**From Generation to Generation**).

One of the strategies associated with the survival of the family is reflected in the attitude of younger to older family members. After elderly members of the family hand over their property their position is determined by individual rights and according to the prevailing norms of a particular environment. In the territory of present-day Slovenia, and particularly in rural areas, these rights were once (and in some cases still are) detailed in a special, legally bind-

Hope chest from 1855 represents the bride's dowry and property as the type of inheritance through the female line. It can be examined through smaller windows, which in the language of the museum exhibition denotes the possibility of different interpretations (photo by J. Žagar).

ing contract. It specified the quality and quantity of goods (such as housing, clothes, food, and occasionally money) that the former master of the home-  
stead had to receive on a regular basis until his death.

Additional Themes and Elements

The themes addressed in this exhibition area are accompanied by a **back-ground of various sounds** in the following order: a child crying; voices of various family members; the sound of the crackling fire; food preparation; a shared meal; a prayer; and the creaking of a door. Emanating from the targeted parts of the display area, these sounds transform the presented topics into a lively, animated experience.

Before leaving, the visitor can explore a **touch screen** with a selection of glimpses from the life of the Reichmann family from southern Carinthia, Aus-

Title screen of the  
homemade film clips  
titled *The Raubar  
Family* available as a  
touchscreen option.



tria<sup>2</sup>. Filmed by the father, these fragments of family life show the daily life and activities on festive days. This is a genuine document that recorded events tak-  
ing place within the family as well as the author’s own selection of everything  
that he deemed worth preserving as a visual record of family history. The top-  
ics depicted onscreen correspond to the classification of themes addressed in  
this exhibition chapter.

2 **Raubarjevi / The Raubar Family.** Selkach/Želuče, Austria, 1992-2008. Photography by Hanzi Rei-  
chmann; selected by Polona Sketelj; edited by Hanzi Reichmann and Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interacti-  
ve application by Peter Gruden; SEM Production, 2008; duration: 8 min.

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# My Community – My Birthplace

Nena Židov

Where am I from? Which people are close to me?

With whom do I spend my working days and with whom do I share festive days?





## My Community – My Birthplace

This section of the exhibition discusses the local community as one of the environments that can importantly contribute to the formation of the individual through mutual relations, transmission of knowledge, social control, and the safeguarding of tradition. To some extent, members of the local community identify with a shared place of residence where they live in similar conditions, share local history and common interests, and celebrate the same feast days. The worldviews the individual acquires in his or her local community are generally retained also later in life and in new environments. Most people preserve throughout their life this sense of affiliation to the place where they were born and where they spent their childhood and youth.

Although the influence of the local community on the individual's identity is significant in any culture this section of the exhibition tries to illustrate it on the example of a traditional village community as one of the types of local communities in Slovenia. The setting of the exhibition area is reminiscent of the village square with the village pub, church, well, fire station, street lamp, and the linden tree. The panels depicting the pub, the fire station, and the church represent a kind of façade, and the display cases represent the “windows” through which the visitor can peek at the interior of these buildings and institutions. All the topics presented here are supple-

mented by photographs. Although most of the artifacts and photographs come from the Slovene ethnic territory there are also several from other cultures, which underline the universal function of local communities.

### Internal Diversity of the Village Community

The village community consists of all who live in that particular village. Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rural population living in different parts of Slovenia shared a relatively similar lifestyle (living conditions, food culture, dress style, etc.) and means of livelihood (agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts, etc.). People shared an awareness of the community and acted as a whole. In the past, kinship ties, the institution of godparents, and neighborly

ties were of particular importance. While elderly villagers ensured the preservation of traditional values younger generations joined girls' and boys' communities. Every village community had people, including foreigners, who enjoyed a special reputation and prestige, for example the priest, the mayor, teacher, innkeeper, shopkeeper, and healer. Then there were village originals and those from the bottom of the social and economic ladder, such as beggars.

**Young Bachelors' Groups** are a typical example of the ties shared by young unmarried men of the same generation. They were in charge of public order, exercised control over premarital love life, and played an important role in the preparation of wedding ceremonies (erection of maypoles; the so-called *šranganje* - demanding redemption for the bride from their own village). In some places, such groups are still in charge of organizing social life and village traditions such as carol singing, Shrovetide celebrations, the erection of maypoles, etc. Prerequisites for admitting a young man into their ranks were a certain age and a successful completion of a test (e.g. the demonstration of certain skills or of power). The day of admittance (often on St. Florians's feast day, Shrovetide, St. Martin's Day, St. Stephen's Day) and the accompanying rituals varied from place to place. Once married, men are no longer members of their village bachelors' group.

An example of the many activities exercised by a bachelors' group is the so-called *otepanje*, carol singing filmed in Stara Fužina on St. Stephen's Day in 2005.<sup>1</sup>



### Community at Work and on Feast Days

This section of the exhibit highlights mutual assistance and common celebration of feast days, both of which have a significant social and integrating role among community members. **Mutual assistance** is an informal and periodical form of solidarity based on the principle of reciprocity, which importantly contributes to the maintaining and strengthening of contacts between community members. In rural parts of Slovenia, mutual assistance had an important economic and social role, particularly before the Second World War. People helped one another with farming chores; with the building of homes and outbuildings; when a sudden event or an accident occurred; in case of sickness or of animal disease; and at important personal events such as birth, marriage, and death. When a major farm chore had to be completed by a given time (e.g. haying, harvesting, the hoeing of the vineyard, etc.) and a household did not possess a sufficient number of helping hands, mutual assistance was indispensable. People borrowed farming implements, tools, and beasts of burden. Introduction of more modern farming methods, increasing mechanization of agriculture, and other possibilities of livelihood after the Second World War have significantly reduced the importance of and the need for mutual assistance. Yet certain tasks involving heavy machinery (e.g. the thresher) still require a larger number of workers.

Photogram made from images from the film *Otepovci* available on the screen.

Photogram made from images from the film *Setting up the Maypole* available on the screen.



Glimpse into the exhibition chapter *My Community – My Birthplace* with a wire mesh tree as the central stage element (photo by M. Habič).

Photo on the previous page by M. Špiček

<sup>1</sup> **Otepovci.** Stara Fužina, December 2005. Camera and selection Nena Židov, editing Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, production SEM, 2008, duration 3 minutes and a half.

**Feast days** have an important social and integrative role in the community. In the past, the entire village community celebrated church holidays and participated in the many customs of the yearly cycle. In addition to these, new local holidays were established after the Second World War, which were most often connected with significant historical events that had taken place in the territory of the local community, or else were linked with important people who were born or who had worked in the area. Local communities also celebrate some state and international holidays together. In the past, the entire village community participated in some personal and family holidays. During the wedding preparations, friends of the bride made wedding wreaths and bouquets and helped her with her wedding dress. In some places, village men extended wedding invitations and enlisted bridesmaids and other wedding guests, while the women of the village participated in the preparation of festive dishes and pastries, and also served during the feast. The guests contributed toward the wedding feast either in kind or with cash. Those who had not been invited joined the celebration wearing masks, or else as lurkers (the so-called *prežarji*).

The 1994 film about the erection of a maypole in Drašiči, a village in Bela Krajina, depicts one of such common celebrations that involved the entire village community.<sup>2</sup>

### Common Matters and Regulations

Local communities, which are also responsible for the **management of common affairs**, formulate their own regulations to ensure a smooth operation. In the village community, for example, they had to agree on the repair of common

Glimpse into the section on common matters and regulations (photo by M. Habič).

Display case with some of the items related to the local community and the management of common affairs (photo by J. Žagar).



roads and tracks; cleaning of water sources; management of the common land; sharing of common goods; protection of property; etc. The display case exhibits some items related to the management of common affairs, for example the tally sticks (*rovaši*), the halberd of the village night watchman, and the horn of the village shepherd. While the tally sticks of Bela Krajina were used to keep record of the quantities of wine borrowed from the communal wine cellars in the western part of Slovenia the raffle tally sticks once determined the distribution of common goods among members of the village community. With the excep-

<sup>2</sup> *Postavljanje majskega mlaja / Setting up the Maypole*. Drašiči, April 1994. Research and camera Andrej Dular, editing Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, production SEM, 2008, duration 5 minutes.

tion of the ancestral god from a village altar in Benin in Africa, which is similarly associated with the life of a local community (only in this case it is a community in Africa), all of the items on display are from the Slovene ethnic territory.

Local communities have their representatives who lead and represent the community. This segment of the exhibition therefore highlights the institution of the **mayor**, who has acted as head of the territorial unit since the Slovenes had settled in this territory. Nominated and elected by members of his or her community, the mayor was in charge of maintaining order in the village; common village affairs; and the implementation of decisions agreed upon by the community. He also performed some judicial functions and collected taxes. As the community elder, the mayor was the agency of the community's autonomy and its chief representative in relation to other village communities, the seignury, and higher authorities. After the introduction of self-governing municipalities in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mayors have become heads of the municipal administration.

### Gathering Places and Community Hubs

Local community is characterized by social cohesion and frequent contacts between its members. Its territory features buildings and institutions that play an important part in the lives of local residents, for example the common land, roads and paths; water sources; the area beneath the village linden tree; the cemetery; school; village store; fire station; post office; pub; artisan's workshops, etc. This exhibition area addresses the role of some of them: the village pub, the well, the linden tree, the fire station, and the church.



In addition to the church and school, the village **pub** was one of the most important village features. It was easily recognizable by its architecture and by the signboard or inscriptions on its façade. It had a significant impact on the life of the village community, and certain types of village pubs or inns such as carter's, pilgrimage, and hiking inns, were also important for the wider surroundings. Since many of the local pubs were generally poorly attended during the week some operated only on Saturdays, Sundays, and feast days. The attendance was much higher on the fete celebrating the local patron saint's day, on Shrovetide, and on Easter Monday, when many of these establishments also featured live music. In the interwar period, the less affluent farmers chose this venue for celebrations of baptisms and weddings, and for the

*Village Pub: A Place for Socializing: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*

*View of the pub "façade" highlights one of the gathering places of the local community, where the predominantly male patrons exchanged information, formed public opinion, and imposed social control over village life (photo by M. Habič).*





after-funeral repast. The pub was a gathering place mostly for men, who usually frequented it on Saturday evenings and after the Sunday Mass. It was only after the completion of more arduous farming chores such as sowing, mowing, and harvesting that the pub was filled also during the week. While enjoying their drink, and occasionally food, men discussed politics, village affairs and farming, and played cards and other games. The village pub was one of the places where people exchanged information, formed public opinion, and implemented social control.

While the village pub is symbolized by a notice board and a sign the two “pub windows” with items related to drinking, eating, and socializing, highlight its principal functions. The exhibited photographs illustrate the role of the **innkeeper** who, until the 1930s, was one of the most prominent people in the village community and, in addition to the teacher and the priest, an im-



The showcase opposite the pub displays utensils for water transportation, thus symbolically depicting the village well as the meeting point of women, who cocreated public opinion and social control (photo by J. Žagar).

Wire mesh tree, which is the central scenic element of this exhibition chapter, represents the village linden tree. Symbolizing stones on which the heads of village homesteads used to sit to discuss common village matters, the wooden cubes placed beneath the wire tree also serve as seats for visitors (photo by M. Habič).



portant factor in the economic and cultural life of the village. He often performed various functions, for example those of the mayor. Due to their good economic status, the innkeepers were highly desirable as confirmation godfathers and godmothers.

Opposite the village pub, a socializing venue for (mostly) men, stands a display case that symbolizes the **village well**; this, on the other hand, was generally the domain of women. The items in the display case are related to the transport of water from the village well. Since water is indispensable for the survival of humans and animals alike water sources were frequently an essential condition for the creation of permanent settlements. One of such water sources is the well. Before each rural household had its own well the common village well played a significant role. It supplied drinking water for people and animals; water for the preparation of food; for laundering; and for fighting village fires. The well was the meeting place for women who would go there to fetch water or wash the laundry. This was an opportunity to meet other women, socialize, and discuss personal and public affairs, thereby influencing public opinion and exercising control over certain matters. Some villages had a small basin with standing water (*kal*), where farmers could water their cattle and horses, or else built common wooden drinking troughs

near the well or another water source. After the introduction of individual sources of water and the waterworks the common water sources have lost their significance.

Like elsewhere in the world, public village life was linked with a tree, most often a **linden tree**, in many places in Slovenia; the stylized tree in this exhibition room is made of wire. Until the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the area beneath the linden tree was the site of civil proceedings and trials, and in the feudal times also a gathering place for heads of village homesteads who had to make decisions about common village matters and economic issues (road repair; management of the village common; maintenance of water sources; common pasture; harvest dates, etc.). In some villages, men sat on stones placed under the linden tree, or gathered around a stone table; in this segment of the exhibition, such sitting stones are depicted by wooden cubes. Young men used to gather by the linden tree to sing songs, and in some places this traditional gathering place has been preserved to this day.

The exhibition area also features a copy of a **village street lamp**, dated 1667, from Brkini, which serves to remind the visitor that the common awareness is also made up of stories of individual people. The lamp was installed after an unfortunate accident; later on, its maintenance was taken over by the village community.

*“One evening, the only son of the richest village shepherd had a fatal accident. In the dark, he stumbled on the shaft of a cart so clumsily that he died. In order to prevent any further accidents the shepherd installed in his son’s memory the faral, a street lamp, in the middle of the village. The oil for the lamp was donated by the shepherd, and every evening the lamp was attended to by the village caretaker. Later on, the village girls who had boyfriends serving in the army started to care for the lamp. This was presumably done so the boys could find their way home even at night.” (Medvešček 1992).*

### Public Safety

One of the important functions of the local community is to ensure the safety of its members and their possessions. In a rural environment, watchmen used to supervise fields, vineyards, forests, and pastures. In the fall, they had to prevent the livestock to stray into the fields. One of their tasks was also to convey news to the villagers. During the grazing season, herders took care of the safety of farm animals. Such tasks were often performed by members of the socially and economically most vulnerable strata of the village population.

Providing physical safety for people and property, **firefighting societies** have always played a very important role in Slovenia. Once engaged mostly in the prevention of fire and in firefighting, in recent years the firefighters also participate in eliminating the consequences of elemental disasters and traffic accidents. The first fire society in Slovenia was founded in Metlika in 1869; currently the country has approximately 1380 volunteer fire societies. Their headquarters are located in fire stations, which started to be built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first volunteer fire societies emerged. Although these stations are primarily intended for the storage of firefighter tools, vehicles, and other equipment, in many places they are also the hub of local cultural and social life. Many firefighting societies have singing and drama groups and brass bands. Firefighters participate in church and state ceremonies and organize firefighter parties and other local events. In our exhibition, the fire station is symbolically represented with panels depicting a typical façade of the fire station furnished with a “window” and the statue of St. Florian. The window, in our case a showcase, displays items related with firefighting: a firefighter diploma, helmet, trumpet, two axes, and a lottery drum.



Dated 1667, the village street lamp from Suhor in Brkini illustrates the tangibility of a story that is simultaneously personal, family-related, and local (photo by M. Habič).



The displayed statue of St. Florian, the patron saint of firefighters, directs the visitor from physical safety into the world of spiritual security. St. Florian, whose feast day is on May 4, is one of the most popular saints in Slovenia. Depicted as a Roman soldier pouring water over fire, he became the patron saint of firefighters in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is represented on the façades of numerous fire stations and on firefighter banners, and many places celebrate his feast day by organizing firefighter parties. Some depictions of St. Florian on the façades of fire stations are shown in the displayed photographs.



The “façade” of the fire station with alcoves exhibiting firefighting objects and a statue of St. Florian stresses the importance of firefighting societies both in the care of physical safety of the local community and in the organization of cultural and social life (photo by M. Habič).

*Physical Safety - Firefighters: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*



### Spiritual Shelter

Spiritual security of local communities is closely associated with religious objects whose type depends upon the religion of the local population (Roman Catholic Church, mosque, synagogue, temple, etc.); these are depicted in the photographs on the panels. The role of various saints in Slovenia and their affiliated churches is symbolically illustrated with the displayed altar from the vicinity of Tržič. Discussed are the function of the church as a building and as an institution, and the purpose of the belfry. On the one hand the church is a building in which Christian worship takes place, and on the other it is a community made up of members of the Christian faith. Slovenia has over 2,500 Catholic churches and approximately 60 churches of other religious denominations. The church and the priest represent an important institution within the village community. They supervise religious life and affect moral and social life of the local population. In the past, the **church with its belfry** denoted one of the most important communication points. While the ringing of bells and the striking of the public clock determined the rhythm of the local life the area in front of the church building was an important gathering spot before and after the Mass. Some churches, particularly parish churches, have adjacent cemeteries. In addition to attending to other tasks, the sexton took care of the church, rang the bells, wound the clock, and was responsible for funeral service.

Important features of the village community were local and *parish* patrons. Many places in Slovenia have their own patrons, which are depicted in the local church

and occasionally associated with particular place names. By far the most common patron saint is Virgin Mary, followed by St. Martin, St. George, St. Nicholas, St. Michael, St. Peter, St. John the Baptist, St. Jacob the Elder, and St. Margaret. The feast day of the parish patron is still celebrated as one of the most important religious events, and some places also organize fairs and other public festivities. Family members and more distant relatives usually gather over a festive lunch.

Perceiving them as universal benefactors, the village community turned to their local patron saints in times of distress and hardship, appealing for help.



Altar with the statue of St. Urban: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).

Panels illustrating the spiritual security of the local community emphasize the significance of religious buildings and institutions, which exercise control over religious matters and over the moral and social life of the villagers (photo by M. Habič).

### The Community and the Outside World

When meeting with the world beyond their immediate environment, people become aware of their affiliation with their local community and form an **attitude toward** what is perceived as “**domestic**” and as “**foreign**.” Often based on stereotypes and manifested in different ways, this attitude may emphasize specific features and excellence of their own village or home town and its inhabitants. Local affiliation can be detected in myths, taunts, songs, customs, and common symbols. Many local communities have their own formal and informal symbols, such as the flags and coats of arms.

Several **village coats of arms** are displayed as examples of local symbols. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some villages in the area of Mursko Polje had their own coats of arms, which were carved out of wood, made of dough, or painted. At village festivities, such as weddings or the local priest’s first Mass, these were hung above the seat of the most distinguished guest, or featured on flags. Their motifs, depicting either animal and plant life or inanimate objects, were related to the history of the village, its specific activity, local characteristics, or special attributes of its inhabitants; sometimes they were merely a humorous designation of the place. Although the coats of arms had no particular legal significance they have been sometimes preserved to this day on the seals used by administrative municipalities or on place name signs.

Based on their direct or indirect experience, members of the local community also form an **attitude toward other communities**. Due to the strong attachment to the home environment and its people even a neighboring hamlet or a nearby village may be perceived as a “foreign place.” As a result, the attitude towards its inhabitants may be negative, which is reflected in the attribution of stereotypical negative characteristics. In the past, some villages occasionally engaged in disputes and confrontations. On the other hand, some people may also underrate their own environment and excessively praise foreign places.

**Territorial boundaries of the local community** are clearly defined. They may be natural features such as rivers, streams, valleys, and mountains, or else boundaries installed by the human hand (boundary stones, place name signs, boundaries of administrative units, etc.). Such an example is the displayed place name sign. The territory of the local community may be easily recognizable by its natural features and cultural characteristics, toponyms and microtoponyms, important historical events, and so on. It may be noted for its distinguished residents who were born or worked there, or for specific activities of the local population, such as the celebration of local feast days, specific customs, typical crafts, and so on. Lately, there has been an increasing interest in “local characteristics,” their revival and reproduction, and the creation of “new traditions”, all of which serve to integrate the community and create a shared affiliation.



Village coats of arms from Mursko Polje as a symbol of local communities and a place name sign that illustrates territorial boundaries of local communities (photo by J. Žagar, M. Habič).

### Local Communities in the City

This exhibition chapter concludes with **urban local communities**, which function in concentric circles at the level of streets, individual parts of the city, and the entire city. Urban local communities historically emerged mainly within the socially and professionally fairly uniform parts of the city and its suburbs (e.g. areas populated with the nobility, the middle and the working classes, craftsmen, the proletariat, etc.). In some parts of the city, or at least among those who have been living there for a long time, the sense of local affiliation has been preserved to this day. On the other hand, modern residential neighborhoods with their objects of public importance, such as kindergartens, schools, stores, parks, etc., are no longer local communities in the true sense of the word. Due to the increased mobility of the population and its diverse social and professional status the feeling of local and interpersonal affiliation



is now less pronounced or even nonexistent. With the exception of some inter-neighborly relations, there are often no direct contacts between people. Their only connection is often merely the necessity to settle issues related to their common residential area. With the exception of children and the elderly, urban dwellers are generally less dependent on their immediate environment and form contacts and attachments outside their residential area, with friends, coworkers, and members of various interest groups.

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# Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures

Inja Smerdel

Leaving home – where to and why? Do I remain who I am?





## Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures



The path is both a symbolic and a tangible representation of departures. It is a road, a signpost ... And on every path there are people ... (photo by M. Habič).

ines inevitable consequences, such as a broadened geographical horizon, and acceptance or rejection of certain cultural elements, knowledge, and skills. Departures from home could change those who repeatedly departed: double or multiply them, or possibly split their family, local, provincial, and professional identities. These are the questions that the visitor contemplating the contents of this chapter (as well as other stories in the other six chapters of the permanent exhibition) could also ask themselves – and perhaps (faced with the silent confrontations with their imaginary fellow humans) even discover certain answers about themselves.

### Museum Representation of Departures

How is it possible to translate this topic into a museum presentation, not only through words, but especially visually and through sound, in order to convey it to the visitor as clearly as possible? And do so in order to “communicate” with the visitor in an attractive yet easily understandable museological language, even through the language of symbols?

A symbolic and yet very real materialization of every journey and every departure, whether from home or from elsewhere, is the **path**. It can be a road,

Photo on the previous page by B. Zupančič

This exhibition chapter, titled *Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures* and presented, as much as possible, through the eyes of an imaginary visitor and their possible experience of the exhibited material, strings several thoughts, explanations, and comments related to museum interpretations of the presented topic. The texts are mostly a compilation of the findings and selected excerpts from the existing and thematically relevant ethnological literature. They have enabled the creation of sufficiently persuasive, vivid, and multilayered outline of each segment of this chapter. Presented are the diverse motives for leaving one's birthplace, which may be the result of necessity, choice, survival strategy, or personal development. The chapter discusses people's departures from the environment into which they were born and where they were brought up, their encounters with new milieus and people, and their coping with difference. It exam-

intersections, signposts, or crossroads. And on every path there are people. These are the “main heroes”, the protagonists, those who were departing somewhere else. Then there is also the **starting point** and the **final destination**, or the point of **returning to the start**. Familiar and foreign places such as villages, market towns, cities, etc. ... The three afore-mentioned basic components of departures have defined the organization and design of the available exhibition space and represent the visual center and dominants of this exhibition chapter. The eternity of departures – their temporal relativization and at the same time their realization – is materialized in the **mirror** at the end of this chapter. It reflects the names of villages as the starting points of the journey, the silhouettes, portrayed from behind, of those who were departing – and the visitor's own image.



And now let us take the journey through space and time, on which the individual, due to various family circumstances or wider social conditions, steps not only across the threshold of his or her own original home but also beyond the boundaries of the home town. The motives for leaving for other, more or less distant places such as villages, market towns, and cities, and encountering unfamiliar people there, are clearly quite diverse. However, only three of them have stood out as the most basic and common, and were therefore selected to illustrate this topic: better earnings, religion, and knowledge.

### In Pursuit of Survival or a Better Life

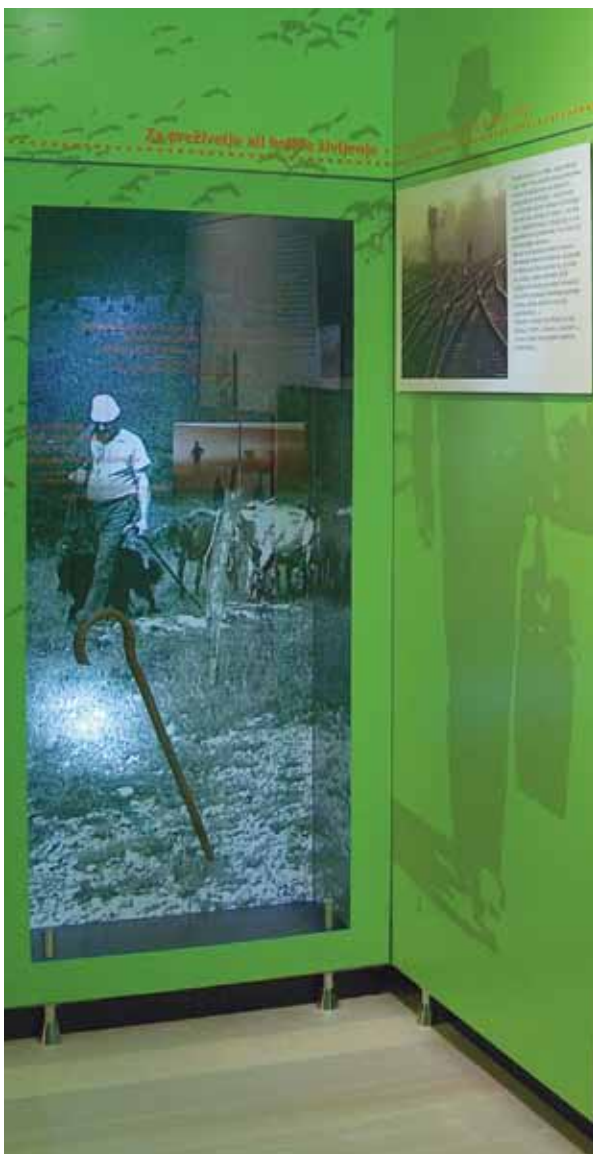
The emphasis of the central topic presented in this segment of the exhibition is on the most frequent motive for departure, that of the prospect of better earnings. Those who set off were unable to survive on what a plot of land on a small farm, or around a modest cottage, could offer (enough food to avert hunger and the purchase of necessities that could not be produced or made at home); neither could it sustain dreams of a better life. There were also those who left because they yearned for more than their familiar daily routine. The story about people's struggle for survival and their search for a better life starts



Crossroads and intersections, symbolically illustrated on the introductory panel with a photograph of a tangle of railway tracks, are also representations of departures (Shutterstock).

A large photograph of the “roofs of our home town” symbolizes the starting point and the final destination (or the point of returning to the beginning) (photo by M. Habič).

The story about people's struggle for survival and their search for a better life starts with a panel and a display case associated with nature through images and words. The visitor is directed toward the beginning of all paths by a symbolic object that is an aid to every traveler - a shepherd's stick hovering in the display case (photo by J. Žagar).



with a panel and a display case whose association with nature and with images from the animal world through words and pictures introduces the topic. The visitor first encounters images of a flock of birds and a flock of sheep travelling together, united by similar needs such as the need for food, water, warmth, etc. A symbolic object, a shepherd's stick floating in the display case, an aid to every traveler, directs them to the beginning of all these paths.

Before "setting off on the path", and before entering *The Boulevard of Those Departing*, the visitor is surprised by a dense mosaic of words and images that introduce the motley crowd of daily, seasonal, and other migrants. During periods of social and other changes and discord, people were leaving home in the past centuries and in the past decades, and especially and most massively between the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were taking with them their knowledge, work skills, their produce and products... and, upon returning home, bringing back not only their earnings but also other goods, often foreign, new, and different cultural components and concepts about other, different people. With this in mind, it is not difficult to imagine just how mobile the life in the Slovene countryside had really been. Some people were departing every day or every week, others seasonally, every spring, summer, fall, or winter, be it on foot or riding a donkey, by cart, bicycle, train, or motorcycle... underneath the blistering sun, in rain and in thunder, or in a blast of wind.

Among them were numerous seasonal *agricultural workers and day laborers*, for example Carinthian women who migrated from the Slovene to the Austrian side to work as reapers; haymakers from Slavia Veneta who migrated to the Karst region, and those from villages in the vicinity of Šmarna Gora who were migrating to the Ljubljana Moors; threshers migrating from the Karst to Pivka, from Prekmurje to Hungary, etc.; and plum peelers (the so-called *slivarji*), who migrated from Brda to Posavje to gather and peel plums that were then dried into prunes. Seasonal *forest workers* (the so-called *hrvatarji*), migrated from Notranjska, Pivka, Kočevsko, and Dolenjska to work in the forests of Slavonia, Banat, and Bosnia; men from Baška Grapa migrated to Romania; etc.

As in the past, when in the interwar period people from Kozjansko migrated to Žalec to harvest hops, hop pickers from the Savinja Valley still migrate to Germany, and those from Hrvatsko Zagorje, Croatia to the Savinja Valley. Apple, grape, and strawberry pickers from Slovenia have been migrating to western European countries, those from Croatia to Slovenia, and so on.

There were also *itinerant rural craftsmen* (periodical and seasonal): grinders (Resians, the Roma); tinkers (usually the Roma, but also Slovaks and people from

Resia); seamstresses, tailors, cobblers, and bricklayers (whose seasonal departures from home in search of work have been recorded already in the Late Middle Ages; those from Friuli migrated to places in Slovenia). *Women from suburban villages* migrated on a daily or on a weekly basis. They worked as washerwomen (from Bizovik and some other villages of the Ljubljana hinterland; from villages in the vicinity of Trieste, etc.); or cleaners (for example the *limpiadore* from Trieste, mentioned in sources from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Some women from the Karst villages continue to clean and tidy up in the households of "their" families in Trieste. Then there were *female sellers of their own farm produce or products* who were doing this on a daily basis: milk vendors (from the hinterland of Ljubljana, Trieste, etc.); vegetable sellers (i.e. those from Krakovo and Trnovo in Ljubljana, already mentioned in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, who still had their own permanent sales areas in the Vodnik farmer's market in the 1990s); bread sellers (from the Slovene part of Istria and the vicinity of Trieste, and in particular those from Škedenj, a village near Trieste, who until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century sold bread in Trieste and other coastal towns). There were also *resellers of agricultural and other products*, who migrated daily or only occasionally: the so-called *potovci* and *potovke* (people who traveled from place to place to run errands for others); the *kupinarji* (for example the egg traders of Prekmurje); egg sellers (who traveled from the Dobrepolje Valley to Ljubljana or Trieste to sell eggs; from Pivka to Trieste; those from Šavriška Brda, who first went to Istria to collect the eggs, and then to Trieste to sell them); etc. Woodenware peddlers (especially from Ribnica, Kočevsko, and Resia) *sold their own (woodenware) products or else those made by others*, either seasonally or on market days. There were people *who sold what they had gathered or caught*; those selling special "products" (salt, tobacco); and those *who offered certain "services"* (seasonally or periodically), for example chestnut vendors and sellers or resellers of birds. The so-called *peškadorke*, female fish vendors from the coastal villages in the vicinity of Trieste, sold fish in the Karst region. They were mostly the wives of fishermen from Križ, Kontovel, and Devin, whose presence in Trieste was mentioned in sources from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Smugglers and musicians have been vividly described in Slovene folk songs. Trying to find work and better earnings, these people were migrating from different parts of Slovenia in such large numbers that the woodenware peddlers from Ribnica have eventually become synonyms for peddlers and, just like the so-called Šavrinke, women from Istria, symbolic bearers of regional identity.

At the end of this dense mosaic, visitors behold words and images that remind them that such and similar departures in search of additional earnings are in fact a well-known economic, cultural, and social phenomenon also in other countries and on other continents. At least from approximately the 16<sup>th</sup> and up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, migration occurred across most of the European territory. Let us reflect on the Scottish peddlers, for example, who roamed through Scandinavia and northern Europe as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century; the Dutch seasonal mowers; the French *les voituriers* (migrants from Morvan transporting wood), or the Italian *cramars* (peddlers from Carnia), etc. In this context, questions connected with the impact of these migrations on the transfer of knowledge and work techniques seem particularly intriguing.

### The First Side Path: Departing for the Sake of Faith

And now, the **path** itself, the **central scene** of our exhibition story, awaits us. We commence at the beginning of the exhibition area, at its starting point, by the wall with a large photograph of the "roofs of the home town." Here, perhaps, we may head along the first side path, which recounts the story of departures for the sake of faith: pilgrimages to pilgrimage centers and churches. Whether



The first side path, *Departing for The Sake of Faith*, beckons with the introductory panel bearing a symbolic photograph of a crowd



in front of the church in Brezje, the largest pilgrimage center in Slovenia (photo by J. Žagar).

In addition to a mosaic of images, pilgrimages from the recent past are also illustrated with a multitude of items from museum collections and from other sources (photo by J. Žagar).

On the opposite side: along the path, in the *Boulevard of the Departing*, visitors encounter life-size photographic images of six protagonists departing into the world. They are able to look into the faces and figures of actual people and enter into a dialog with three male and three female characters arranged in pairs: a female reaper and a forest worker; a washerwoman and a grinder; and a female milk vendor and a woodenware peddler (photo by M. Habič).

motivated by the fulfillment of promises, penance, requests for divine intervention, the desire to give thanks, or something else, such homages are known to all major religions. An invitation to proceed along this path is extended by the introductory panel bearing a symbolic photograph of a crowd in front of the church in Brezje, the largest pilgrimage center in Slovenia. Upon entering a niche behind the panel – which is not unlike a side altar – we can watch film footage of a modern pilgrimage from Čatež to Zaplaz<sup>1</sup>, flanked by representations of past and more recent pilgrimages. The former are illustrated with a mosaic of depictions and a display case with a series of related objects from museum collections (votive offerings, holy cards, religious medals, etc.); the latter with a mosaic of photographs and a display case with a multitude of contemporary pilgrimage souvenirs.



### The Boulevard of the Departing

After having taken leave of the “*roofs of the home town*” as the starting point, many visitors will probably head toward the central theme and the visual and sound dominant of this story – the **Boulevard of the Departing**. Their guide along this symbolic path are the sounds of footsteps from different roadways and other related sounds from our environment: first footsteps on the macadam, accompanied by the initial, calm sounds of the village, then those rushing along the asphalt, and finally those arriving to a noisy, bustling town. On this path we encounter six protagonists, six factual people departing into the world. In this segment of the “exhibition on people seeking their place in the world” the visitor beholds the faces and figures of actual people depicted in life-size photographic images, and enters into a dialog with three female and three male characters. Arranged in pairs, they are representatives of seasonal agricultural and forest workers (a female **reaper** and a **forest worker**); providers of different services and craftsmen (a **washerwoman** and a **grinder**); and sellers of their own products or of those grown or made by others (a female **milk vendor** and a **woodenware peddler**). All of them have been captured on camera while following their paths. Initially introduced by appropriate verses from folk songs or by articulate quotations, their activities are described in more detail in condensed texts. Summarizing the basic knowledge about each group of these daily or seasonal migrants, their origin, locality, and social standing, the texts outline the cultural elements and the specific features of their way of life.

<sup>1</sup> **Romanje / Pilgrimage.** Čatež, Zaplaz, August 2002. Research, camera and selection Nena Židov, editing Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, production Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, 2008, duration 5 minutes.





Let us take **forest workers** as an example.

*“I had a lumberjack, and counted all his thalers...”*  
(Karel Štrekelj, Slovenske narodne pesmi, Ljubljana 1908-1923)

The so-called *hrvatarji* were especially well-known before the First World War and in the interwar period. These were seasonal workers, men and youths from impoverished farming families and largely from Notranjska, Pivka, Kočevsko, and Dolenjska, who migrated “to Croatia and beyond” and to the forests of Slavonia, Banat, and Bosnia. Men from Baška Grapa even went as far as Romania. They were generally leaving in the period between October and April, after work in the field was completed, “when all was done at home and I needed to earn money to buy salt.” They departed in smaller or larger groups ranging from 6 to 14 (in Notranjska) and 30 to 50 (Dolenjska) men. Work groups were assembled and managed by the so-called *kasatorji*. Forest workers went to forests to “cut down woods, hew thick beams, railway tracks, and various staves for barrels and tubs.” They usually earned quite well. Upon their return, some of them even tucked their newly-acquired wealth, “all those florins,” into their hats for all to see.

Another example is the **milk vendors**.

*“She’s going to carry milk to Trieste for the first time. She’ll become a milkwoman. /.../ It’s not that easy to carry on your head a basket with two or three pitchers full of milk. /.../ She will be accepted among the adults. Every day she’ll go to the city where the accomplished gentry live.”*  
(Vesna Guštin, Tema je še bila, ko je zjutraj petelin budil, Repentabor 2006)

Vendors of cow’s milk were mostly farm women that carried milk to the cities and delivered it to townspeople’s homes. For many families, this was the only source of income. Although such milk vendors had once been well-known also to the residents of Ljubljana, the cities’ milk supply was largely taken over by cooperatives even prior to the Second World War. Among the most numerous were the vendors from Istria, the Karst, Brkini, and Vipava Valley, who journeyed to Trieste day by day, year by year. Vendors from the vicinity of Koper, for example, are depicted on a picture from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to sources, women were delivering milk to Trieste until the mid-1970s. Carrying their liquid load, they came from the villages closest to the city on foot, and later by bicycle. Those from more distant places traveled by train and, after the Second World War, also by bus. Each of them brought to Trieste up to eighty liters of milk daily, and serviced up to 100 customers. Milk could only be sold by adult women, who were issued a sanitary certificate. Many of them left their homes during the nighttime and returned in the early afternoon, only to once again start preparing milk and containers for the following day.

While reading the texts and perusing the exhibition we cannot help but noticing that the back silhouettes of the trio of departing pairs consist of a collage of small photographs and occasionally of depictions of other reapers, forest workers, washerwomen, grinders, milk vendors, and woodenware peddlers. Next to the dominant photographic images of our six protagonists, we see on the platforms (or on the walls behind them) one or several objects closely linked to their occupation, be it a tool or a means of transport. The reaper has three sickles and a small wooden barrel, which was used primarily for carrying beverage to people tilling the fields. The forest worker has a saw, a pick, and an axe; the washerwoman a pushcart; the grinder a grindstone, the milk vendor a coil, a milk jug, and two measuring cups; and the woodenware peddler

a woodenware basket. Next to the reaper is another, quite surprising object for the transportation of a thirst-quenching beverage – a wooden gourd, undoubtedly from the Balkan cultural environment. Let us recall that other exhibition areas also display items from foreign cultures. They prompt us to reflect on the universal dimensions of each thematic section of the permanent exhibition. Looking beyond these objects, we perceive photographs of various work processes (harvesting, forest work, laundering, whetting, etc.). We can even watch “live photographs” (documentary films) of washerwomen at work and of a woodenware peddler: *Washerwomen from Bizovik* from 1959<sup>2</sup> and excerpts from the film *Urban from Ribnica* from 1968<sup>3</sup>. The most pleasant surprise, however, is the composite reality of the functional context next to the pair in the middle, that of the washerwoman and the grinder. The two exhibited objects (from the collections of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum) are actually the very same objects depicted on the displayed photographs (from the photographic archives of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum), namely the pushcart of the washerwoman Marija Peršič from Dobrunje near Ljubljana and the grindstone of the Roma grinder Laci Baranja from Černelavci in Prekmurje.



### Reflections of Departures

At the end of the path, and after the departure of the last pair, we suddenly catch sight of ourselves in the **mirror wall**. The wall poses a very current, relevant question: where do our own paths in pursuit of a better life or higher earnings lead us? This issue is highlighted by an illuminated article cut out from a recent issue of the *Delo* newspaper, which discusses thousands and thousands of daily migrants in Slovenia. Under the ceiling, in front of the mirror, we can look more closely at the **signpost** symbolically directing us to former as well as current main destinations – to Vienna, Belgrade, Brussels, Trieste, and Ljubljana. The reflection in the mirror, or upon looking from the end of the path toward its beginning, toward the “*roofs of our home town*,” once again returns us to some of the starting points, to the villages of Ribnica, Solbica/Stolvizza, Hudajužna, Kontovel, Bizovik, etc. The six people introduced in this segment, our main protagonists, were namely not only departing from their homes but also returning there, which is symbolically illustrated with their back silhouettes visible either in the mirror or when we look back to the beginning of the path.

In the end, we also realize that the many people pursuing their own unique paths were not faced only with decisions and dilemmas of where to go, which path to take in order to gain a better life and better earnings – symbolized both by the signpost and the initial photograph of the diverging railway tracks – but also with more far-reaching decisions regarding their permanent settlement in the city. Many of them were able to find what they had been looking for,

Among the displayed objects associated with the six protagonists are also those that were their most indispensable work companions; they are placed on a platform or affixed to the wall behind each character. In addition to a small wooden barrel, the reaper is equipped with another, quite surprising, object for the transportation of a thirst-quenching beverage: a wooden gourd that undoubtedly originated in the Balkan cultural environment. This item from a foreign culture prompts us to reflect on the universal dimensions of each thematic section of the permanent exhibition (photo by J. Žagar).

2 *Bizoviške perice / Washerwomen from Bizovik*. Bizovik, 1959. Research Dr. Pavla Štrukelj, screenplay Jože Bevc, directed by Jože Bevc, camera Žare Tušar, production Viba film, 1959, duration 8 minutes.

3 Fragments from the documentary *S’m z Ribn’ce Urban / Urban from Ribnica*. Rašica, Kot near Ribnica, Škofja Loka, Praprotno, Vrba, Ljubno na Gorenjskem, 1968. Camera Tone Robnik, Viki Pogačar, Janez Maly, concept and realization Metod and Milka Badjura, production Viba film, 1968, selection Inja Smerdel, duration 5 minutes.

and decided to remain there. We also learn that the very people who, due to a myriad of motives, had left their rural environments, became in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century one of the first inhabitants of suburban, mostly working-class settlements such as Zelena Jama and Galjevica in Ljubljana. We find out that these first newcomers to urban centers frequently made a living as domestics, hirelings, apprentices, etc. In Vienna, for example, Carniolan chestnut vendors and similar migrants, for example Italian vendors of wooden toys, Croatians and Silesians selling linen, Tyrolean and Friulian scissor and knife grinders, tinkers from Slovakia, and others – were significantly altering the town's population structure and thus co-creating the multicultural fabric of the city pace.

The final wall of this exhibition chapter, bearing the title *Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures*, therefore explores the effects of departures. It directs our attention to the diverse consequences of some of such migrations to urban



Signpost, a symbol of departures (photo by J. Žagar).

Depicted through fragments of texts and images, the final scene of the exhibition chapter *Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures* draws attention to the effects of departures and the diverse consequences of migration to urban milieus (photo by M. Habič).

milieus. They are illustrated by fragments of texts and pictorial material on the inhabitants of the Ljubljana suburban settlement Galjevica and on Slovene chestnut vendors in Vienna. Finally, we encounter a very specific aspect of departures, namely a negative attitude toward newcomers, this eternal and global source of local, national, cultural, religious, and other prejudice – in the form of explicitly expressive graffiti.



## The Second Side Path: In Search of Knowledge

Just as we are about to leave this exhibition space to proceed to the next one, titled *My Nation – My Country*, we notice on the left two more panels with a short presentation of the second side path: leaving home in search of knowledge. This does not refer to the experiential knowledge acquired in the course of everyday learning by observation and imitation but to the knowledge acquired in schools or during apprenticeship, away from home. In addition to the two motives already discussed, this motive for departure is just as universal and is symbolically illustrated by a photograph of pensive Chinese children seated in school benches. The theme is outlined in the text, which first presents the early stages of the development of education in Slovenia and then lists cities where people attended grammar and secondary schools. Young people from poorer families also sought apprenticeship to learn a trade, or



else left to attend various courses, which can be seen in the mosaic of related photographs and certificates. A surprise for the visitor is an original diploma, on view in a display case, of a juris doctor, in this case of Judge Ivan Močnik, obtained from the University of Vienna at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

We take leave from the subject of departures, “*beyond the borders of our birthplace*,” accompanied by the Slovene poet France Prešeren and his eloquent, and in a certain historical period also symbolic, example of the path to knowledge: his departure from his native Vrba in Gorenjska, first to the elementary school in Ribnica in Dolenjska and later onward – all the way to Vienna. And inadvertently we remember the verses, so deeply ingrained in our memory, written by the great poet:

“O, Vrba, happy village, my old home, / My father's cottage stands there to this day. / The lure of learning beckoned me away. / Its serpent wiles enticing me to roam...”  
(Translated by Alasdair MacKinnon)



Mosaic visualization of the second side path, *In Search of Knowledge*: another universal motive for departure, it is symbolically illustrated by the photograph on the introductory panel of pensive Chinese children seated in school benches (photo by M. Habič).

Before proceeding to the next exhibition chapter, the visitor can examine the revealing graffiti that offer a very specific aspect of the consequences of departures (photo by J. Žagar).



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## My Nation – My Country

Andrej Dular

How do I experience the country I belong to?  
Which nation do I believe to be my nation?





## My Nation – My Country

View of the exhibition area with wavy panels. The spatial and architectural design of the exhibition chapter *My Nation – My Country* follows its concept and the content structure by emphasizing and interpreting individual topics and segments while integrating them into a whole. The blue-tinted lighting in the exhibition space symbolically reflects the guiding principle of the entire exhibition chapter (photo by A. Dular).



The concept of the exhibition chapter titled *My Nation – My Country* explores the installment of the individual within the spatial (*The State and Its Space*) and the social (*The State and Its People*) framework of an ethnic, national community – the state. It is based on the premise that the world of today is organized in nation-states or in multinational state communities based on the individual. The individual is an intrinsic part of large communities such as the nation and the state. And since throughout the history the state has been linked with the Church as an institution of spiritual and political power, the state, in addition to ethnic, national, and civic identities, has also defined people's spiritual and religious identity.

The seven chapters of the exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* portray the individual's imaginary journey from their hearth and home into the unknown world, from their family and the local community to the planetary human community. This particular chapter focuses on the still-familiar spatial and social environment which a person defines as their homeland and their community, something that belongs to their own ethnic and national identity.

This recognition is the result of a systematic educational process in which the individual's own identity is formed in relation to other identical or similar ethnic and national communities. Citizenship, nationality, worldview, and religious affiliation define the widest identity of the individual. In order to make those who wish to explore the exhibition aware of these identities and develop a critical attitude towards their own identities this chapter presents them through a variety of symbolic and museographic interpretations. It also stimulates reflection on similar identities of people and communities in other parts of the world.

The spatial and architectural design of the exhibition is subject to the principal concept of installing the individual in various spatial and social dimensions, and based on the presentation of museum objects and textual, visual, and audio materials in a certain setting, in display cases, and on panels. Associated with soft undulation and the diversity and fickleness of the reality of life, the wavy panels first describe the changing **geo-political characteristics of the state** (*The State and Its Space*) in different time periods, followed by the depiction of the **person as an individual** (*Under the Watchful Eye of the Authorities*), and finally of people as a **national community** (*The State and Its People*). Encased in glass, the central scene opposite the

Photo on the previous page by B. Zupančič

wavy panels depicts a **symbolic setting** with square and pyramidal elements illustrating the **social structure as well as the rigidity and unapproachability of the authorities** (*The Social Pyramid and the Authorities*).

A special feature of this exhibition chapter is also the blue-tinted lighting in the exhibition area. While the coldness of the blue color symbolically illustrates the rational and law-regulated state and its community the blue-tinted panels also highlight a theme of special importance – the individual as a building block of every society and its processes. Although this section does not have any audiovisual displays the visitor can choose, in addition to listening to several Slovene folk and literary songs, among the sound recordings of the national anthems of the countries that existed in the Slovene territory during the last hundred years. The aim of the national anthems is to evoke in the visitor an emotional feeling of civic pride, and possibly nostalgia for the past. Slovene songs, on the other hand, have been included in order to create a sense of pride in belonging to a particular national and linguistic community.

Panels represent one of the cohesive threads of the design of the entire exhibition. They display photographs or drawings that highlight a specific topic (the cartoon of Slovenia shaped as a chicken as the introduction to the segment *My Nation – My Country*; a photograph of the city of Ljubljana illustrates the segment *From the Village to the Town*; a relief map of Slovenia introduces *The Changing State*; images of “countless” faces announce the topic *Under the Watchful Eye of the Authorities*; notes on nations and their languages illustrate the section on *Awareness of Affiliation*; a photograph of Bled, with people in the foreground wearing the national garb, presents the theme *Shared Symbols*; and finally, a drawing of an enthroned king introduces the subject titled *A Critical View of the Authorities and the Nation*.

After leaving the previous exhibition chapter, *Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures*, the visitor enters the chapter titled *My Nation – My Country* together with a silhouette of an approaching person. The silhouette represents an imaginary



Each panel segment of the exhibition chapter *My Nation – My Country* consists of three panels with applied graphic foundations; texts and pictorial material applied on laminated square tiles; showcases, inserted into the panel, with displayed objects; and in two cases audio recordings (photo by A. Dular).

newcomer leaving a rural setting, the village, for the urban milieu of the town, in the hope of finding livelihood, education, and a better life.

## The State and Its Space

### From the Village to the Town

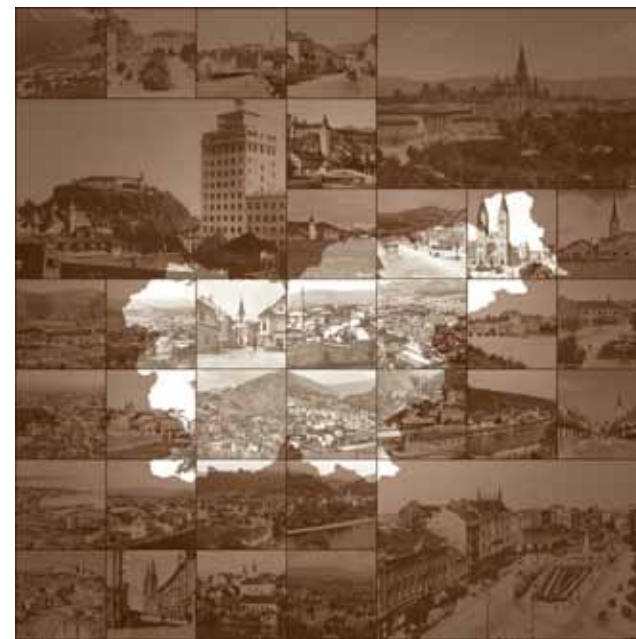
Migration from agricultural areas to towns was the result of rural overpopulation and the grim reality of farmers burdened with heavy debts after the agrarian reforms of 1848. In search of better livelihood, and particularly after natural disasters such as droughts and plant and animal diseases, people from rural areas turned to the cities. Those who did not choose to emigrate abroad were increasingly attracted by the emerging industry of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Towns provided the surplus of the rural population with work. They were generally employed as domestics, industrial workers, and in various trades; only a small part of them sought additional education there. Advertisements from the Slovene dailies of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which are depicted on the panels, indicate the urban need for workers from rural areas and list employment possibilities available to newcomers.

Social diversity of urban inhabitants, newcomers, and occasional visitors is symbolically represented by the common and festive headgear displayed in the first display case titled *Diverse Social Structure of the City*. A gentleman's top hat and a farmer's finest hat, the hat of an urban middle-class lady, and a festive scarf worn by a woman from the countryside indicate not only the social standing of their owners but also the general habit of rural visitors to wear their Sunday best when going to the town. Another motive for moving to the city was the desire to obtain better education. This is illustrated with a copy of a 1933 apprenticeship contract between an urban master shoemaker and a rural apprentice. Various professions needed in the city are depicted in the photographs of representatives of certain trades and occupations, such

The first showcase is titled the *Diverse Social Structure of the City*. The reasons for immigration to towns, and consequently the towns' diverse social structure, are symbolically illustrated with an apprenticeship contract between a rural apprentice and an urban master shoemaker and with men's and women's headgear worn by city-dwellers and by rural newcomers and visitors (photo by J. Žagar).



Mesh photograph of Slovene towns. Towns are the hubs of economic and political power; centers of education, and "melting points" of numerous identities. Their role and significance in certain periods are illustrated with a collage of photographs of Slovene towns and state capitals.



as the shoemaker, plumber, upholsterer, chimney sweep, domestics, miners, and factory workers, as well as in those depicting a mine and several factories.

Offering more than mere livelihood, cities were also melting pots and creators of new social, professional, and other identities. Rural newcomers, initially perceived as different and foreign, eventually embraced the urban, mostly working-class identity. All over the world, special status is accorded to capital cities as the centers of political, economic, social, and religious power of the state and the national community. Spatial dimensions of the state are there-

fore illustrated with a square photograph composed of smaller photographs of Slovene towns, applied on a brighter silhouette of modern Slovenia. Over different periods, Slovenia was governed by the capitals of multinational states – Vienna, Belgrade, and Ljubljana – that dominate other photographs.

### The Changing State

The state is defined as the broadest sociopolitical community with its own territory, governance, constitution, laws, tax rules, and security and defense forces, all of which manage this community. The individual recognizes and experiences the state through the process of socialization and active participation in the daily life, through the educational process, implementation of legal norms and regulations, integration into social and political organizations, and through state symbols. The world of today, which is based on such national or multinational state communities, is illustrated with a picture of a ball bearing various state flags and with photographs of national symbols, for example of well-known natural sights (i.e. Mt. Triglav and the Great Wall of China); political figures (Mahatma Gandhi); and prominent cultural landmarks (the Statue of Liberty in the USA, the Eiffel Tower in France). Since countries all over the world use similar features and "obligatory" symbols to identify themselves several examples from other parts of the world, in addition to prominent sights from Slovenia, have been deliberately selected. These symbols mark us as equal yet still recognized as different. The four countries that have emerged on the territory of present-day Slovenia are therefore presented through generally recognizable state symbols that have changed over time. The state symbols on the panel are arranged in four vertical columns depicting the map of a particular state territory; its coat-of-arms; an image of its sovereign; and some basic data on each state entity. In addition, the visitor can select a button on the panel to listen to the recordings of the four national anthems. As state borders, sociopolitical, and religious systems of countries evolve and change over time state symbols and official identities of their inhabitants change as well. During the last hundred years, Slovenes lived in four different countries and were therefore ascribed four different citizenships.

The showcase titled *The State through the Language of Symbols* displays state symbols applied on various objects that people use or encounter daily: money, postage stamps, rubber and revenue stamps of government agencies, gas vouchers, the state flag, a copy of the Official Gazette, a map, house number plaques, a signboard proclaiming state monopoly for the sale of tobacco, state license plates, books on the socio-political system of the state, the Constitution, and notifications of state bodies on elections and referendums. Additional photographs on the panels depict classrooms furnished with state and religious symbols, official documents, and various events and manifestations featuring strongly emphasized state symbols. Different historical, cultural, sports, and other events and religious manifestations raise and consolidate people's awareness of their common state and religious affiliation, and their civic pride. All of the above objects and pictorial materials from various time periods indicate just how strongly people's lives are permeated with elements of the socio-political communities that they encounter virtually on a daily basis. Geographical and

Network of square tiles with state symbols. We perceive the state through its symbols, such as the flag, the coat of arms, and the national anthem, and through its sociopolitical order and territorial integrity. As the country changes over time the statuses of its citizens change as well. In the last hundred years, Slovenes lived in several state entities until independent Slovenia was created in 1991 (photo by A. Dular).





cultural features, recognized as “world attractions,” as well as noted state leaders, symbolize a particular country to the world at large. The changing state entities depicted in the display case titled *The Same Place but a Different Country* are illustrated with the view “from the outside”, from the perspective of an external observer. This particular observer, a Slovene who decades before had immigrated to America, was sending letters, mailed in three different time periods, to his relatives in his hometown of Litija. In addition to the fourth one, which is not an original but has been created for the purpose of illustration, the three original envelopes were addressed to the same addressee living in the same location but in four different countries, which clearly demonstrates the transformation and the identity change of the state.

*The State through the Language of Symbols: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*

*The Same Place but a Different Country. The changing state identity may also be observed “from the outside.” The displayed envelopes, mailed between 1912 and 1928 to Koške Poljane by Litija, clearly demonstrate the transformation of the state, and consequently also the changed citizenship of the addressee (photo by A. Dular).*



### Under the Watchful Eye of the Authorities

The next thing that attracts the attention of the visitor is the narrowed passageway between the display panels and the central scene, titled *The Social Pyramid and the Authorities*. It is the point where the individual, including our imaginary visitor, is installed between the two principal themes, namely *The State and Its Territory* and *The State and Its People*. The setting has been designed in such a way that the visitor could feel their connection with, and integration into, the broadest sociopolitical community – the state.

Consisting of blue-colored panels and, opposite them, the principal scene, which is encased in glass and represents the focus point of the segment titled *Under the Watchful Eye of the Authorities*, this part of the exhibition chapter addresses the interaction between the state and its citizens. With its governmental institutions, the state creates and determines relations with its citizens, ascribing them with different social statuses and roles. People are thus forced to adapt to social norms and regulations prescribed by various institutions and organizations in which they are involved. In the display case with the title

*Multiple Images of the Individual through the Eyes of the State*, a person's various roles in life are presented through personal documents which the state ascribes to the individual in different stages of her or his life (birth certificate, baptism certificate, certificate of origin, identity card, passport, health card, military card, driving license, title deed, decree, societies and associations membership cards, invitations to vote, notices of probate, payment summons, verdict in the name of the people, decorations and recognitions of secular and ecclesiastical authorities, etc.). These documents formally prove that people are citizens, voters, members of various associations and organizations, etc. On the other hand, the bee-hive panel depicting an office scene illustrates a humorous perception of the functioning of state apparatus and the authorities, and shows an individual's, or popular, perspective on the state.

But the relationship between the state and the individual is not one-sided. Individuals or citizen groups exert influence on the formation and operation of the state and its institutions through elections, referendums, protests, petitions, and other means. This is illustrated with photographs of gatherings, demonstrations (in support of those who were deleted from the register of Slovene citizens; of equality of all citizens; the rights of young people; various po-

*Tiles with texts and images on the central panel of the section Under the Watchful Eye of the Authorities. By attending public protests and rallies, signing petitions, participating in elections, etc., the individual (citizen) can also reciprocally influence the functioning of the state, try to change*



litical parties, etc.), and petitions, for example against censorship and against political pressure on the media.

Moving through the narrow passage, museum visitors also get a glimpse of their own image in the tiled mirror on one of the display panels, along with the objects representing the central scene behind their back. Gazing at this pictorial symbiosis, they recognize the symbolic attributes of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. They realize that they are not only individuals but also citizens, and as such constantly under the control, protection, and leadership of the state and its secular and ecclesiastical bodies; these are often quite alienated from the people. This image is augmented by applications on the display panel of blank lines from an identity card in which visitors can figuratively insert their personal information and thus identify themselves. There is also a drawing of a marionette, a symbolic depiction of the citizen controlled and guided through life by the invisible strings of civil servants and church officials. Visitors thus become aware that they are the bearers of numerous social roles assigned to them by the state throughout their life, and perceive that

*it, and attempt to adapt it to their own needs and requirements. Gazing at the mirrors, visitors recognize themselves as individuals who are issued by the state various certificates of their personal and social identity, while at the same time perceiving the reflection of the central scene behind their backs, which invokes a feeling of being controlled by state and ecclesiastical authorities (photo by A. Dular).*

*Multiple Images of the Individual through the Eyes of the State: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*



their social image in the world is composed of many parts - not unlike the image of their own body consisting of many small images reflected in a multitude of small mirrors on the panel.

The image in the mirror is designed to lead the visitor to the central scene of this exhibition chapter. The scene is designed to illustrate, through symbolic elements and simultaneously actual objects from different periods, the universality and the “eternal character” of secular authorities on the one hand and spiritual (ecclesiastical) on the other. Displayed is a symbolical item of clothing of a representative of each: on one side a **tailcoat with a tall hat**, on the other a **vestment with biretta**. Each is furnished with its own ambient background: the photograph of bookshelves laden with state codes on the secular side and with church literature on the ecclesiastical one; both illustrate ideological indoctrination of each system. A table/mensa constructed from wire mesh displays copies of official gazettes, rubber stamps, and breviaries. A **chair/throne with a high backrest**, also made of wire mesh, is placed at the table. The seat represents a symbol of the office intended for representatives of the establishment and power. The table and the chair also illustrate the structure of the society, with smaller squares of the mesh symbolizing the social structure of lower state and ecclesiastical bodies and the larger ones of higher state and ecclesiastical authorities. The pyramidal shape of the throne’s

backrest, which represents the individual climbing up the social ladder, features several ascending **human figurines** made of wire. Enclosing the entire scene, a stylized pyramidal form starts with the lowest rungs at the bottom and finishes in a golden top, depicting the authorities and the society from its lowest to its highest levels. Authority as a universal concept of social power is symbolized with a **bronze statuette** of a tribal chief from Benin, Africa. The glass that surrounds the scenic layout represents the inaccessibility, inviolability, aloofness, superiority, and alienation of the authorities from the

individual and the community. Photographs on the sides of the central scene depict the most famous architectural symbols of secular and ecclesiastical authorities, both in our country and abroad, i.e. parliament buildings and sacral structures.

It is now time for the visitor to examine the second part of the exhibition narrative, which places in the limelight the human being, the people, the community, and the related ethnic and national identities.

Central scene titled *The Social Pyramid and Power*. By highlighting the symbolic meanings of the exhibited objects, photographs, geometric and other shapes, and various materials, the central scene encased in a large display case illustrates the universal governing and social structures of the state and their attitude toward the individual – the citizen (photo by A. Dular).



## The State and Its People

### An Awareness of Belonging

The state and its people are depicted through the individual’s awareness of their ethnic and national affiliations, which have been formed over longer periods of time. The concept of one’s own status and affiliation is shaped only in relation to other people. The basis of national identity is thus a person’s realization and awareness of their ethnic and national origins. While an ethnic group is a community of people living in a particular territory and speaking the same language the most important characteristic of the nation is distinct awareness of the common historical and cultural development as well as shared political aspirations. One of the elements of common ethnic and national affiliation is religious identity. National consciousness may culminate in the birth of a separate nation state.

One of the most important cohesive elements of national consciousness is awareness of the common language, which is symbolically illustrated with the introductory photo of a girl with a blue-tinted tongue. An Indo-European language, Slovene belongs to the southern branch of Slavic languages; this is depicted in a photograph of the distribution of Slavic languages in South

View of the panels in the segment *Awareness of Affiliation*. One of the most important cohesive elements of national consciousness is awareness of the common language. It is consolidated by written documents on the common language, literature, language manuals, newspapers, and modern communication media (photo by A. Dular).



and East Europe. Aware of the importance of the national awakening in crucial periods of the nation’s history, enlightened and well educated individuals as well as institutions played a major role in the strengthening of Slovene national consciousness. Photographs on the panel depict important linguistic building blocks ranging from the Freising manuscripts from the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, which represent the oldest sources written in the Slovene language; the first printed words in the Slovene language on a German poster from 1515; the first Slovene books (for example *Abecednik*, a primer written by Primož Trubar; the first translation into Slovene of the Bible, by Jurij Dalmatin); to the blossoming of journalism (i.e. *Kmetijske in Rokodelske Novice*, an agricultural and handicraft bulletin) and literature; and finally the emergence of new electronic media that disseminate the Slovene language. The photographs present several key personalities instrumental in the creation of the Slovene word (Primož Trubar, France Prešeren, Janez Bleiweis, and Josip Jurčič). Language awareness was further raised and promoted by schools, extra-curricular education, and the dissemination of educational books and fictitious literature printed by the Mohorjeva Družba Publishing House. Latter-day research and educational institutions responsible for the publishing of important linguistic journals and

Photograph of postal deliveries (messages) illustrates one of the ways of language expression. A fundamental means of communication, language is among the most important symbols of ethnic and national identity. As the official language of the state it is legally protected by the state (photo by A. Dular).

publications (i.e. *Slovenski pravopis*, Slovene Orthography, and *Slovar Slovenskega Knjižnega Jezika*, Dictionary of the Slovenian Literary Language), also play an important role in the raising of language awareness, as do various societies and organizations that promote through their activities the linguistic awareness of the individual and the community.

The majority population strengthens its linguistic affiliation and awareness by using the Slovene language in everyday situations and in various creative fields, which are depicted in the photographs on the display panel, i.e. a handwritten songbook, a manuscript of food recipes, letters and postcards, inscriptions on gingerbread hearts, an epitaph on a gravestone cross, wall slogans, and public notices. Objects bearing various inscriptions in the display case titled *Language and Linguistic Affiliation* include a wooden beehive front panel, on which the artist reinforced the painted story with text; a colored egg adorned with an IHS monogram; two colored eggs with inscribed greetings and love quotes; gingerbread hearts furnished with paper inserts with verses; two wine jugs inscribed with a toast; a songbook; books printed by the Mohorjeva Družba Publishing Company; and various schoolbooks and notebooks.



Gingerbread hearts with attached messages and printing sheets with verses. Both in its spoken and written form, language reflects one's material and spiritual world; it is also a means of artistic expression (photo by A. Dular).

*Language and Linguistic Affiliation*: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar)

### Shared Symbols

Affiliation awareness is further reinforced through imparted notions of the characteristics of one's own nation. National symbols, perceived as the cornerstone of national identity, are taken from the nation's history, its mythology, culture, economy, and characteristic geographical and other features. As such, they represent a selection and a new interpretation of their meanings. Notable individuals may also feature as important symbols. Consequently, such symbols are constantly being created, and since their significance changes over time they may also sink into oblivion. The photographs on the panel show some symbols recognized and perceived as typically Slovene: natural sights such as mountain peaks (Triglav), rivers (the Soča), lakes (Lake Bled, Lake Bohinj), caves (Postojna Cave), the sea; flora (the carnation) and fauna (the olm, the Lipizzan horse), special architectural features (the hayrack); noted tourist resorts (Bled); folklore (national costumes, the accordion); culinary specialties (the Carniolan sausage, the *potica*); historical personalities; and notable contemporaries such as athletes, politicians, scientists, cultural workers, artists, etc.). The display case titled *Construction and Use of Symbols Perceived as "Ours", Devised to Separate Us from Others* displays objects which represent symbols of national and patriotic affiliation (souvenirs designated as national souvenirs, playing cards with motifs of popular tourist sights, woodenware as an expression of homeland authenticity and originality of the national spirit, and widely popular beverages and renowned products of domestic brands).



Further symbols of folk pride and the community spirit are traditional and folklorized music (the visitor can choose among four sound recordings of folklorized songs). With political consensus, such shared, national symbols, which carry a special significance and embody power, may be transformed into state symbols (i.e. France Prešeren's widely popular poem *Zdravljica* (Toast), parts of which have been chosen to represent the national anthem of Slovenia. The state also organizes contests for the design of national symbols - the coat of arms, the national flag, and money). On the other hand, national symbols frequently become an object of folklorization manifested in various economic, political, and cultural events, primarily for promotional and commercial purposes (application of national symbols to ornamental and memorial objects). These symbols are used as a vehicle for international recognition of the state of Slovenia, and therefore of "Us" vs. "Others".

Other common national symbols are objects associated with the nation's past and the country's integrity, as well as state leaders and representatives of the authorities. They illustrate how people perceive (idealize) their country and the national territory (i.e. Kozler's map), identify with it (the desire for autono-



my, expressed in the May Declaration), and which objects of everyday use are chosen for the application of state symbols (i.e. chests, wall hangings). With these, people demonstrate their attitude towards the state represented by the symbols depicted on the objects in the display case titled *Identity Processes through Everyday Use*. Among these are a beehive panel with the heraldic imperial eagle; a bottle of spirit, called *Maršal*, with the image of Marshal Josip Broz Tito; a cake pan with the coat of arms of the Republic of Slovenia; a wine jug with the heraldic imperial eagle; a colored Easter Egg with the inscription Long Live Yugoslavia; jewelry made from a silver coin; a wall hanging with the motif of a monarch; a memorial badge with the coat of arms of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; a Slovene flag cake topper; and a gramophone record with patriotic songs. All of these are declarative expressions of affiliation and consolidation of state and national identity.

The visitor has now reached the last segment of the story about the state and its people. Although less extensive, it offers a different, and even somewhat heretic, view of the topics discussed above. This view, which is not appreciated by any state, is titled



Panels depicting *Shared Symbols*. The awareness of affiliation is constructed through shared symbols taken from the nation's history, culture, geographical features, etc., which have been assigned national significance. Some of them become national symbols (photo by A. Dular).

National symbols, which frequently become an object of folklorization and commercialization, also reflect a special attitude toward the respective state community. As such, they may be applied to various products for sale and to objects of everyday use as demonstrated in the display case titled *Identity Processes through Everyday Use* (photo by A. Dular).



## A Critical View of the Authorities and the Nation

It offers a critical perspective on Slovenia as a country, on its nation and its authorities, and also on people of other national and ethnic origins who reside in it. The visitor encounters views of notable personalities, for example writers, critics, and artists, which were published in satirical newspapers such as *Brencelj* and *Pavliha*, in literature (*Butalci*), in political newspapers, and in culture-related publications (*Diareja*). On display are also graffiti and wall slogans made by anonymous people wishing to express their positive, negative, and sometimes humorous or sarcastic attitude towards their nation and the state with its authorities, as well as towards other nations, ethnic groups, and other entities that represent an integral part of Slovenia.

Jokes in written form or in spoken language, of anonymous or vague origin, represent a special perspective on the authorities, the nation, and the state. They are a critical or humorous response to current sociopolitical events in one's own country. They often reflect an idealized, stereotype perception of one's compatriots and, on the other hand, express pejorative notions of members of other ethnic groups, nations, or countries.

The chapter *My Nation – My Country* is supplemented by a display panel titled **An Individual's Journey**. Presented in literary form, the story about a particular individual recounts his personal journey through life and his place within the framework of a state entity. It focuses on his adulthood at the onset of the First World War, when in the name of the Emperor he had to go to war to defend his fatherland.

*Attention, the state kills!*  
Graffiti on a building in Ljubljana. People may also perceive the state as a coercive institute and assume a critical attitude toward it, which is reflected in a variety of ways; one of them is by writing anonymous graffiti (photo by A. Dular).



*“Censorship practically no longer exists... / Even the hottest topics are now being openly discussed, such as ....., and even ..... !!”*  
This political caricature by Tomaž Lavrič (*Diareja*) illustrates how noted authors and artists create their works of art to articulate societal anomalies and express their critical view of the state and the functioning of its authorities.



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# My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World

Marko Frelih, Daša Koprivec, Tjaša Zidarič

What makes me travel to foreign countries and live among strangers?  
How do I judge otherness? Where do I see sameness?



## My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World

### Introduction

Tjaša Zidarič

When an individual directly encounters different cultural milieus of our vast world his or her own social and cultural concepts are put to the test. Is it myself who is different – or are others? This assessment depends primarily on the observer, as does the decision on what to do with these differences. Should they be discovered and merely observed, or perhaps changed? Should I embrace them and coexist with them? Pass judgement on them from the viewpoint on my own cultural predisposition or try to comprehend them as a mere variation of the universal? In any case, encounters with foreign worlds enrich our personal world and may, although indirectly, affect it in yet more significant ways.



View of the exhibition area  
(photo by B. Zupančič).

This segment of the exhibition, titled *My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World*, addresses some of the reasons why in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century people living in the territory of present-day Slovenia decided to depart, either temporarily or permanently, into the wider world. They left, alone or in groups, as missionaries, travelers, researchers, adventurers, or in search of work and better earnings. The main characteristics of the selected types of migration are presented through photographs, documents, museum objects, and different recorded material; additional texts provide further explanations. In terms of museological presentation, these departures are

symbolically illustrated with the sea depicted on a semicircular scenic element that symbolizes mass migration across the ocean. The atmosphere of foreign worlds is conjured by the sound of waves and by audio recordings from foreign lands.

Undulation is also highlighted in the layout of the exhibition room with the gradually shifted panels depicting various motives for departing. The selected examples illustrate the topic of world migrations in general, an ethnological and anthropological theme topical both in the past and at present, in Slovenia and in other countries around the globe.

Photo on the previous  
page by B. Zupančič

As in the past, Slovenes remain involved in various migration processes: in the neighboring countries they live as a national minority; in different countries around the world they are part of the Slovene diaspora. Current emigration flows from Slovenia generally consist of labor migration, especially of young people leaving the country in search of better employment opportunities. There is also intensive immigration to Slovenia, whereby the interweaving and mingling of identities continues in our country as well. Many ethnic and migrant communities, groups, institutions, organizations, and civil initiatives sharing a similar agenda are active in Slovenia. While it is true that globalization facilitates labor mobility and the flow of consumer goods the vast majority of the world's population has been denied access to the latter. Current migrations are often associated with socially vulnerable groups such as undocumented migrants, migrant workers, refugees, and with issues such as acquisition of asylum, integration into the dominant culture, migration associated with violent conflicts, human trafficking, etc.

With the development of communications, intercultural contacts have become part of the daily life of many people around the world, and as a result, the concept of “being different” has become less remote and more familiar. In our increasingly global, multicultural society, encounter with the diversity of foreign cultures has become a fact of life for the majority of the world population. Departures from one's native country due to various occupational interests, acquisition of further education, or else economic, political, or military reasons represent a constant of today's globalized society; the same applies to political migrations and refugeeism. Travel trips and holidays abroad have become part of many people's lives. Reasons for departures may vary, and decisions to do so are either taken voluntarily, in distress, or as a survival strategy.

Migrants of all types importantly contribute to the cultural diversity of today's globalized world. Coexistence of people with different cultures, religions, languages, and world views affects both individuals and society as a whole. The museum should therefore offer insight into the dialogues between cultures and become a place of integration. In doing so, it will deepen our knowledge of them, raise public awareness of intercultural diversity, and reinforce a positive attitude toward those who are different. Perhaps it is only through encounters with foreign cultures that we can become aware of some of the characteristics of our own culture, and thus understand ourselves better.

### Reasons for Departure

Marko Frelj

The visitor entering the exhibition area titled *My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World* first encounters on the left-hand side some randomly selected photographs that, due to their stereotype subject matter, seem very familiar and close to us; a moment later, however, we become aware that they are images from foreign lands.

Positioned next to the passageway and to the right, the three large wooden statues from West Africa instantly convey an image of a different world. Although seemingly strictly stylized and static, their symbolic message nevertheless contains the vital energy of human civilization. They represent transformed images of the woman depicted in three abstract forms: as a mother with a child in her lap, as a wife carrying a jug on her head, and as a house maker preparing a meal. Constantly present since the dawn of humanity, these images range from the omnipotent universal divine notion of Mother Earth to the woman who, holding her child on her lap, takes care of her family and provides descendants.



The decision to leave ancestral home and set off into an unfamiliar world is the result of different motives. Travelers are curious about foreign places, different people, and unknown cultures; some people are motivated by the desire to further their education and earn more; and some have to meet their professional commitments. The resolution to depart from home is probably one of the most difficult decisions a person makes in his or her life. Home environment provides security that is difficult to give up. The motive to leave one's parents, relatives, birthplace, and homeland is therefore extremely important. In the past and present alike, these motives varied from person to person. They are also constantly changing, just as the possibilities for traveling to foreign countries and living among strangers change from day to day. Some motives, however, have not changed for centuries and are still relevant in the present.



View of the exhibition area titled *My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World* (photo by J. Žagar).

Three female statues that represent a symbol of fertility; motherhood; and the central role of women in African society (photo by M. Frelj).

### In the Name of the One and Only God

This segment of the exhibition highlights some of the most frequent motives in the Slovene history of traveling and of encountering foreign cultures. First of all, the visitor will get acquainted with the religious motive. Missionaries were spreading Christian faith among the indigenous peoples on different continents. Two noted Slovene missionaries, Friderik Irenej Baraga and Ignacij Knoblehar, shall serve as an example. The first worked in the Great Lakes region of North America, the second in missionary outposts along the White Nile in South Sudan. Although their primary goal was to convert the “pagans” to Christianity they also championed the rights of the local populations who were frequently victims of colonial politics. They regularly sent reports on their missionary work in America and Africa to their homeland, stirring great interest among their compatriots. In their time, they were exceptional connoisseurs of the areas in which they operated, and communicated with the local populations in their own languages. Baraga studied the languages of the Ojibwa and the Ottawa Native American tribes, Knoblehar the language of the Dinka and that of the Bari people. In order to introduce these cultures to their fellow countrymen they also brought various objects upon their return to their homeland.

Their *modus operandi* was later followed by other Slovene missionaries. The Missionary Museum in Groblje near Domžale and the Bengali Museum in Ljubljana, both of which operated until the Second World War, were created in the same manner.



Missionaries working among the “pagan” peoples sent detailed reports to their native country, thus spreading geographical knowledge among Slovenes. Although their letters largely focused on religious themes they also yielded a lot of interesting information about foreign countries and their inhabitants.

Over centuries, the doctrine of missionary work has constantly evolved and changed. While missionaries were once primarily concerned with religious teachings in recent decades they are increasingly active in providing education and health care for people living in the poorest parts of the world. An increasingly important role is played by female missionaries, who now work all over the world. Supported by charities in their homeland, Slovene missionaries of both sexes have now become an important factor in international humanitarian activities. Pedro Opeka, an Argentinian missionary of Slovene



Friderik Baraga and Ignacij Knoblehar, with Baraga's grammar book of the Ojibway language in the foreground (photo by M. Frelj).

This anthropomorphic fetish with nails, magic pendants, and amulets is overlapped by the symbol of the cross, indicating that a new faith has overpowered traditional beliefs (photo by M. Frelj).

Missionary teaching children with the help of large depictions of Biblical events. Supervising the supply of African missions, St. Peter Klaver's Missionary Society also sold various propaganda materials, especially books, magazines, and postcards (SEM Documentation).



descent, attracted worldwide attention with his lasting zealous work among the garbage people and the homeless in Antananarivo in Madagascar. In 1912, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

### Creating and Leaving Footprints in a Foreign Land

A restless creative spirit knows no boundaries. It constantly seeks new challenges and fills its reservoir of vitality by drawing from the desire to create. A genius lives as long as she or he creates, regardless of time and location. When following its ideas, the restless spirit knows no homeland and does not distinguish it from foreign parts. Its home is everywhere, and nowhere. After its work is done it proceeds forward without ever looking back.

One of such people was certainly Baron Anton Codelli from Ljubljana, who was viewed as a scholar and considered quite eccentric. Partly due to his photographic archives kept in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, his role is particularly highlighted in this segment of the exhibition. In 1911, the Telefunken Company from Germany invited Codelli to carry out the project of building a radiotelegraph station in Togo, Africa. It took him and his colleagues three years to successfully develop the necessary technology and establish wireless communication between Africa and Europe. At the onset of the First World War, however, an order was dispatched from Berlin to mine the station and its antenna towers, and in a few hours it crumbled to dust. Codelli's film and photographic material, as well as objects he had brought from Africa to decorate his manor in Kodeljevo, a part of Ljubljana, remind us of his years spent in Africa.

While staying in Africa, Codelli became quite enthusiastic about filmmaking and produced the first motion picture made in Africa. Titled "*The White Goddess of Wangora*", it was first shown in London in 1914. After the initial screening, the film disappeared and was never found again. On display are photographs from several shots from the film. The screen next to them shows an excerpt from a documentary on the daily life of locals in Togo. Codelli himself financed the film and covered all expenses<sup>1</sup>.

Kamina wireless radiotelegraph station in African Togo (SEM Documentation).



Slovenia Bois, part of the Slovenijales Company, trained and employed the predominantly local help for the cutting of gigantic trees (SEM Documentation).



In the 1970s and 1980s, many Slovenes were travelling abroad for political or business reasons. The non-aligned politics of Yugoslavia opened doors into the world for numerous Slovene companies, mainly due to international trade. The intensity of foreign policy was especially pronounced in post-colonial African countries, where Slovenes worked in diplomatic service. Africa was of particular interest also because of its low-cost labor. But many of the political decisions and plans did not produce the desired results, and long-term projects tended to fail after a few years.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from a documentary film *Vnemškem Sudanu / In German Sudan*. Northern Togo, 1913/14. Author Hans Schomburgk, selection Marko Frelj, Schomburgk Film Production, 1917, duration 4 minutes and a half.

Slovenia Bois, which was part of the Slovenijales Company, operated in the Central African Republic. It was founded by Anton Petkovšek, the latter manager of the Bank of Ljubljana branch in West Africa. He was a great admirer and a passionate collector of African art. Particularly striking segments of his collection, now in the possession of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, are the bronze sculptures from Benin and Nigeria. Items in the collection represent part of the decorations on village sacrificial altars dedicated to the king's family and ancestors. This section of the exhibition displays a selection of such objects. Some of the bronze items from Petkovšek's collection are also displayed in the rooms of other exhibition sections and serve for comparison purposes.

During the period of intense contacts with non-aligned countries, many people from different continents came to Slovenia, especially from Africa, Asia, India, and South America. These were mostly students who generally returned home after they had finished their studies; some, however, decided to remain in Slovenia. Since some of them were very keen to introduce to Slovenes their homeland, and particularly its music and literature, their presence certainly increased interest in other cultures. This period marks the onset of different societies, organizations, and especially university programs for Asian and African studies.

### Wandering around the World, and a Bit Further

There are people who, due to their intense yearning to travel, can feel somewhat restricted by their home environment. They search for ways to escape anywhere, as far as possible from their own people, their place of birth, and their homeland. They possess a restless, free spirit and feel suffocated if they have to settle down. One of them was Alma M. Karlin, an author who transformed the classical notion of travel in a very unique manner. She had a burning desire to discover new things, both in the physical and spiritual sense. Her mission in life was to create something that would contribute to the universal harmony between the human world and nature. She neither knew nor recognized restrictions in this world, and indeed in any worlds. In the interwar period she set out to travel around the world. At that time, her eight-year journey was an extraordinary feat, which still awaits its proper place in history. On display is some of the pictorial material, mainly photographs, which portray her surrounded by objects and wearing clothes associated with different places in which she sojourned during her voyages. Also on display is an *Erika* typewriter, which is the same brand of typewriter as the one that accompanied Alma Karlin on her travels around the globe. She continued to use it long after her return to her homeland.

Although Alma Karlin is the only person from the long history of Slovene traveling who is featured in this part of the exhibit it has to be noted that there were

Copies of bronze figurines depicting realistic and fantastic motifs from the sculptural treasury of the former kingdom of Benin were extremely popular among collectors and connoisseurs of African art (photo by J. Žagar).



Model of the *Erika* typewriter, with a fragment from Alma Karlin's manuscripts in the background. Originally written and published in German, many of her books were later translated into Slovene while much of her unpublished literary and archival material remains in manuscript form (photo by J. Žagar).



many other Slovenes who responded to the challenges of the world, creating a wealth of travelogues, films, and photographs. Among the most notable is Tomo Križnar, who evolved from a first-rate traveler and travel writer into a great humanitarian worker and fighter for the rights of people in Sudan. Another special type of travel is associated with Slovene mountaineering expeditions. Slovene mountaineers have achieved outstanding feats that rank them among the very best in the world. They have documented them with on-the-spot reports and excellent documentaries, but most importantly, they have brought the mountainous world of the Himalayas to their fellow Slovenes.

The segment *The Magical Allure of the Orient* focuses on Egypt, a country with which Slovenes have long-lasting contacts (photo by J. Žagar).

Ornamental candlestick from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Egyptian symbol of *ankh*; Slovene Museum of Christianity (photo by J. Žagar).

### The Magical Allure of the Orient

The motto of all travelers, be it in the past or today, is to see the world because it is different. Perhaps it is due to their contacts with Africa, and especially with Egypt, that Slovenes have been familiar with different worlds for a long time. For almost two hundred years, we have been traveling to the country of the Nile, in the past generally as individuals and today as tourists taking trips organized by tourist agencies. Egypt used to be particularly attractive because of the regular shipping connection between Trieste and Alexandria, and pro-



Even though souvenirs bought by modern-day tourists are different than in the past items associated with ancient Egyptian belief motifs and clichés of the Orient are still very popular (photo by J. Žagar).



vided many opportunities to get acquainted with a very different world. The country offered a glimpse of the magnificent heritage of ancient pharaohs, and for many a Slovene the arabesques of the Orient and the echo of the muezzin's prayer denoted the first contact with Islam. Egypt was also a site of biblical events, and as such an

important starting point for pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The port of Alexandria represented the first contact with the daily Oriental customs associated with the Islamic religious tradition. Although with a certain degree of reservation, Slovenes generally respected Islam and were interested in its characteristics. In some ways they were impressed with the Islamic culture, particularly with the ancient monuments in the vicinity of Cairo, such as the ancient pyramids and the Sphinx of Giza. The whole world is fascinated by Egypt, and Slovenes are no exception.

Hardly anyone who has visited Egypt has returned home without any souvenirs. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, travelers brought things associated with the era of the Pharaohs. Among the most popular were items that were easy to pack in the luggage, such as amulets and jewelry. A much more difficult feat was undertaken by Anton Lavrin, who in 1845 transported two granite Egyptian sarcophagi to the cemetery of his native Vipava.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, original souvenirs started to be replaced by imitations. Tourists have been increasingly fascinated by the array of items made in the "classic" Oriental style. Water pipes, incense, essential oils, and gauze garments evoked in the European a hidden romantic desire for the elusive world of the magical Orient. The items in the display case are typical examples of the current exotic kitsch and souvenirs associated with religion and magic. Since there is no Orient without music the indispensable musical background is provided by a recording made at the Khan El Khalili bazaar in Kairo in 2005.

The legacy of ancient Egyptian pharaohs has spawned an unprecedented tourist industry. Mass tourism of the last two decades caused major social, economic, and environmental changes in the country visited by between ten and twelve million tourists per year. Prior to the political turmoil of 2011, the Tutankhamun mask was inspected by almost 2, 5 million people each year. Tour-

Standard tourist snapshot of the famous sphinx in Giza near Cairo (photo by M. Frelih).



ism has dictated a particular dynamics of learning about Egyptian cultural and natural heritage. Within several days, tourists visited certain carefully selected places that offered a variety of sights: they came face to face with the Orient in Kairo, visited the pharaohs in Luxor, took a cruise along the Nile, admired coral reefs in Hurgada, and snorkeled in Sharm El Sheikh.

The entire area of the exhibition chapter titled *My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World* is overlooked by the central scenic element hung from the ceiling – a **globe, constructed of wire**, on whose circumference individuals move with ease. Each has their own motive and agenda, each has their own perspective on the world. Although part of this world, we look at it from a distance and "from the outside", just as we would see our world in front of us if we activated the Google Earth program on our computer screen. From an enormous distance in the atmosphere, we can move the computer mouse and "descend" to the Earth, "stroll" around the world, or in but a moment land on the doorstep of our own house, inspecting it from all possible angles.

The diverse means of transport, their affordability, and geopolitical conditions are intensively changing the dynamics of moving around the globe. This is also true of Slovenia, which has recently become an increasingly attractive tourist destination for people from different parts of the world. Our departures and

The two Egyptian sarcophagi in the cemetery of Vipava are closely connected with Anton Lavrin, a native of Vipava and a collector of Egyptian antiquities, who served as Austrian Consul in Egypt. One of them houses the remains of his son, the other of Lavrin's parents. These are the only Egyptian sarcophagi in Europe that still serve their original purpose (photo by M. Frelih).

our interest in the world beyond Slovenia were at the forefront in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But it is already possible to say that in the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, “more and more of the world is coming to us.”

Primarily due to new computer technologies, notions about the world and foreign peoples continuously change. Today the “entire world” has been brought to our home, and the social media constantly reinforce intercultural connections and blur geographical and cultural boundaries. Globalization is increasingly diminishing our world, and the rapid development of science is simultaneously providing new insights into our civilization and also the entire universe.

The Globe and People  
– the central scenic  
element (photo by  
J. Žagar).



## In Search of a Better Life

Daša Koprivec, Tjaša Zidarič

The development of the industrial society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century increased the need for industrial labor force, which enabled many people to seek employment outside their home town or village and move abroad. Slovenes started to migrate from rural areas of the Slovene ethnic territory to work in larger industrial and commercial centers, which was also due to the modernized rail and shipping transport. They became part of the mass stream of immigration, mainly from Europe to North America, which had been taking place since the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was not only the Slovenes who were able to obtain work in the United States and its large community of rapidly developing federal states, but also the Poles, Italians, Germans, Finns, the Irish, the English, and members of other European nations. Altogether several millions emigrated there. For Slovenes, emigration was most often an economic necessity and the means to improve their living conditions. Those who left were both the young and the old, single and married, either in groups or alone. While some intended to return to their homeland others were well aware that they were leaving for good. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially during the period of changes caused in Europe by the First and the Second World War, Slovenes also left their homes as refugees.

Slovene economic emigration reached its peak before the First World War, when people emigrated mostly to the U.S., and during the interwar period

when they left for Germany, France, and Egypt. At that time, altogether 300,000 people left Slovenia. Most of them went to the U.S.; 25,000 to Argentina; and 45,000 to various European countries. Emigration was quite intense also after the Second World War, when approximately 71,000 Slovenes moved abroad. A special type of emigration is the *refugee movement* of the civilian population, which first appeared during the First World War when the Austrian and Italian authorities relocated a large mass of endangered civilians from the area of the Isonzo Front, mostly to Lower Austria, the Czech lands, Moravia, and various parts of Italy. During this period, as many as 80,000 Slovenes moved from the areas of Goriško and Posočje alone. After the First World War, the annexation of Primorska and Istria to Italy caused yet another wave of emigration. By 1931, around 22,000 Slovenes from Primorska moved to the Yugoslav part of Slovenia. Next wave of refugees occurred during the Second World War, when refugees fled from the territory occupied by the Germans to the Province of Ljubljana, at the time under the Italian control. In 1942, this area had about 17,000 refugees. After the end of the Second World War, in 1945, some 20,000



refugees left Slovenia but 12,000 of them were returned to Yugoslavia by the Western Allied Forces. After their initial stay in refugee camps in Italy and Austria, the rest migrated mostly to Argentina, Canada, and in part to the U.S.A.

One part of the exhibition chapter titled *In Search of a Better Life* consists of two main themes: *Emigrants* and *Immigrants*.

## Emigrants

This segment of the immigration story is introduced by photographs of the first Slovene economic emigrants who set into the world seeking a better livelihood. These photographs are presented primarily in the context of their occupations and the type of work they obtained abroad. Most photographs depict Slovene emigrants from Notranjska, Prekmurje, Goriška, the vicinity of Ljubljana, and, although to a much lesser extent, also of Slovene immigrants living abroad, in Argentina and Australia. Introducing the subject matter, these photographs illustrate their departure and leave-taking from their home town. Already during the course of their journey, emigrants often posed for photographs and sent them back to their family, indicating that as soon as they had embarked on a train or a ship, they already entered a new phase of their life. The exhibited photographs, train and boat tickets, and documents symbolize their passage from the familiar to a foreign environment and thus the beginning of the transformation of their personal and social identity.

Entrance to the exhibition space *Into the World in Search of a Better Life* symbolizes emigration across the ocean. One of the features visible in the rear is the so-called *Pendulum of Nostalgia*, which symbolizes the feeling, quite familiar to Slovene immigrants, of being torn between two identities (photo by M. Habič, B. Zupančič).



This is followed by the presentation of various types of work Slovene men generally performed abroad. Having started to leave their homeland in the 1880s, they were mostly from rural areas. As immigrants they usually worked as *forest workers*, *miners*, and *construction and industrial workers*.

The oldest displayed photographs, which were taken between 1904 and 1907, depict forest workers in Pennsylvania, USA. They are followed by a group of photographs depicting miners, the most numerous male immigrant group, and have been selected in order to cover the widest possible time periods and geographical distribution. Featured are Slovene miners in Minnesota, USA in 1917; those in France and Germany in the 1930s; and those in Australia from



Slovene miners in Snowy Mountains, Australia, 1967 (SEM Documentation).



Slovene workers at the factory owned by a Slovene family. Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1950s (SEM Documentation).

the period after the Second World War. Next are photographs of industrial and construction workers, occupations that were quite frequent among Slovene male immigrants. The first group is depicted during the construction of a dam on the Argentinian Mendoza River in the 1930s, the second during the construction of the Australian Snowy Mountains hydropower system in the 1960s. These were construction projects larger than anything these men had been used to in their homeland. In the 1960s, numerous Slovene men obtained employment in

industry, particularly in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and in some Scandinavian countries. On display as a symbol of earnings and savings, both of which represent the main motive for working abroad, are the employment record book of a Slovene industrial worker in Austria from the 1970s and the savings book of a female immigrant working in Austria in the same time period.

We continue with the presentation of typical female occupations of the first Slovene immigrants. They worked as *straw hat makers* in Chicago; *cooks* in New York; *nannies* in Egypt; *farm workers* in France and Austria; *domestics* in Belgrade, Yugoslavia; *industrial workers* in Germany and Australia; *nurses* in Canada, etc. While some of them had left Slovenia together with their hus-



Group of Slovene and Croatian construction workers on the Mendoza River dam, mid-1930s (SEM Documentation).

bands and then stayed at home to take care of their family, the majority obtained employment. Their occupations are depicted on photographs from different time periods and geographical areas.

## Slovene Women in Egypt

Particularly highlighted are Slovene emigrant women, the so-called *aleksandrinke*, who obtained employment in Egypt, working as chambermaids, cooks, nannies, governesses, seamstresses, and wet nurses. Since they started to leave their homeland already in the 1870s they are among the first Slovene emigrant women to work across the sea. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their emigration became increasingly massive. Although to a lesser extent, Slovene men left for Egypt as well. They worked primarily as mechanics, drivers, park watchmen, construction workers, and stonecutters on the Aswan Low Dam. This segment of the exhibition is furnished with three short film excerpts, which can be watched on the touch screen<sup>2</sup>, from interviews with three informants: an *aleksandrinka* and a daughter and a son whose mother had worked in Egypt. Their narratives were recorded in Goriško.

Panels with photographs of the first Slovene female immigrants, the *aleksandrinke*, employed in Egypt. They are supplemented with short film excerpts, available on the touch screen, from interviews with three informants talking about Egypt (photo by M. Habič).



Slovene emigrant women, the so-called *aleksandrinke*, traveled on the Trieste – Alexandria route by the *Esperia*. The photograph is a keepsake of the family of one of such emigrants, who returned home on board the *Esperia* in 1930 (SEM Documentation).



<sup>2</sup> *Aleksandrinke in njihovi potomci / The Alexandrian Women and Their Descendants*. Alberta Gregorič, Prvačina, October 2007. Franc Faganel, Šempter near Nova Gorica, January 2008. Marija Černe, Bilje, June 2007. Research Daša Koprivec, photography and editing Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, interactive application Peter Gruden, SEM Production 2009, duration 9 minutes.

## Immigrants

By coming to a new country, Slovene emigrants became immigrants and gained a new identity. This is illustrated with various documents on display, for example a certificate for aliens, a permanent residency certificate, and a certificate of citizenship in the United States from the period before the First World War. There are also two documents with which Argentina “tagged” Slovene political refugees after the Second World War, and a card received by political refugees in an Austrian refugee camp prior to their departure for Argentina. By accepting new documents, Slovene immigrants symbolically and actually agreed to the new regulations and obligations stipulated by the host country. They adapted to their new social environment and, after a certain period of work, improved their economic position. This was manifested in their clothes, cars, home style, and other status symbols.



*Pendulum of Nostalgia* in the form of a heart (on the left) illustrates the feeling of Slovene immigrants of being torn between two identities: the necessity to adapt to an alien environment and the need to preserve their original ethnic and cultural characteristics. Photographs and documents of Slovene immigrants are displayed in the background; those depicting typical professions of the first Slovene female immigrants are on the right (photo by M. Habič).

Proud of their achievements, immigrants were sending home photographs from different settings. The visitor can examine a snapshot of a Slovene woman who had moved to Canada at the end of the 1970s and worked in Montreal as a nurse. She poses in front of her new house, next to a large car and a motorcycle. Next is a photograph from the 1930s of young men and women in a Slovene club in France. The photograph of young men laughing, relaxed and with cigarettes in their mouths, was sent to relatives back home as a proof of their current, more affluent and relaxed environment.

### Torn Between Two Identities: The Pendulum of Nostalgia

Photographs of new and different houses, fancy clothes, and family and club celebrations constitute a large part of the collection of immigration photographs. They were a valuable proof of the immigrants' changed identity in their host country. On the other hand, it was precisely because of their encounters with different cultures that Slovene immigrants wished to preserve part of their original ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities. The central scenic element in this part of the exhibition has therefore been named **the pendulum of nostalgia**, installed in the passageway between the segments titled *Emigrants* and *Immigrants*. It symbolizes the feeling of being torn between two identities: the necessity to adapt to the alien environment and, on the other hand, to pre-



serve one's original ethnic and cultural characteristics. This gap is constantly present in the life and sentiments of Slovene immigrants. The heart-shaped pendulum swings to and fro between the identity partially left behind in the homeland and the new, immigrant identity forged abroad.

To the right of the pendulum, the visitor can examine photographs of Slovene clubs and associations abroad. These are the places where immigrants can most actively preserve certain elements of their original identity. Particularly active are Slovene associations in Australia, Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, the U.S.A., Germany, Austria, Serbia, Bosnia, Sweden, etc. Presented is an example of maintaining a traditional Slovene custom, the celebration of Easter, in the Australian Slovenian Association Sydney. On the left side, we display photographs of handmade bobbin lace products adorned with typical Slovene motifs such as the carnation, linden leaf, edelweiss, and the swallow. They were made by Slovene immigrants from Melbourne, Australia, who have thus symbolically expressed their ties with the homeland.



*Pendulum of Nostalgia*  
– a symbolic exhibition  
element (photo by  
J. Žagar).

Planica Slovenian  
Association, Melbourne,  
Australia, 2006  
(D. Koprivec).



### Material Heritage of Immigrants

Since the material heritage of Slovene immigrants is abundant and diverse the visitor will be also able to examine some of the objects formerly in the possession of Slovene immigrants. The display case titled *Materialized Immigrant Heritage* presents a selection of objects from different locations that the immigrants brought with them upon their return home, and items sent to their relatives in the old country as a gift. On display are several letters, photographs, money orders, souvenirs, presents, books, and maps, which for decades have held a special symbolic value for the families that possessed them. Every object exhibited here has been chosen as a symbol of the diverse life stories of Slovene immigrants, and all of them are a tangible proof of the ties between immigrants and their relatives back

home. The visitor can inspect a container for olive oil, a remembrance of the grandmother who had worked in Egypt; a pocket watch from the grandfather, a miner in the USA; and an Easter card from a miner's family in France. There are also two school textbooks, written in Arabic and French, which were brought from Egypt by the daughter of a Slovene woman who had been working there, upon the family's return to Goriško, Slovenia. The letter from Egypt was addressed to the son, now residing in Italy, of a woman once employed in Egypt. When a steam engine's fireman was leaving Missouri he was given

the displayed pocket watch by his employers as a parting gift. There is also a Mother's Day card sent by an immigrant woman to her mother in Prekmurje.

The modern world remains just as open as in the past. The descendants of Slovene immigrants live in different places around the world, mostly in cities such as Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Perth in Australia; Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, and Eveleth in the U.S.A.; Toronto, Montreal, and Calgary in Canada; Buenos Aires, Mendoza, and San Carlos de Bariloche in Argentina; Montevideo in Uruguay; Berlin and Stuttgart in Germany; and Belgrade and Sarajevo in former Yugoslavia. Because of this, the chapter on Slovene immigrants ends with the photographs of children, the youngest generation of Slovenes living abroad.

Emigration from Slovenia has once again been intensified in recent years, as more and more young people are leaving their native country to seek better employment opportunities abroad. To this end, several agencies have been established in Slovenia. They assist people in obtaining a work visa and search



for job offers for young people who wish to emigrate, particularly to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Another category of those who are leaving Slovenia in search of better earnings are young people with university degrees, particularly from the fields of science, technology, and medicine. Concurrent with this type of emigration, immigration to our country has intensified as well, and the intertwining of different identities thus continues also in Slovenia. This is evident from a newspaper article titled *Slovenia: More Immigration*, which mentions a high number of immigrants to Slovenia. They all participate in co-shaping our country. Contacts with other cultures through Chinese and Indian restaurants, Thai massage parlors, or Buddhist and Ayurvedic centers, for example, once perceived as utterly exotic, have expanded the context of "difference" and enriched our daily life.



This exhibition chapter  
also contains a showcase  
displaying part of the  
material heritage of  
Slovene immigrants  
(photo by J. Žagar).



Pocket watch, presented  
as a parting gift to a  
Slovene immigrant by his  
railway company when  
he concluded his work as  
a steam engine's fireman  
and returned to Slovenia.  
St. Louis, Missouri, USA,  
1920 (photo by M. Habič).

In front of a Chinese  
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# Me – My Personal World

Janja Žagar

Who, then, am I? Where do I come from and where am I going?





## Me – My Personal World

Again focusing on the individual, the final chapter of the exhibit *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* raises two important questions: *Who, then, am I? Where do I come from and where am I going?* The first one is related to the individual's awareness of his or her journey so far; the second tries to install their life in the broadest temporal, spatial, and social concepts of the world. They provide the basis for the understanding of one's existence.

The human personality is a jigsaw puzzle of his or her characteristics, experiences, behavior, and insights. While the smaller part of the personality is innate, the larger one develops and changes throughout life. A special feature of the human species is the collection and organization of memories, knowledge, and experiences in a meaningful "whole". This process takes place at the level of the individual and at the level of various communities.

The individual's journey through life is a unique experience. Graphically depicting his or her travels through life, it is illustrated on the introductory panel with visible traces made by a distant human figure with a backpack on their shoulders (which contains various experiences and insights gathered along the way, memories, knowledge and skills, ideas, beliefs, principles, etc.).

### Of Symbolic and Formative Building Blocks

The last chapter of our exhibition, which summarizes all previous ones, converges from the color spectrum of white light to the darkness of the night. Rather than exploring the Slovene cultural environment or historical background in the construction of space and graphic effects it employs general symbolic elements. These are supplemented by a mixture of examples from different temporal and spatial realities translated into material objects or applied images, which establishes three levels of treatment: universal, sociocultural, and individual.

The exhibition space, which can be reached along a narrow passage, again features certain elements from the first exhibition chapter, for example the central pillar, darkened floors, walls constructed with panels, sound elements, etc. These symbolically indicate the principle of circulation, the convergence of the end with the beginning.

The content and design of the final narrative chapter underlines the idea of exchange between the individual and the world – the question of the relation between internal and external reality. The **round exhibition space** denotes the boundaries of the conceptual and experiential personal world, which is shaped in dialogue and negotiation with others. The principle of the external and the internal is depicted with a double circumference: the round inner

space is rimmed with panels lower than those in the first exhibition space. Behind it is the outer space with the ground plan of a square, surrounded by higher panels. The space between the two is used for display cases and larger viewing niches.

The higher outer panels are black and depict the night outline of the forest, house roofs, and the starry sky. A black textile symbolizing the **sky** is attached to their circumference, with a number of pinpoint lights – the stars – shining through. The panels and the ceiling form an apparent firmament, studded with galaxies and constellations, which has and will attract many past and future generations. Although the night sky constantly changes due to the motion of the planets and other space phenomena it is still perceived as endless and eternal. Similarly, the undulation of the sea in the first exhibition space also had the role of an "eternal" companion.

As at the beginning of the exhibition, the silhouette of **David** is depicted on the central pillar. In this case, however, David's figure is much smaller since he is installed between the gigantic space of the earthly reality and the wide expanse of the cosmos. Although the symbolism of the pillar and David is the same as in the first exhibition space, it does not depict only the relationship between the individual and the environment around them but a much broader relationship between the individual and the conceptual world – many conceptual worlds, in fact. The mosaic structure of the silhouette can be perceived either as a jigsaw puzzle of roles and identities or of subjective "truths" and "meanings." The figure of David is surrounded by small pieces of mirror that occasionally reflect light, thus resembling small reflectors that mirror fragmentary and dispersed memories of past events and people.



Entrance to the final exhibition space (photo by B. Zupančič).

The dark textile **flooring** composed of squares symbolizes our image of the past, which is based on selective history, heritage, and memories.

A mesh wire **chair** next to the pillar, an echo of the mesh wire bowl filled with seeds in the first room, is intended for visitors. An industrial mass product, the chair was selected in order to stress our mass consumer society and global processes, all of which have a profound influence on our conceptual world. The chair has been placed in this spot so that the visitor can sit down, reflect upon their life, the past or the future, or merely gaze at the starry sky above... What do we see with our eyes and what do we, equipped with experience and information, *perceive*?

Since David's image on the central pillar is much smaller compared to the one in the first exhibition space the physical and mental space around it seems much larger, and



questions for reflection are more consequential (photo by J. Žagar).

Image consisting of numerous images: our multicultural world is a global blend of people, animals, plant life, raw materials, goods, information, ideas, concepts, skills, behaviors, techniques, technologies, products, services, diseases ... and their interactions.

## Contents of the Exhibition Narrative

This segment of the exhibition highlights some universal human capabilities. The first is the ability to accumulate information, skills, and knowledge of previous generations as well as those acquired in one's own life. The second is the ability to abstract from and to (logically) select certain of the accumulated notions and knowledge; the third is the ability and will to apply all of these in action.

Because of these abilities, humankind was able to develop abstract concepts such as the past, the present, and the future – or even more precise conceptions related to the past, for example the history, heritage, and memory. It is on such ideas that concepts of equality and diversity, which connect or separate people, are often based.

This exhibition chapter discusses two principal (*The Inner World; The Outer World*) and two connective topics (*Questions and Answers; Choice as Creation*). They are supplemented by the introductory (*The World at Home*) and the concluding (*Personality as the Whole of Identities*) themes.

### The World at Home

As the visitor leaves the previous exhibition chapter titled *My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World* to proceed to the final part of the exhibition, they encounter double-sided showcases. These display objects that can be perused from either exhibition space, and thus symbolically also from two different viewpoints (the aspect of the home from the viewpoint of the outside world, and the aspect of the world examined from home). While the display cases viewed from one side thus bear the common title *Material Heritage of Immigrants*, they are titled *Glimpses of the World* when perused from the other side. The displayed items illustrate the objects sent by Slovene immigrants to their families back home, thus giving them some insight into the immense world outside, as well as the reminders of their life abroad they had brought with them upon their return to their native country.

This, however, is just part of the message. It is namely possible to examine in a similar way all the past and contemporary exchanges of people, animals, and plant life, inanimate objects, raw materials and goods, information, ideas and concepts, skills and

knowledge, techniques and technologies, products and services, illnesses, physical and spiritual practices, etc. The history of human migration is indeed the history of the transmission of natural and cultural components that accompany people's lives and ease their struggle for survival. The people of today may perceive the global mixture of these components as self-evident as the mixture of spices in a certain dish. Yet at the time of their origin, each ingredient denoted a novelty, a local specialty, a rarity, and perhaps even something precious. As in the past, these ingredients still blend in the present. Such a mixture yields new species, new phenomena, and new practices. As a result, it is extremely difficult to speak of original, genuine components of the modern world, and often even controversial from the point of view of historical truth.

This is why this part of the exhibition utilizes the language of graphics instead of words. We have assembled a mosaic image of the Earth's continents from a number of small depictions of local products, traditional physical and spiritual disciplines, sports, dance styles, meditation techniques, healing practices, international organizations, and so on.

Local diversity, which forms the basis of concepts of "traditional" specialties, is presented through the graphic media depicting the market offer of spice plants. In the past, some of these were the engine of extensive trade routes, business contacts, and disputes. Although they are now widely available in many parts of the world and can be easily included in our daily meals, we still think of them as local, regional, national, etc. The present global consumer exchange, which in one way or another shapes and affects our daily lives, is illustrated with chopsticks from a Chinese restaurant in Ljubljana and with several types of corn cobs and spices from South America; the latter are not indigenous to our geographical environment and are therefore perceived as quite unusual.

The showcase titled *The Distinct and the Different in the Service of Tourism* displays tourist souvenirs, largely from private collections, from different parts of the world, for example an embroidered cap from Uzbekistan; scented cones and sticks from India; an Egyptian bookmark made from painted papyrus; a DVD with Greek music and with photographs of typical sights in Greece; and volcanic stones from Santorini, Greece. By putting these souvenirs on display we wished to encourage our visitors to reflect on items that they bring home from their travels around the world, as well as on those presented to them by their travelling relatives and friends. Tourist souvenirs are a modern modification of a local culture into a distinctive tourist keepsake. They can also represent personal experiences and memories transformed into a tangible object.



*The Distinct and the Different in the Service of Tourism: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*

### The Inner World : The Outer World

Although each of them contains both poles, the main topics highlight the principles of the internal and the external already with their titles. The first one, graphically represented by the texture of a neural network, focuses on the memory of past events, experiences, and observations. The second one, fitted with the background of the Earth photographed from space, looks at the accumulated knowledge, skills, and achievements of countless human generations that have shaped the modern world. This includes human ventures across the boundaries of our planet, which enable us to reflect on Ourselves (Earthlings), as well as the history and the future of the planet that we all share.

Is the memory of an event or experience a matter of the inner, or perhaps the outer world? Is this memory hidden as a data and an emotional "record" inside us or within the material remains left over after that particular event, preserved long afterwards? Are our memories linked only with directly experienced events, or do we internalize other people's memories as well? Do some of the events we have learned about during our school years, which are considered relevant parts of our common (local, regional, national, or global) history, become ingrained in us?



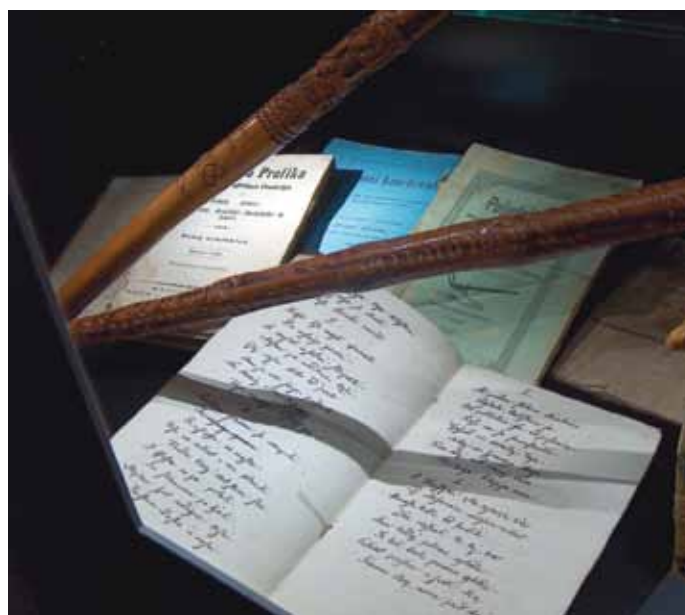
The segment titled ***The Inner World*** investigates the inner conceptual world of the individual. Far more than a bare mirrored image of the outer world, this is an individual, unique, and processed take on everything absorbed from it. Part of this processing mechanism is the memory, which is not only a biological but also a cultural category. Biologically speaking, the memory is created by neural networks in the cerebral cortex. It is the ability of the brain and of billions of neurons whose interconnections enable perception, recollection, consolidation of memories, and memory recall. Preservation of memories and their transformation into something new enables accumulation and exchange of knowledge, skills, and experiences. Because of our ability to process old memories and upgrade them through new findings we have been given access to useful insights of other people and of previous generations.

Each memory is deeply influenced by the cultural pattern of reminiscence. This pattern dictates what should be remembered from the personal and the shared past, and how to renew that memory so that the feeling of our own continuity and affiliation to others makes sense. It also tells us what is of no essential importance and may be forgotten. The principle of heritage, an image of the past which renders the present significant and meaningful, is an example of such a culturally conditioned selective memory. The texts, material objects, and pictorial material on display emphasize the difference between personal, collective, and historical memories and between personal, common, and universal heritage. The showcase titled ***Skills and Knowledge Captured in Memory*** illustrates this concept by displaying several objects (i.e. memorial staffs, a miniature wicker manure wagon, a clay crib) and books (handwritten collections and printed

Stressing memory as a biological and cultural category, the segment titled the *Inner World* draws attention to the importance of the individual's internal processing of the world around them (photo by J. Žagar).



*Skills and Knowledge Captured in Memory: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*



manuals). They document the experience, knowledge, and skills of previous generations that can be creatively utilized by our and by future generations.

Personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings are the strongest parts of personal memory. Since they also involve other people they are subjected to comparisons and alterations, and personal memory is adjusted to correspond to collective memory. Collective memory is therefore the result of unification and convergence of different memories. This kind of memory consolidates a group and becomes the basis of group identity.

The most powerful memories are associated with significant milestones and exceptional – whether happy or tragic – periods and moments from personal, family, and local history. This is why they are most frequently “frozen” in pho-

tographs and captured in diaries and local chronicles. It needs to be stressed that established norms and habits also dictate intimate feelings, or at least the outward, visible appearance, of each individual.

Broader social groups mold different collective memories into the official version of the memory, “associated” with certain select events from a longer historical period. Through school education and repeated rituals (holidays, memorial ceremonies, memorial places), this historical memory becomes an integral part of an individual's life and memory, and is now composed of personal experience and internalized common elements.

Memories may be triggered by a sudden smell, taste, color, shape, sound, or a renewed visit to a certain place, building, or room that were important to us in the past. *Memory Captured in a Place* is the title of a larger exhibition area set up behind a panel wall. It displays several pieces of kitchen furniture and kitchenware. In the kitchens of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which were named white kitchens and particularly widespread at the time, such equipment was very common (this particular kitchen equipment from Logatec was made in the 1930s and was still in use at least fifty years later). Featuring a number of industrial products that in the past could be found in many Slovene homes, this stylized kitchen triggers memories of a very familiar environment in many visitors.



*Memory Captured in a Place: view of the display area (photo by J. Žagar).*

*Memory Captured in Objects: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).*



Memories can be retrieved by reminders in the form of a written record, picture, sign, or object. Some objects can be perceived as tangible traces of personal or shared memories. They may be appreciated because they document and prove select historical facts or periods. Some people treasure them because they represent biographical remnants of their lives and of the life of their community. Still others feel that it is important to somehow preserve things that are exceptional and valuable for future generations. The tangible heritage in museums has a similar role. It is based on personal heritage consisting of applied and memorial objects but often interpreted through general narratives and collective labels.

The showcase titled *Memory Captured in Objects* displays museum artifacts and personal objects with significant memorial value. While some of them were originally designed as memorial objects (i.e. photographs, albums, commemorative badges, diaries, etc.) others are associated with important personal events that people wished to preserve (wedding bouquet, wedding handkerchief, etc.). Memorial objects could also be ordinary things used on a daily basis but with deep emotional significance (i.e. a pocket watch, letters, a perfume container, a cigarette box with cigarettes, etc.). Additional pictorial material depicts other tangible memories or certain details associated with personal milestones (such as the wedding date, the date of First Communion, first downhill skiing run, or even of a severe mountaineering accident).

The segment *The Outer World* looks at the world into which an individual is born and which therefore represents the starting point of their life. Rather than the immediate environment and local habits, it examines the common treasury of humankind (the accumulated knowledge, experiences, skills, inventions, findings, etc.) contributed by previous generations and their most capable individuals.

Scientists who have had a profound impact on our lives, transcended the limitations of previous scientific findings, and shaped the foundations of today's conceptual world have been preserved in collective memory. Together with their achievements, they have become part of the common heritage of humankind. We commemorate them internationally, on the national or on the local level. They are depicted on monuments, postage stamps, banknotes, etc.; they are celebrated in exhibitions, celebrations, books, on memorial days, and have been incorporated in school curriculums. Some of them are portrayed in the displayed photographs, which show the monument of Copernicus in Warsaw, Poland; postal stamps from various countries, issued to celebrate certain scientists and their discoveries, for example Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, and Albert Einstein; and a stamp dedicated to two Slovene aviators, the Rusjan

The segment titled *The Outer World* examines the shared treasury of all humanity, which contains the experience, findings, knowledge, and skills of previous generations. It provides a venue for thought, perception, and agency of the individual (photo by J. Žagar).



brothers, and their plane Eda. In this way, and through the daily use of their inventions, such people co-create the inner world of many people.

In the last five centuries, the scope of knowledge about the Earth and space, natural laws, and the relationship between the human and other living species, has changed profoundly. This allows a deeper insight into the natural laws of the microworld on the one hand and of the universe on the other. Although technologies have neither developed evenly everywhere nor simultaneously, we may speak of the technical history of humankind. The purpose of

technical devices is to overcome the limitations of sense organs and conscious experiences. Such devices enable us to observe things and processes the human eye is incapable of seeing, and the human experience cannot grasp. Several photographs illustrate images provided by telescopes, microscopes, x-ray and ultrasonic devices (i.e. images of galaxies, human bone structure, cells with nuclei, Salmonella bacteria) and a photographic camera (a falling drop of water, "frozen" into eternity). Visual information has a profound impact on people's concepts. Such images certainly expand our awareness of reality, and at the same time raise new questions and spur curiosity.

The principal aim of technology is to make life easier, whether it is mechanics, electricity, telephony, electromechanics, or digital technology. The development of technology was especially rapid in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and today's mass production and widespread use of technical products is staggering. The showcase titled *Technology in Daily Use* features a number of household devices that were widely used in the 1950s and 1960s. Many visitors are familiar with them: a semi-automatic washing machine, fridge, vacuum cleaner, electric iron, coffee grinder, electric cooker, hair dryer, etc. When a

technical novelty is incorporated in our personal life and simultaneously in the life of our community (e.g. the first radios and television sets, the first car in the family or in the wider community), personal and collective memories, depicted in a photograph, intertwine. The experience of the first encounter with identical technology, its use, and its eventual abandonment transforms people living in the same period into an imagined community. When obsolete objects are discarded and replaced by new, more modern and useful ones the old ones become nostalgic material remnants of past eras. They have nothing in common with our unpredictable future but are beautiful because of the memories they evoke. Some of them are displayed in the showcase that poses an important question to visitors: *What Is*

*Technology in Daily Use:* a view of the display area (photo by J. Žagar).

*What Is Worth Collecting?:* a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).



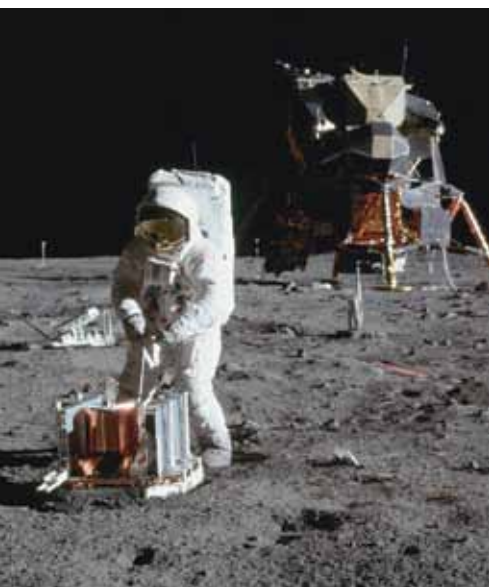
*Worth Collecting?* It exhibits part of a private collection of models of cars mass produced in the 1960s. Due to their popularity in Slovenia, these cars have acquired affectionate nicknames (such as the popular Volkswagen beetle/bug, which in Slovenia was dubbed the *hrošč*), and the models on display evoke in the visitors many fond memories and stories about their first family cars.

A group of photographs highlight several additional aspects of our common world heritage and of belonging to the humanity that shares the planet Earth: the raising awareness of shared values, but also of common fears (of natural disaster on the one hand and of fatal human errors of great proportions on the



other). These are supplemented by the common memory of historical eras, turning points, and paths of development. Similarly, human endeavors to go beyond the boundaries of our planet and travel deeper into space (from observing the sky, “tapping” into the universe, and sending artificial satellites and research probes to space, to sending manned rockets to other planets) can be considered our common world heritage.

In order to consolidate select elements of the collective memory, achievements, and events into the consciousness of every individual, various international anniversaries and thematic days have been proclaimed worldwide. Celebrations are organized at different levels – national, regional, institutional, or within various societies. Although the forms of such manifestations differ to a certain extent their main aim is the same, namely to consolidate the shared, global affiliation of all people. 2009, for example, when the Slovene



First person on the Moon, engraved in the collective memory of humankind and immortalized on numerous photographs (1969, NASA).

View of the Earth, our common planet (1969, NASA).



Ethnographic Museum opened its permanent exhibition, marked the anniversaries of several “world” events; some of them are illustrated in our exhibition with photographs of memorial stamps and events: The International Year of Astronomy commemorated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Galileo Galilei’s first recorded astronomical observations with a telescope; Darwin Year marked 200 years since the birth of Charles Darwin and 150 years since the publication of his book *The Origin of the Species*; the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight of two Slovene flight pioneers, the Rusjan brothers, with their biplane EDA 1; the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first human footsteps on the Moon, etc.

Included in our common heritage are also the notions of extraterrestrial beings, of Others, who differ from any living species on our planet. In the display case titled *Is There Anybody Else out There?*, visitors can view some educational illustrations and school notebooks that represent the tangible knowledge of the planet Earth and other planets in our solar system. The displayed toys, children’s books, and pictures convey fantasy images from the worlds of fairytales and motion pictures. Whether real or not, at least some of them evoke deep and vivid memories of childhood (i.e. Vid Pečjak’s children’s book *Drejček and the Three Martians* from 1965; a child’s carnival costume of a Martian from 2006; a model of the Roswell alien from 1947; and Yoda, a fictional character from the science fiction franchise *Star Wars*).

## Questions and Answers : Choice as Creation

The two connective themes installed among the two principal topics also try to find connections between the inner and the outer worlds. The first one explores cultural models of perceiving the world and of understanding the meaning of existence. Some “eternal” questions are used as the graphic background on the panels. The second theme focuses on the creative process of acquiring personal concepts about the world on the basis of images and information obtained from the world outside, through other people and the mass media. To enhance this topic, the texture applied on the panels is written in the computer language of binary code.

**Questions and Answers** stress the spheres of living that transcend the daily life and are closely related to the awareness of one’s own existence and transience of life. A person’s understanding of the world and their role in it, notions about space and time, and the concepts of meaning and the supernatural represent the foundation of every culture. These concepts differ enough to either link or separate people. Fundamental questions about the human being and the world, the concepts of what is free, good, beautiful, just, moral, sensible, logical, and so on, can only have incomplete answers and are always culturally conditioned. There are no absolute answers. Such answers function only as guidelines, a basis for the individual’s search for intimate answers and meanings. They can be understood as guidance but also provide support, solace, and meaning in the daily life and in the face of death.

Questions about everything that is, was, and will be, represent a link between the inner and the outer world. It is irrelevant if answers to them are sought in fairytales, folktales, mythological traditions, religion, art, or science. This segment of the exhibition features select images and commentaries that emphasize the diversity of forms within the same cultural element (e.g. motifs and characters from folk and fairytales, myths, and legends) rather than various specialties usually emphasized in national or local heritage, or a multitude of religious practices and their characteristics. We only wish to stress that all beliefs provide the framework of people’s conceptual world and values; explain the most profound questions about the secrets of the universe and the natural order; formulate explanations about the meaning of life and death; and define the place of the individual in the community and the cosmos.

We have decided to illustrate the concept of cultural relativism with a collection of diverse objects from different cultural environments and title it *Expressions of Ideas and Beliefs*. The smaller items in the display case were generally intended for personal use. Among these are an amulet depicting Virgin Mary with baby Jesus; a rosary with symbols of Christ’s suffering; a manuscript of sacred texts from Ethiopia; a statuette of Guanyin, the Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion from China; a fetish for a long life from the Ivory Coast; and a painted Greek Orthodox icon. Larger statues, placed in a viewing niche, had been owned by families or smaller local communities. They were often a mix-



*Expressions of Ideas and Beliefs*: a glimpse into the display case (photo by J. Žagar).

ture of official religious doctrines and popular beliefs, e.g. the Sitting Christ from a house sign from Drenovec in Bizeljsko; a wooden statue of St. Urban; a Chinese statue of Buddha; a mask of an evil forest spirit from Mozambique; a Mali ritual vessel with depictions of divine ancestors; a statue depicting a scene from the epic Ramayana from Bali, Indonesia, etc.

The second connective theme, titled **Choice as Creation**, speaks about the accumulation of select information from the outside world and the construction of one's personal world – one's personal perception of the world – based on it. In addition to people's own experience, their world is created out of thoughts, experience, knowledge, memories, and visions of other people, mediated through spoken or written word, images, music, etc. In order to point out the significance of indirect experience, the visitor can explore this topic on the touch screen. It provides short videos of three narrators of folktales<sup>1</sup> and of three narrators from different cultural backgrounds, who were asked to share some of their life experiences and wisdom acquired over the years<sup>2</sup>.

The press, radio, and electronic and other mass media have always strongly influenced people's perception of reality and historical memory. By communicating misrepresented facts and partial information they affect the meaning and understanding of messages. Since they convey the impression of a direct



David as a symbol of Everyman on the mosaic depiction of the Earth. The concluding animated sequence in the final exhibition chapter represents a visual summary of the concept of positioning within the (self) constructed image of the world.

Title page of the interactive content *My World through ... Fairytales, Insights, and Media Images*.

experience, an illusion of shared experience, and a sense of belonging to an illusionary community, such images are particularly effective. It can therefore be argued that the media shift the boundaries between the personal and the collective, the private and the public, and the local and the global.

Mass media has significantly increased and geographically expanded the impact of some individuals, for example public figures, politicians, musicians, actors, athletes, etc. They influence people's concepts of what is beautiful and desirable, which is exploited especially by the fashion industry. Motivated by their idolatry of celebrities and role models, individuals sometimes construct communities that, although virtual, are based on the illusion of a common ex-

1 **Moj svet skozi ... pravljice / My World through ... Fairytales.** Fanči Vidmar, Pravljica, Vojsko, July 2007. Marija Cvetek, Bog je svet delil; Svetemu Petru se ni ljubilo pobrati podkve, Ljubljana, May 2007. Ljuba Jenče, Deček, ki je imel rad oblake; Zemlja plava na vodi; Zemlja nastane iz zrna peska, Ljubljana, January 2008. The author of the concept and expert associate Janja Žagar; interview, photography, and editing Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interactive application Peter Gruden; SEM Production, 2008, duration 10 minutes.

2 **Moj svet skozi ... opazovanja / My World through ... Experience.** Marijan Česnik, Ljubljana, March 2008. Ana Zablatnik, Bilnjovs, Carinthia, Austria, June 2007. The author of the concept and expert associate Janja Žagar; interview, photography, and editing Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interactive application Peter Gruden; SEM Production, 2008, duration 8 minutes and a half.

perience. The displayed images illustrate various ways of glorifying such celebrities, both living as well as already deceased: a commemorative postage stamp honoring the English comic actor Charlie Chaplin; a wax doll of the pop icon Elvis Presley; a Liverpool city bus featuring a photograph of the famous music group the Beatles, the pride of the city; the iconic image of Che Guevara, a major figure of the Cuban revolution, printed on mass-produced textile products, etc.

The use of similar technology as a linking element between people of a particular period has already been stressed. Now we will highlight some select products of the global industry that function as a bonding element between people of a particular generation and era: musical genres and even individual melodies; motion pictures and animated films; fashion trends, popular and highly desirable clothing items and accessories; and even advertisement texts and jingles. Such mass-produced items are offered to all members of a particular society simultaneously; they are not selected according to the same criteria, however. The showcase titled **Offer and Choice – Internalization of the Oustate World** displays a record player purchased in the 1960s by a Ljubljana family; family members used it for at least two decades to listen to their favorite musical genres and melodies. Some of these tunes can be found on the vinyl records placed in the same display case, and their covers shall probably evoke memories of a familiar melody in many a visitor.



In this way, people we have never known or met, events that we have not witnessed and have not even happened to us, ideas and thoughts that are not our own, or feelings we do not experience directly, can all become part of our personal world. It is within this seemingly complete set of select images, which people observe, evaluate, and categorize through their senses and understanding, that they also install themselves. This lifelong process based on acquired social and cultural patterns is part of the universal nature of human beings. On the other hand, for each person it is also a unique attempt at finding meaning and their particular role in the wide world.

This self-positioning process is illustrated with the third connective theme available on the touch screen.<sup>3</sup> It presents dozens of different images of well-known people, natural and cultural sights, and historical events from domes-

Deep impact of fictional characters: a poster for the famed film *Gone with the Wind* from 1939.

Images of famous film beauties (Marilyn Monroe, Sophia Loren, Catherine Deneuve, Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Marlene Dietrich, Anita Ekberg, Elizabeth Taylor, Brigitte Bardot, Katharine Hepburn, Greta Garbo, and Veronica Lake) inform the public ideal of beauty and of what is desirable.

3 **Moj svet skozi ... medijske podobe / My World through ... Mass Media Images.** The author of the concept Janja Žagar; interactive application Peter Gruden; SEM Production, 2008; duration 1 minute and a half.



tic and foreign environments. These images, which are not arranged in any particular order, are transformed in the concluding animation sequence into a mosaic applied on a rotating terrestrial globe, with a contour of David inserted among them in the end.

Additional Themes and Elements

The dialog between the inner and the outer is supplemented by various sounds. Silence alternates with various sounds from “within” (heartbeat, crackling fire, ticking of the clock) and those from the “outside” (blowing of the wind and strikes of the church clock illustrate distant sounds from the outside). Most of these sound elements are present, in one way or another, in other exhibition chapters but in the last one they are combined in a unique amalgam.

*An Individual’s Journey*, the cohesive thread that accompanies every chapter of this exhibition, ends here, although not with death. It ends with the author’s memory of his ancestors and of the river that has accompanied many a life and



Graphical summary titled *Personality as the Whole of Identities*: while the silhouette of David, applied on a panel, is filled with singular nouns (denoting the selected or ascribed identities of the individual) the space around it is filled with a tiny pattern of numerous potential identities written in the form of plural nouns (photo by J. Žagar).

Dark and curved exit tunnel with a mesh ceiling and a series of selected images from the exhibition, which represent a string of memorial impressions from life (photo by J. Žagar).



death, events and changes, and yet it still flows peacefully onward. The graphic background of the panel features a shadowy outline of the author, who was part of the described family saga, both in real life and in the story.

Several other exhibition elements also function as part of the summary of the entire exhibition. First there are themes about personal and group identities (*Personality as the Whole of Identities*), which are visually illustrated with the graphic textures of the panels and a large applied silhouette of David. Next, there are proverbs and worldly wisdoms applied over the texture of the tree. In comparison with the first exhibition chapter, the tree has a much thicker trunk and the leafless crown of winter.

The dark, curved tunnel through which the visitor exits from the exhibition resembles the one the visitor encounters at the beginning. Every human being is born alone, and dies alone. The sociocultural network that throughout life gave every individual a specific form has lost its firm and tangible structures. This is illustrated with black string curtains that have now replaced the former firm outer walls of the tunnel. The abovementioned structures, however, are still present in those who accompany the departing person and remember him or her later on; they are symbolized by the mesh ceiling of the tunnel. Finally, the visitor passes through black and white threaded curtain, the same as at the entrance to the first exhibition space, into the daylight.

On parting, the visitor can read the thought written on the tunnel wall:

*A person’s contribution to the human community goes beyond the boundaries of her or his life.*

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# Exhibition Narrative Translated into Objects

List of Museum Objects on Display





## Exhibition Narrative Translated into Objects

### List of Museum Objects on Display

Our exhibition narrative contains approximately five hundred museum objects that vary by age and geographical origin, as well as by the criteria of their basic function and the social affiliation of their users. The objects in this list, which was prepared by the authors of all exhibition chapters, are arranged according to the sequence of the chapters, and within each chapter according to the sequence of the display cases in each room - always in the viewing direction. In order to help with interpretation of the exhibit and to facilitate the search for a particular object the display cases on this list bear the same title as the actual display cases on view.

These museum objects, or else groups of object, are listed according to their location in the corresponding display case, from left to right, from top to bottom, and from back to front. A group of object denotes objects with the same name and corresponding data. Each object or object group contains categories with the following data: **name** of the object/object group, supplemented with information on its **purpose of use** and ascribed **meanings** whenever possible; geographical **location** (of the item's use or origin); **datation** (period of use or origin); and the **status** of the object/object group. Due to the basic concept of the exhibition design these lists, unlike the conventional catalog units, do not contain information on materials, size, or designation (inventory number) nor are they supplemented by descriptions of objects. As an exception, a note on the material or color is added to the object's name in order to facilitate the search or distinguish similar objects displayed in the same showcase.

The subdivision with data on the status of an object provides information on only those objects that are not part of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum's collections and are either from other museum collections or else in private possession of individuals, families, societies (*private property*), etc. The term *illustrative example* indicates objects that are not included in our museum fund or in private possession. Neither are they museum copies, replicas, imitations, or else conventional illustrative materials that are sometimes part of the museum fund<sup>1</sup>. We have defined them as original objects that differ from the above-mentioned ones in that they are new, used, or occasionally even discarded items, and are either selected from the great variety of presently available objects or else gathered in nature. Their presence and symbolic meanings enhance the clarity and understandability of the exhibition narrative and the discussed concepts.

<sup>1</sup> In the most general sense, an illustration is a means of sensory representation and understanding of the subject. In the case of museum illustrative materials, it is generally an illustration of a particular cultural element (e.g. settlement type, building types, etc.) or a clearly comprehensible depiction of the function of a certain object, the process of its manufacture, or its various development phases, etc. This may also be an object made specifically for the museum after the example of the original object, which the museum does not possess or which has not been preserved to this day. It may differ from the original in terms of size, material, attention to detail, or even interior structure, provided that this does not hamper its illustrative function.

## 1. I – The Individual



### History of Living Species, Reconstructed through Fragments

- Solid remnants of living creatures: shells and fossilized fragments / private collection
- Modern replica of a Lombard pot from the 6<sup>th</sup> century from the site of Rifnik by Celje / private collection
- Parts of animal skeletons / private collection



### Biological Markers of Individuality

- Baby hand and footprint keepsake cast / Ljubljana / early 21<sup>st</sup> century / private collection
- Fingerprints and names of their owners from the "file" of a child detective / Ljubljana / early 21<sup>st</sup> century / private collection
- Dental cast of the lower jaw and teeth, the basis for braces / Ljubljana / late 20<sup>th</sup> century / private collection
- Milk teeth as a keepsake of childhood / Ljubljana / late 20<sup>th</sup> century / private collection
- Glass with discernible imprints of finger and lips / illustrative example
- Personal documents with identification elements / first half and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Ultrasound image of a human embryo / Ljubljana / late 20<sup>th</sup> century / illustrative example



### The Tree between Nature and Culture

- Wooden container with lid / Vojsko / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Tree of knowledge – a clay candleholder / Mexico / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Cross section of a larch trunk with visible annual rings / 2006 / illustrative example
- Seeds and leaves of different trees / 2006 / illustrative example



### What Harms and What Helps?

- Natural and chemical medications and remedies / illustrative example
- Plasters in original packaging / Kočevje / prior to the Second World War
- Pendant – relic / Tomišelj / 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Christian crosses and holy cards as personal amulets / late 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Pocket statuette of Virgin Mary – the Patroness in a wooden box / Ljubljana / interwar period
- Silver votive – praying man holding a heart / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

- *Buqui v katirih se vsze sorte arzneje za veliku bolesni snajdajo* (Book in Which All Sorts of Medicines for Many Diseases Can Be Found), handwritten medical book / 1791
- Hagstone for good health and happiness / illustrative example
- Amulet – scarab as a protection against evil / Egypt / between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.
- Amulet – Eye of Horus as a protection against evil / Egypt / between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.
- Good luck clay piglet / Ljubljana / 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Pendant with the motif of a four-leaf clover for good luck / Stopnik / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Amulet – necklace with metal beads and mask as a protection against evil / Benin / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Amulet – Arabic incantations against perils in the desert / Sudan / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Construction of Beautiful and Significant

- Women's ornamental brass comb / Gorenjska / first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Woman's ornamental horn comb / mid-19<sup>th</sup> century
- Natural body dye (ash, pulverized bones, ochre) / Sudan / mid-19<sup>th</sup> century
- Natural body dye (henna) / illustrative example
- Fragrance bottles / Ljubljana / late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative example
- Mandarin headgear / China / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Ornamental combs / Mozambique / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Female figurine with ornamental scars – fetish for a long life / Ivory Coast / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Needles for ornamental scarring (scarification) / Sudan / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Artificial nails / 2009 / private collection
- Artificial eyelashes (Carnival accessory) / 2009 / private collection
- Bride's headdress / Bela Krajina / first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Girl's headband / Bela Krajina / 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Construction of Beautiful and Significant

- Body ornaments / Benin / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Earrings / Kenya / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Earrings / Kenya / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Earrings / Carniola / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Women's earrings, part of Slovene national costume / vicinity of Ljubljana / between 1890 and 1930
- Decorative ear decoration / Egypt / around 1200 B.C.
- Bracelets / Benin / 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Nose ornament / New Britain, Papua New Guinea / early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Nose ornament / Admiralty Islands, Papua New Guinea / early 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Template and Handwritten Inscriptions on Objects

- Wooden seals for cheese decoration / Velika Planina / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden seal for cheese decoration, made according to older examples / Stahovica in Gorenjska / 1959
- Seals with initials and names / Ljubljana / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Jade seals with engraved characters / China / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden knife for soft foodstuffs with engraved inscriptions and name / dated 1823
- Horn spoon with hand-engraved inscription / Zgornja Štajerska / around 1840
- Horn spoon with hand-engraved inscription / Salzburg / around 1840
- Embroidery sampler with the name of the embroiderer / dated 1858
- Wooden template for printing monograms before embroidery / Ljubljana / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- White embroidered handkerchief with the monogram of its owner / late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Monograms embroidered on silk (semi-finished products) / Ljubljana / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Reading handbook / China / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century / private collection
- Handwriting notebook for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade / Vojnik by Celje / 1925–26



### Personalized Objects

- Half-liter jug with the handwriting and monogram of manufacturer / Komenda / interwar period
- Spoon with personal marks of the owner / Podkoren / 1870
- Wooden spoons with personal marks of the owner / Podkoren / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Tailor's iron with the engraved monogram of the owner / dated 1724
- Tailor's iron with the engraved monogram of the owner / dated 1782
- Beef horn whetstone holder with the engraved monogram of the owner / Zgornja Savinjska Dolina / dated 1912
- Multi-piece personal cutlery in a case / Tibet / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Cutlery in a sheath with the engraved name of the owner / dated 1831



- Men's ring with engraved initials of the first owner / Ljubljana / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden gingerbread mold with the name of the owner/ manufacturer / Škofja Loka / dated 1835

## 2. My Family – My Home



### Desire for Children

- Votive picture, gratitude for a healthy child / dated 1758
- Gingerbread mold with the motif of a baby / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wedding gingerbread / Škofja Loka or vicinity / around 1937
- Ivory statue of mother with child – a symbol of fertility and motherhood / DR Congo / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Bronze statue of mother with children – a symbol of fertility and motherhood / Ghana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Baby, a votive figurine (intercession for a baby) / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Votive heart / 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Fragments of Childhood

- Cup with a motif from the tale of *Janko in Metka* (Hansel and Gretel) / Ljubljana / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century / private collection
- Toy sewing machine / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Toy pail / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Toy bedroom furniture / Bukovica in Selška Dolina / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Doll / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Doll coated with ochre / Kenya / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Toy winnowing machine / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Spinning top, a party game / vicinity of Ribnica / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Child's musical toy / Petrušna Vas / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Toy cradle with baby / Nasovče / 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Fragments of Childhood

- Baby walker from a trader's family / Radeče by Zidani Most / around 1900
- Bronzed baby shoe from the family of a postal official, a keepsake of the baby's first steps / Novo Mesto / around 1907
- Silvered baby shoe from the family of a postal official, a keepsake of the baby's first steps / Novo Mesto / around 1905



### Domesticated Fire

- Lantern / Gorenjska / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Oil lamp / Ljubljana / late 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Splint holder for home lighting / Bled / still in function during the First World War
- Splint holder for home lighting / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Holder for wax coils with scissors for wick / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Flint stones / Gorenjska / 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Small table lantern / vicinity of Celje / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Fireplace broom / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Andiron for logs and for the heating of pots on the open hearth / 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Food Preparation

- Two pans and small pot for cooking on the stove / Ljubljana / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Small pot / Mojstrana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Pot for cooking on the stove / Mojstrana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Egg pan / Mojstrana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Pot for cooking on the stove / Mojstrana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Clay pot for cooking in the bread oven / Spuhlja / beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Cast iron pot for cooking in the bread oven / Spuhlja / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Clay nut roll mold / Mojstrana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Small clay pot for cooking in the bread oven / Hočevje / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Cake mold / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Nut roll mold / Ljubljana / beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Brush for coating loaves of bread or cakes with egg wash before inserting them in the bread oven / Voklo / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Ceramic receptacle for ritual offering of food or drink / Ivory Coast / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Clay baking pan for baking bread on the open hearth / Kralji by Stari Trg / beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Pan for cooking on the open hearth / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Pan for cooking on the open hearth / Škofja Loka / beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Pot for cooking on the open hearth / Suha Krajina / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Storage

- Bread bin / Cerovec / in function until the 1970s
- Shampoo box, later used for storage of household utensils / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Candy box, later used for storing cookies / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Storage box (presumably for a healing stone) / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Storage box for shaving accessories / Ljubljana / before 1941
- Storage box for small items / presumably from western Štajersko / dated 1755
- Jewelry box of the nobility / second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century
- Cream pot / Bratonci by Beltinci / first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Preserving jar / Ljubljana / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- *Kneipp* coffee box / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Spice containers / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Pantry / Dravinjski Vrh / still in function in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Spoon holder / Gorenjska / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Basket for storing food / West Africa / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Grain container / Ratež by Novo Mesto / 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Necessities of Life through Applied Objects

- End board of the bed frame / Gorenjska or western Štajerska / dated 1889
- Cradle / Ljubinj / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Baptismal blanket / Maršiči in Dolenjska / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Decorated trough, an example of a multi-purpose object (for kneading dough but also for sleeping or for carrying an infant) / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden head rest adorned with symbols that protect the sleeping person / Somalia / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Towel hanger / Stari Trg pri Ložu / 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Embroidered towel with monogram / Ljubljana / dated 1885
- Middle-class toiletry set (jug and washing bowl, chamber pot, comb dish, soap dish) / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden washboard / Bistrica by Sotla / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century





### A Place for Socializing

- Nativity scene and embroidered Nativity napkin / Črnomelj / interwar period
- *Kristusovo rojstvo* (Birth of Christ), painting on glass / first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- *Zadnja večerja* (Last Supper), painting on glass / first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Crucifix with Jesus and tools of Christ's torture / second or last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Painting on glass (St. Valentin Retijski) / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Holy ghost above the dining table – guardian of home / illustrative example
- Group of books as an illustrative example of shared reading and learning
- Bench / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Table / Gorenjska / dated 1785
- Bowl with spoons, an illustration of joint partaking of food / Bled and Gorenjska / 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Wicker plate with wooden spoons / Togo / 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Roles of Family Members

- Chair with carved inscription *Dober dan* (Good Day) and initials of the head of the family / dated 1848
- Chief's stool – status symbol of the Ashanti / Ghana / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Chest key – symbol of property of the lady of the house / Selška Dolina / 17<sup>th</sup> century



### Protecting the Home

- St. Mary, statuette from a façade niche / Rečica by Laško / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Farmhouse shutter with the motif of St. Mary with the dead Jesus beneath the cross and St. Florian / Orehek by Kranj / dated 1850
- Monkey skull with intertwined reeds for the protection of the house and its entrance against evil ghosts / DR Congo / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden lock with the depiction of two deities – a symbolic protection against thieves / Mali / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Seated Christ, statuette from a façade niche / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- House blessing printed on the paper / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Door knocker / Šiška by Ljubljana / last third of the 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Vise for door opening / Šiška by Ljubljana / late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Door knocker from the door of an arched stone entrance / Materija / first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

- Door lock / 17<sup>th</sup> century
- Latchkey / 17<sup>th</sup> century
- Key / Štajerska / mid-17<sup>th</sup> century
- Lock / Štajerska / mid-17<sup>th</sup> century
- Door lock with owner's name / dated 1806 /
- Epiphany house blessing from 19<sup>th</sup> century (copy) / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Stone amulet in the shape of the homestead and livestock for the protection against misfortune / Bolivia / 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Materialized Memories and Ties

- Cylindrical box with family initials / Celje / late 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Framed depiction of the family tree of the Bernard family / Celje / late 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Family photographs, mounted on the wall / Bistrica by Sotla / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Photograph of the Valentinčič family, mounted on the wall / Podbrdo / 1930s / private collection
- Photograph of the Bernard family, memorial reproduction / Celje / late 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Manuscript notebook, a reminder of the deceased grandmother / Bilčovs/Ludmannsdorf in Rož/Rosental / early 20<sup>th</sup> century / private collection
- Photo album, materialized memory of events, buildings, and people / Trieste / 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Metal belt, family heirloom / Brezovica pri Ljubljani / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Silver tableware with engraved name, gifted at birth and later a reminder of the giver / Ljubljana / 1940 / private collection
- Letters, reminders of the deceased parents / Ptuj / 1930s / private collection
- Photograph, a reminder of the deceased mother, with children at her deathbed / Rogaška Slatina / 1960s / private collection
- Memorial photographs of the Tomšič family / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Cup, a reminder of the deceased mother / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Accessories for the national costume, a reminder of the deceased mother / Ljubljana / late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Men's watch chain / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Plane as an illustrative example of the transmission of knowledge and tools / Gozd Martuljek / around 1830
- Wooden statues of woman and man, part of the ancestor worship ceremony / Mali / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden tablet with house number, house name, and signature of masters of the house on the back – an illustrative example of the transmission of home and property / Šentjakob/Sankt Jakob in Rož/Rosental / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Means of Subsistence

- Knives for toothpick making / Nova Vas, Dolenjska / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Plane for toothpick making / Šentjurij – Škocjan, Dolenjska / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Loom / Bela Krajina / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Hoe / Podbrdo, Primorska / 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Marital Property through the Male and the Female Line

- Wedding ring / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Wedding photograph / Bistrica by Sotla / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Land register extract, document about the property brought to the marriage by the husband / dated 1882
- Photograph of newlyweds, mounted on the wall / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Baptismal blanket for a newborn baby, part of the dowry / Ljubljana / after 1922
- Newborn baby blanket, part of the dowry / Ljubljana / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Bed linen, part of the dowry / Vienna, Austria / prior to the First World War
- Embroidered winding-sheet, part of the dowry / Dobropolje / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Embroidered towel with monogram, part of the dowry / Ljubljana / dated 1885
- Painted wedding chest, part of the dowry and property transmitted from generation to generation through the female line / dated 1885



## 3. My Community – My Birthplace



### Common Matters and Regulations

- Ancestral god from a village altar / Benin / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Tally stick for determining the distribution of produce from the common / Črnotiče / late 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Horn for summoning cattle / Trenta / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Helberd of a night watchman / Materija / 19<sup>th</sup> century, in use until 1920
- Tally sticks for keeping record of borrowed wine / Bela Krajina / late 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Village Pub Symbols

- Sign / Ribnica in Dolenjska / until the Second World War
- Notice board / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Village Pub: A Place for Socializing

- Saltcellar / Rakičan / 1920–1940
- Plate / Unec / interwar period
- Knife / Rakičan / until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Spoon / Rakičan / until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Fork / Unec / prior to the Second World War
- Account book from the Majerle pub / Stari Trg by Lož / early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Flypaper / Cerknica / late 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Deck of cards
- Spinning top / Ljubljana / prior to the Second World War



### Pub Measures and Glassware

- Wine bottle / Grabe / prior to the Second World War
- Wine glas / Pusto Polje / after 1921
- Wine glass / Grabe / prior to the Second World War
- Wine glass / Bočna / interwar period
- Spirit bottle / Pusto Polje / after 1921
- Spirit glass / Grabe / prior to the Second World War
- Spirit glass / Lendava
- Soda syphon bottle / Logatec / prior to the Second World War
- Wine bottle / Pusto Polje / interwar period
- Beer mug / Grabe / prior to the Second World War
- Beer mug / Stari Trg / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Jug for wine or water / Grabe / prior to the Second World War





### The Story of an Individual: Part of the Collective Consciousness

- Village street lamp (copy) / Suhorje, Brkini / dated 1667



### Physical Safety: Firefighters

- Firefighter diploma / Gornja Radgona / 1964
- Ceremonial firefighter's helmet / Ponikve by Trebnje / 1910 / private collection
- Firefighter bugle / Ponikve by Trebnje / 1910 / private collection
- Firefighter axe / Ponikve by Trebnje / 1910 / private collection
- Small ceremonial firefighter axe / dated 1876
- Lottery drum / Tržič / dated 1879



### St. Florian: Patron Saint of Firefighters

- Statue of St. Florian from a fire station / Tomažja Vas by Novo Mesto



### Spiritual Shelter: The Church

- Altar with the statue of St. Urban / from the church of St. George above Tržič / made in 1883



### Transportation of Water from Common Water Sources

- Buckets for water transportation / Slavia Veneta / prior to the Second World War
- Wooden receptacle for water transportation / Stročja Vas / 1977
- Wooden receptacle for water transportation / Vojsko above Idrija / until 1950



### Symbols of Place

- Village coat of arms, part of a place designation (illustrative example) / Podgradje / created in 2006
- Village coat of arms, part of a place designation (illustrative example) / Presika / created in 2006
- Village coat of arms, part of a place designation (illustrative example) / Stročja Vas / created in 2006
- Village coat of arms, part of a place designation (illustrative example) / Rinčetove Grabe / created in 2006
- Village coat of arms, part of a place designation (illustrative example) / Nunske Grabe / created in 2006
- Place name sign / Retnje / 1930s



## 4. Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures

### Departing in Pursuit of Survival or a Better Life

- Shepherd's stick / Črni Vrh, Notranjska / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### Tangible Memories of Pilgrimage

- Holy cards from various pilgrimage centers /from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Religious medals / Brezje, Sv. Gora, Goriško and Višarje, Maria Zell or Our Lady of Loreto / late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Crucifix and rosary, legacy of an urban middle-class family / Ljubljana / interwar period
- Box / Višarje / middle or second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Votive painting / dated 1764

### Contemporary Pilgrimage Offer

- Contemporary pilgrimage souvenirs / Brezje, Ptujška Gora, Nova Štifta / early 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative examples

### Reapers

- Sickles / Dolenjska / late 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden barrel / vicinity of Vitanje / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden gourd / Balkans / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> or first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### Washerwomen

- Pushcart for transporting laundry / Bizovik / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### Milk vendors

- Jug for transporting milk / Lokev by Divača / prior to the First World War
- Coil / vicinity of Kozina / late 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Measuring cup for milk / Kras / interwar period
- Measuring cup for milk / Kras / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

### Forest Workers

- Saw / Šentvid by Stična / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Pick / Štajerska / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- Axe / Lukanja above Oplotnica / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

### Grinders

- Whetstone of the Roma grinder Laci Baranja / Černelavci / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### Woodenware Peddlers

- Woodenware basket / Ribnica in Dolenjska / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### Departing in Search of Knowledge

- Diploma from the University of Vienna, awarded to Judge Ivan Močnik / Idrija / 1910



## 5. My Nation – My Country

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### Diverse Social Structure of the City

- Apprenticeship contract between urban master shoemaker and rural apprentice (copy) / Bela Krajina / 1933 / illustrative example
- Festive silk scarf of a rural woman visiting the town / Goriča vas pri Ribnici / 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Festive hat of an urban middle-class lady / Ljubljana / interwar period
- Hard brim hat of an urban middle-class man / Ljubljana / interwar period
- Fashionable hat with a decorative feather of an urban middle-class lady / Ljubljana / interwar period
- Festive hat of an urban middle-class man / Ljubljana / interwar period



### The Same Place but a Different Country

- Letter envelope sent from America / December 1, 1912 / private collection
- Letter envelope sent from America / September 16, 1920 / private collection
- Letter envelope sent from America / March 17, 1928 / private collection
- Letter envelope / December 26, 1991 / illustrative example



### The State through the Language of Symbols

- Synoptic chart for school use, a verified depiction of state territory / 1990s / private collection
- Flag of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia / 1950s / private collection
- Sign – *Prodaja duvana* (Sale of Tobacco), state commercial monopoly / interwar period
- Country code car sticker from Yugoslavia, internationally verified country code / Ljubljana / private collection
- Country code car sticker from Slovenia / Ljubljana / 2009 / private collection
- House address plaque – *Titova cesta 26* (26, Titova Street) / Ljubljana / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- *O prometnih predpisih* (Driver's Education Textbook) / Ljubljana / 1973 / private collection
- *Ustava Socialistične federativne republike Jugoslavije z amandmaji* (Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with Amendments) and *Ustava Socialistične republike Slovenije z amandmaji* (Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia with Amendments) / Ljubljana / 1970s / private collection
- *Veljko Mratović, Družbena in politična ureditev SFRJ* (Social and Political Organization of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) / Ljubljana / 1970 / private collection

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- *M. Šnudrl, Naš državljan* (Our Citizen) / Ljubljana / 1961 / private collection
- Notice of elections to the European Parliament on June 7, 2009 (appeal to the citizens to fulfill their right to vote) / Ljubljana / private collection
- Notice of the consultative referendum on June 22, 2008 / Ljubljana / private collection
- Notice of elections for the President of the Republic of Slovenia in 2007 / Ljubljana / private collection
- Rubber stamp / Idrija / interwar period
- Rubber stamp / Kranjska Gora / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Money of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and money certificates; official means of payment as a reflection of monetary autonomy of the state / interwar period; after the Second World War; 1991
- Money – the tolar of the Republic of Slovenia / 1991–2006
- Money – euro coins of the Republic of Slovenia / 2007
- Postage stamps of the state entities of Austria-Hungary; the Kingdom of Yugoslavia; and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia / 20<sup>th</sup> century / private collection
- Petrol vouchers of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, state control over the consumption of consumer goods / 1983 and 1984 / private collection
- Revenue stamp of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia / after the Second World War



### Multiple Images of the Individual through the Eyes of the State

- Beehive panel *Narobe svet* (The Topsy-Turvy World): office scene, people's perception of the operation of the state apparatus and authorities / dated 1820
- Memorial medals from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, a means of the state to mark state-building events and promote patriotic feelings / Ljubljana / first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Memorial "plaque" for national service in the army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia / 1930s
- Personal and other documents, examples of the state control over citizens and of state records / various locations / different time periods



### Language and Linguistic Affiliation

- *Pesem od kmeta inu gospoda* (Poem about Farmers and Gentlemen) from the handwritten notebook of Matija Židan / first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Beehive panel *Hudič vzame Napoleona* (The Devil Takes Napoleon) with inscription, a "folk" interpretation of a historical event / Lokovica nad Libučami / 1872
- Decorated egg with the monogram HIS / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Decorated egg with the inscription *Ne zabi me* (Do Not Forget Me) / Bela Krajina / interwar period

- Decorated egg with the inscription *Pozdrav iz Belokrajine* (Greetings from Bela Krajina) / Bela Krajina / interwar period
- Gingerbread heart with attached verse in the Slovene language / Metlika / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Gingerbread heart with attached verse in the Slovene language / Slovenj Gradec / 1983
- Wine jug with inscription in the Slovene language / Gradac in Bela Krajina / 1929
- Wine jug with inscription in the Slovene language / Gruča by Šentjernej / 1995
- *Slovenski pravnik - Poduk o najpotrebniših zakonih* (Slovene Lawyer – Instructions on Essential Laws), published by the Mohorjeva Družba Publishing Company, which promoted knowledge and national awareness / Celovec/Klagenfurt / 1885
- *Fran Povše, Umni kmetovalec* (Smart Farmer) / Celovec/Klagenfurt / 1875
- *Koledar družbe sv. Mohora za navadno leto 1874* (St. Mohor's Society Calendar for the Common Year of 1874)
- *Alojzij Homan, Postrežba bolnikom* (Serving the Sick) / Celovec/Klagenfurt / 1899
- *Viljem Rohrman, Poljedelstvo: slovenskim gospodarjem v pouk* (Agriculture: Instructions for Slovene Farmers) / Celovec/Klagenfurt / 1898
- *Zgodbe svetiga pisma za mlade ljudi* (Bible Stories for Young People) / Ljubljana / 1816
- *Drugo berilo in slovnica za obče ljudske šole* (Second-Grade School Reader and Grammar for Primary Schools), prescribed educational reading material for the young / Vienna / 1889
- *Prvo berilo* (First-Grade Primer) / Ljubljana / 1986
- *Peter Končnik, Slovenska slovnica za obče ljudske šole* (Slovene Grammar for Primary Schools) / Vienna / 1910
- *Silvo Kranjec, Kako smo se zedinili* (How We United) / Celje / 1928
- *Slovenska pisanka* (handwriting school exercise book for Slovene children) / interwar period
- *Slovenščina* (first grader Alojz Hofbauer's handwriting school exercise book) / Vitanje / 1925-6



### Identity Processes through Everyday Use

- Beehive panel with the Austrian heraldic imperial double-headed eagle / dated 1842
- Wall cloth with the motif of the Yugoslav king and queen and the inscription in the Cyrillic alphabet *Živio kralj i kraljica* (Long live the King and Queen) / interwar period
- *Marshal* herbal liqueur bottle with the image of Marshal Josip Broz Tito on the label / 2009 / private collection
- Cake model with the Slovenian coat of arms / Ljubljana / 1982
- Photograph of Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, a souvenir / prior to the First World War
- Flag of the Republic of Slovenia, cake topper / Ljubljana / 2008 / private collection

- Flag of the Republic of Slovenia, cake topper / Ljubljana / 2009 / private collection
- Gramophone record – *Jugoslavija* (Yugoslavia); issued by RT Belgrade / 1980s
- Wine jug with the Austrian heraldic imperial double-headed eagle / Pessaro, Italy / late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Decorated egg with the inscription *Živijo Jugoslavija* (Long Live Yugoslavia!) / Bela Krajina / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Coat of arms of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, a memorial badge / Ljubljana / 2008 / private collection
- Firefighter Veteran badge, in recognition for a successful and long-lasting work in the voluntary firefighter society, with depicted national and state symbols (linden leaves, Mt. Triglav, and the sea) / Cerknica / 1990s
- Men's watch chain with two ornamental coins: a Bavarian tolar with the depiction of King Maximilian III Joseph (1745–77) (obverse) and the Christian symbolic image of Mary, the patron saint of Bavaria, with baby Jesus (reverse); and a one-dollar coin depicting the face of the Statue of Liberty in New York, the American symbol of freedom (obverse), and a bald eagle, the national bird of the United States (reverse) / 1900
- Pendant – jewelry made from a tolar coin from the reign of Emperor Joseph II (1780–1790), with the depiction of a national symbol – the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Hungary (obverse) – and of a Christian symbol – Mary, Mother of God, protector of Hungary, with baby Jesus (reverse) / 1786
- Pendant – jewelry made from a thaler coin from the reign of Empress Maria Theresa (1740–1780), with the depiction of the bust of Maria Theresa (obverse) and of a Christian symbol – Mary, protector of Hungary, with baby Jesus / 1745



### Construction and the Use of Symbols Perceived as “Ours”, Devised to Separate us from Others

- Can of beer produced by the Union Brewery in Ljubljana / Ljubljana / 2009 / illustrative example
- *Cockta* carbonated drink bottle / Ljubljana / 2009 / illustrative example
- Mug with the motif of the town of Ptuj and the traditional local Carnival character, tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative example
- Poker cards with motifs of Slovenia's sights, a promotional and tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative example
- Paper sugar bag with the logo *Slovenija moja dežela* (Slovenija, My Country) / Ljubljana / first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative example
- *Slovenska potica* (Slovene Nut Roll), CD with culinary specialties of Slovenia, promotional material of the Government Communication Office / Ljubljana / first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative example
- Badges and two ballpoint pens with promotional slogans for Slovenia / Ljubljana / first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative example



- Tourist postcard of the Julian Alps / interwar period
- Male and female dolls in Slovene national costumes, tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Doll of a Ribnica hawker burdened with woodenware, tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Woodenware basket from Ribnica, tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Miniature painted chest, tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Wooden plate painted with national motifs, tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Straw basket, tourist souvenir / Ljubljana / last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Who Regulates and Controls the Social Structure?

- Tailcoat, a symbol of secular aristocracy / Ljubljana / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Top hat, a symbol of secular aristocracy / Ljubljana / 2010 / illustrative example
- *Uradni list R Slovenije* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia) / Ljubljana / 2008, 2009 / illustrative example
- Rubber stamp holder with four stamps, a symbol of official certification and power / Idrija / first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- *Breviarium Romanum* / Vatican / 1931, 1949
- Priestly garment – a vestment with biretta, a symbol of ecclesiastical aristocracy / Nova Gorica / interwar period
- Bronze statuette of a king or tribal chief, a personified symbol of power and authority / Benin / mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

## 6. My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World



- Three women's statues, symbolizing fertility, motherhood, and the central role of the woman in African society / West Africa / 20<sup>th</sup> century



### In the Name of the One and Only God

- Friderik Baraga and Ignacij Knoblehar – plaster molds of sculptor Ivan Zajec / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Baraga's handbook of the Ojibwa language / Slovene Museum of Christianity / 19<sup>th</sup> century



- Decoration from a sacrificial altar. A bronze base for carved elephant tusks depicts the king's head adorned with coral jewelry / Benin, Nigeria / 20<sup>th</sup> century



- Anthropomorphic fetish with nails, magic pendants, and amulets is overlapped by the symbol of the cross, indicating that the new faith overpowered traditional beliefs of the locals / DR Congo / 19<sup>th</sup> century



### Creating and Leaving Footprints in a Foreign Land

- Bronze figurines from a sacrificial altar / Benin / Nigeria / 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Wandering around the World, and a bit Further

- *Erika* typewriter similar to the one used by Alma Karlin when writing about her travels / 20<sup>th</sup> century / illustrative example



### The Magical Allure of the Orient

- “Typical features of the Orient” on offer in modern Egypt as tourist souvenirs (water pipes, apple-scented tobacco, incense, copper jar, tea glass, woman’s kerchief with pendants) / 21<sup>st</sup> century / illustrative example
- Egyptian-style ornamental candlestick and the *ankh*, the most recognizable Egyptian symbol / Slovene Museum of Christianity / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Elements of past Egyptian culture, transformed to suit the needs of present-day tourists (pharaoh’s statue, amulets, miniature pyramid, etheric oil bottles, bottles with Egyptian motifs, scarab, the *hamsa* (hand-shaped amulet), decorative magnet adorned with the *ankh* symbol, tin box shaped like a mummy, decorative magnets shaped like plates with Egyptian motifs, mummy stylus, papyrus) / 21 century / illustrative example



### Material Heritage of Immigrants

- Arab school textbook of the daughter of a Slovene woman working in Egypt / Alexandria, Egypt / 1950s / private collection
- French School textbook (dictionary) of the daughter of a Slovene woman working in Egypt / Alexandria, Egypt / 1950s / private collection
- Easter card as a keepsake of a miner’s family life abroad / France / 1940
- Pocket watch from the legacy of an immigrant miner / Minnesota, USA / 1920s
- Christmas card sent by a Slovene immigrant / Montreal, Canada) / 1999
- Postcard with children’s motif / France / 1940
- Letter and envelope in Arabic, part of the correspondence of the son of a Slovene woman working in Egypt / Cairo, Egypt / 1986
- Personal document in Arabic of a Slovene immigrant woman / Cairo, Egypt / 1961
- Olive lamp, from the legacy of a Slovene woman working in Egypt / Cairo, Egypt / prior to the First World War / private collection
- Cookbook of female immigrant community / Illinois, USA / 1998



## 7. Me – My Personal World



### The Distinct and the Different in the Service of Tourism

- Copy of a Mayan relief / Mexico / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Embroidered cap, a travel souvenir / Bukhara, Uzbekistan / 2002
- Scented cones and sticks, a travel souvenir / India / 2009 / private collection
- Book mark from painted papyrus, a travel souvenir / Egypt / early 21<sup>st</sup> century
- CD with images and music; postcard; pendants; volcanic stones; travel souvenirs / Santorini, Greece / 2009 / private collection



### Modern Consumer Exchange

- Chopsticks from a Chinese restaurant / Ljubljana / 2009 / illustrative examples
- Corn cobs, grains, and spices / South America / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Memory Captured in Objects

- Funeral photo album / 1936
- Memorial photograph of a soldier / Šiška by Ljubljana / end of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Memorial photograph of a middle-class family in national costumes / Ljubljana / late 1920s
- First graders’ memorial photograph / Cezanjevc / 1911
- Photo album and photographs as family memory / end of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Cigarette case with cigarettes, keepsake of the late father / Ptuj / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Perfume container, keepsake of the late wife and mother / Ptuj / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Letters to relatives from the new homeland of America, kept as keepsakes / Pivka / interwar period
- Wall decoration with depiction of Bled / Ljubljana / early 1960s
- Badge from a folk costume event / illustrative example
- Memorial medal of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of high-school graduation (engineers, generation of 1945–1949) / Ljubljana / 2009
- Memorial wedding handkerchief / Ljubljana / 1909
- Memorial ring with the inscription *SIBIR 1916–1917*, family legacy / Ljubljana / after the First World War
- Pocket watch, keepsake of a late relative / Ljubljana / interwar period and later / private collection



- Decorative buckle from family legacy / from the period between 1890 and 1930
- First curl, keepsake of childhood / Ljubljana / mid-1920s / private collection
- Wedding rings, keepsake of a family story about a wedding that never took place / Vienna / prior to the First World War
- Wedding bouquet with the inscribed date of the wedding on the ribbon / Mengeš / 1909



### Memory Captured in a Place

- Kitchen furniture (cupboard, table, two chairs) / Logatec / 1930s
- Bowl and two plates / Mojstrana / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Boots as a keepsake of the father / Hočevje by Krka / 1940s
- Cast iron cooker / 1950s
- Pot / Bistrica ob Sotli / until the 1970s



### Skills and Knowledge Captured in Memory

- Miniature wicker manure wagon / Gorenjci by Adlešiči / 1922
- *Kmetijski koledar za leto 1927* (Agricultural Calendar for 1927) / Ljubljana / 1927
- *Stoletna pratika devetnajstiga stol.* (Nineteenth Century Almanach) / Ljubljana / 1847
- *Umni kmetovalec* (Smart Farmer), a guide for better and more advanced farming) / Celovec/Klagenfurt / 1875
- *Poljedelstvo* (Agriculture), a guide with tips for better farming / Celovec/Klagenfurt / 1897
- *Pesemske bukoze*, a handwritten collection of poems / 1822
- Manuscript collection of devotional songs sung on Christian holidays / first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Memorial staff /dated 1892
- Memorial staff with engraved names of members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Legion of the National Guard / dated 1848, 1862, 1870, 1871, 1875, 1876
- Clay crib / Dolenja Vas by Ribnica / prior to the Second World War
- Gingerbread heart as a modern souvenir and gift / Izola / early 21<sup>st</sup> century

### Expressions of Ideas and Beliefs

- Bottle with a miniature house altar with tools of Christ's torture / Ljubljana / 1933
- Guanyin, Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion / China / in function until 1913
- Ganesha, Hindu deity of success, the patron of arts and sciences, the intellect, and wisdom / India



- Portable altar depicting a saint / Ethiopia / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Manuscript of sacred texts / Ethiopia / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Rosary with symbols of Christ's suffering / second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Amulet depicting Mary with child / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- *Boj z zmajem* (Battling a dragon), depicted on a beehive panel / Pungert by Škofja Loka / late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Holy cards with different motifs / Brezje in Gorenjska, Ljubljana / last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Fetish for a long life / Ivory Coast / second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Rosary made from vegetable berries and glass beads / India / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- *Ta srečna inu nesrečna večnost* (This Happy as Well as Unhappy Eternity), a religious manual / Ljubljana / 1803
- Small cross with crucified Christ / Ljubljana / 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Greek Orthodox icon / Greece / 1876

### Expressions of Ideas and Beliefs

- Sitting Christ from a house sign / Drenovec in Bizeljsko / last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- St. Mary, a wooden statue / Dolenjska / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- St. Urban, a wooden statue / 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Buddha / China / in function until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Guanyin, Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion, on a lotus leaf / China / presumably 16<sup>th</sup> century
- Decorative statue depicting a scene from the epic Ramayana (the mythological bird Garuda, the demon Ravana, and princess Sita, the wife of the god Rama) / Bali / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Mask of an evil forest spirit / Mozambique / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Nandi the winged bull, a servant of the Hindu god Shiva / Bali / second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Ritual vessel with carved sculptures of divine ancestors / Mali / 20<sup>th</sup> century Statue of the goddess of fertility / Mali / 20<sup>th</sup> century



### Is There Anybody Else Out There?

- Models of planets in our solar system, an educational tool and a toy / Ljubljana / early 21<sup>st</sup> century / private collection
- Head cover, part of a child's carnival costume set representing a Martian / Kamnik / 2006
- *Vid Pečjak, Drejček in trije Marsovčki* (Drejček and the Three Little Martians) / Ljubljana / 1965 / private collection



- Little alien, a toy furnished with a text about the universe / Kamnik / early 21 century / private collection
- Manuscript with geographical information on the Earth and its regions / Višnja Gora / 1862
- *Prvi človek na Luni, Nova Celina Zemljanov* (First Man on the Moon: A New Continent of the Earthlings), Delo, July 1969 / Ljubljana / 1969 / private collection



### Technology in Daily Use

- Semi-automatic washing machine / Ljubljana / early 1960s
- Refrigerator / Idrija / 1950s and 1960s
- Vacuum cleaner / Belgrade / mid-1950s, in function until 1963
- Iron / Poljane above Škofja Loka / 1950s and 1960s
- Coffee grinder / Ljubljana / 1960s
- Single-burner kitchen range / Ljubljana / 1960s
- Hair dryer / Ljubljana / end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s
- Standing living room light / Ptuj / from the 1960s until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



### What is Worth Collecting?

- Example of a private collection: models of cars that were mass-produced in the 1960s, 1/18 scale diecast cars / Ljubljana / 2009 / private collection



### Offer and Selection – Internalization of the Outside World

- From a family collection of vinyl records / Ljubljana / 1960s and 1970s
- First record player in the family / Ljubljana / 1960s



## Cohesive Threats of the Exhibition



## An Individual's Journey

Janja Žagar, Andrej Dular

Cover of the novel that provides the basis for the cohesive thread of our exhibition.

Photographs and documents of the author's family represent an important historical source for the narrative about the Štular family of millers from Vavtovec by the Krka; private archives (photo by A. Dular).



Author's field records and excerpts on family, local, and wider social conditions that provide the historical context for the narrative; private archives (photo by A. Dular).

Since we wished to integrate our exhibition chapters into a cohesive whole and present them in a manner that will be easily comprehended by the visitor we have devised a common thread and titled it **An Individual's Journey**. Although a life story, it is not a biographical story spanning from birth to death but a narrative stringing a selection of events, experiences, relationships, and roles of an individual, all of which take place within the daily and yearly cycles. In illustrates an individual's place in the family, and in the history of the society and the geographical location into which he was born. It follows the concept of fragmentation of each individual story and the creation of memory as a (subjective) selection of past events.

*An Individual's Journey* has been inspired by the novel *The Krka Flows Onward* (1983) by the Slovene writer Jože Dular. But this excellent literary story (classified as a continuation of Slovene realistic prose) is actually much more than



a mere narrative. Largely based on real people, documents, and events from the author's family, local, and wider social history, it is therefore partly autobiographical. It represents fragments of reality imbued with the imaginative creativity of a writer into a fictitious whole.

*"In addition to the main protagonists, namely the great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather, grandfather, and father belonging to the Štular bloodline<sup>1</sup>, Dular has outlined with great skill and psychological insight a number of their family members as well as others, whose lives were intertwined, in one way or another, with the Štular*

<sup>1</sup> Author comment: Matija Štular (1779 – 1840), Franc Štular (1820 – 1881), Jože Štular (1859 – 1921, Jože – Josip Štular (1885 – 1958). This narrative about a closely connected family concludes with its recent generations: at the end of the story, the main narrator Jožko Štular, b. 1915 (who is actually the author himself) is joined by his grandson, a representative of the last and youngest still living generation of the Štular family.

*family and its enduring, ambitious, and persevering millers whose sheer ingenuity elevates them among the first notable village personages. And not only the notables – the last of them even acquires a college education and selects his bride in the family of a high-ranking Viennese officer.*

*Events described in the book therefore take place on several levels: in the rural, middle-class, and aristocratic environments, at home, and abroad. It must be said, however, that the strength of Dular's narrative is primarily in the rendering of the peasant population, and he has managed to create a whole range of full-blooded characters. Due to the psychological insight and plasticity of these characters, described with all their virtues and weaknesses, they truly remain in the reader's memory for ever. /... /*

*With equal care and almost scientific scrupulousness, Dular creates the background of the main events by describing a number of actual personages and occurrences from the public and cultural life of Dolenjska that had penetrated from the outside world the rural environment of Vavtovec and its vicinity. In addition to depicting various farming chores, he provided beautiful descriptions of fishing, beekeeping, rural weddings, deaths ... All of them are discreetly incorporated in the main narrative, contributing to the fact that this novel is a veritable chronicle of life in Dolenjska in the previous and present century (i.e. in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, author's comment). Let us also point out that the entire novel is written in a smooth, fluent language, full of juicy metaphors, localisms, and folk sayings. Of particular beauty are the descriptions of nature." (from the preface written by Karel Bačar)*

Like the exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World*, which is compiled of material and pictorial sources, *An Individual's Journey* is composed from short fragmentary narratives furnished with the title, the date of the particular event described in the passage, and the names of the main protagonists. Since the novel speaks of several generations of the Štular family the date of birth has been added to facilitate the timeline and contextuality. The narratives follow the course of history and the social events of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century; stories of the protagonists illustrate the seven exhibition chapters focusing on the family; local community; connections of the locality with its vicinity and more remote places; the homeland and historical turning points; foreign parts; and the memory of the past and the vision of the coming times. This story structure aims at encouraging visitors of the exhibition to ponder upon the intertwining of their own life stories with the stories of other people, as well as with their perception of the shared history.

Panel with the story *An Individual's Journey* (photo by J. Žagar).





Photograph from the 1930s of the actual mill on the Krka owned by the Dular family; private archives.

I – The Individual: The Journey Begins ...

Somewhere a River Flows ...

... it flows, it rises, and runs dry. Like human life. Like the people who had once lived here, grew up, loved one another, left and returned, until they finally grew quiet in the fertile brown soil ... There is a beautiful view from the banks of this river of numerous wine cellars that are scattered over steep vineyards. Even more beautiful is the view from up there down towards the river, which glitters and meanders toward Novo Mesto, Rumanja Vas, Straža, Vavtovec, and other settlements and villages ... This is the world by the river, which many centuries ago had attracted people ... And then they lived and died there, generation after generation. For centuries.

(Dular 1983: 7, 8)



My Family – My Home: Generations of Millers on the Krka

Štular Homestead, Janez Trdina’s Description, 1870 – Franc Štular (\*1820), Jože Štular (\*1859)

... What a marvelous homestead owner this Štular is! It was the flour mill that brought profit, and within the mill the oil mill. The flour mill now brings 1,000 florins a year, and the oil mill itself even more, all of which fosters cattle breeding and thus makes the farm prosper. The flour mill has five water-driven wheels and propels five pairs of millstones; Štular plans to install two more pairs. Since the wheels can be lifted the mill operates in low and high waters ... This man has good fortune and God’s blessing in everything he does. The mill is well-ordered and has four handsome magazines. Štular will now renovate his house very smartly, like a castle ... He has five children, two girls and three boys. Upon leaving the family home, each child will receive four thousand florins. Štular says he does not want to make them rich but give them just enough to make a decent living ...

(Dular 1983: 164)

The New Generation, 1884 – Jože Štular (\*1859), Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)

And so the young Štular and the Radelj girl got married just before the Shrovetide of 1884. In Vavtovec. Francka, of course, has moved here ... And that is how the young couple started their life together. On their own, by themselves! Actually, Janez, Štular’s brother, who has inherited one half of the flour mill, of the sawmill, and of the oil mill, has continued to live in the same house ...

The main thing is that everything was fine at home, in Vavtovec. Especially the kids. Little Jože was later joined by Francelj, later still by little Francka. Janezek died after a year. Finally, when it was assumed that the family circle had long been completed, Marija was born. Well, Mici, actually! ... All of them old, proven names, chosen to preserve the memory of their father and mother, their grandfather, and their uncle.

(Dular 1983: 230, 237)

My Community – My Birthplace: Vavtovec and Its Surroundings

Neighborly Help, 1895 – Jože Štular (\*1859), Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)

It was then that swift footsteps were heard in the doorway, and young Ucmán burst into the room without knocking first. “Fire!” he almost screamed. “Your sawmill!” ... The alarm bell was tolling at the parish church ... Men were already at the mill, which was still untouched by the fire. They ran to the sawmill to save what could still be salvaged ... By that time, a line of people has been formed from the Krka, who were passing wooden pails filled with water to one another, poured it to buckets at the end of the line, and hoisted them up to the roof of the flour mill. Others were standing there, pouring the water over the heated roo ... After midnight, the roof on the sawmill caved in, and the fire began to abate ...

(Dular 1983: 257)

Open Road to the World, 1894

Morning of May 31, 1894! The first train in Novo Mesto, the first regular ride! People are impatient ... They are awaiting, shuffling their feet, until a steam engine reaches the bend and announces its presence with a long whistle. The engine is pulling a row of decorated railway cars behind it ... And here’s the last stop: Straža! And above it, there are village houses and the church of St. Thomas, and even higher Straška Hill with its vineyards and the green Srobotnik. On the left side there are Vavtovec, the Krka, and Štular’s flour mill. Beyond them the fields and forests, with Ljubén, the hills of Poljane, and Rog in the distance ... The train starts to slow down, and then halts. Hundreds of voices shout their greeting, people are waving their hats and handkerchiefs. Among them are farmers, those who had helped build dykes and gorges, schoolchildren and their teacher, and the parish priest ... For the people of Straža, Vavtovec, and others, the path to the world is finally open, right beyond their thresholds. All the way to Vienna, and even further!

(Dular 1983: 248)

Beyond My Birthplace – My Departures: To Vienna and Back

A Letter from Vienna, 1905 – Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)

“... Do not worry about me,” he reads in Jože’s letter. “I have gotten a good, nice apartment with some old Viennese lady. There are three of us, actually: a Croatian man and two Slovenes ... The landlady was very pleased with me, especially when she learned that I would be receiving scholarship. Some students find it difficult to scrape enough money for lodgings and food ... I have become somewhat acquainted with the Export Academy by now. Everything is new, very different from high school ... How are things at home? Hope your grinding and sawing is going well, and that everything else is fine, too. What a pity that the prices of cereals are so low. Has Lukovec left for America? And Drejc, he has probably gotten my postcard with greetings from Prater? His Riesenrad! And now I extend my greetings to the whole family, especially you, Mom, and Dad and little Micica! Your Jože.”

(Dular 1983: 292)

Wedding at the Štular House, 1913 – Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)

Everybody helped, of course, especially during the final days. Each in their own way. The farmhand, the maid, the swineherd, the herder ... Also Mici, who had come from her convent school. Brooms and brushes were in constant use. We had to slaughter a pig, a sheep, a bunch of chickens, provide game and fish, and bake butter bread, cakes, and nut rolls ... If people were going to gossip about the Štular family, at least let them gossip about something good. Then Jože and Fani arrived. So many greetings, so many surprized faces ... And there was the wedding, taking place on Sunday at half past eleven, when Zakrajšek, the parish priest, bound Jože and Fani in matrimony, thus incorporating the bride in the Štular family for ever.

(Dular 1983: 355)

My Nation – My Country: In the Name of the Emperor

**Then, in the Middle of the Summer, It Happened..., 1914** – Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)  
*Austria has declared war on Serbia ... The priest announced it from the pulpit, the municipal servant from the rock beneath the chestnut tree ... Everything is clear, though. Call-up notifications are starting to arrive. Young and grown-up men have to leave to go to war, this war against the damn Serb who is killing off members of the imperial family. Women and children cry. Fani, who is packing the most essential underwear for Jože in a suitcase, is also crying. He has been summoned to Pula ... Several days and weeks later, it got quite complicated. Germany declared war on imperial Russia, France and England on Germany, Austria on Russia and Montenegro, Montenegro on Austria... There were explosions on all sides, thunder, fires ... Blood was spilt. It didn't just last a month, or two. It stretched into years! ...*  
(Dular 1983: 364)

**At War and at Home, 1915** – Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)  
*He was sitting at the table, in his ordinary clothes, bareheaded and with an open shirt. Glad to have been able to throw off for a few days his military uniform and military life ... Jože bent down to little Fančika, who was climbing up his leg, and lifted her to his lap. "Everything will be fine, Fani," he turned to his wife who was breastfeeding the little one. "It's just like manoeuvres in Pula. Before the summer, and certainly by the fall, there will be some decisions someplace, on this or that front. And there will be peace afterwards." ... A week later he left, again wearing his lieutenant's uniform. At peace and determined ... There was a big confusion everywhere, and time went by until it was high summer. At Plave by the Soča, at Doberdob, near Kobarid, and elsewhere there were fierce Italian offensives ... Štular remained in Pula. In the fall, all soldiers were vaccinated against typhoid, cholera, and other diseases. The men knew what that meant. They were going to the front.*  
(Dular 1983: 367)

My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World: Between Foreign Parts and Home

**The End of the War, 1918** – Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)  
*Soldiers are putting down their weapons. The mighty Austria of six hundred years is collapsing and falling to pieces. In November, the Emperor renounced the throne. New countries are emerging. Yugoslavia is one of them. ... But Jože is still in Italy. He is a prisoner of war, and there are no indications that he would soon be released.*  
*Dear Fani,* *Bari, January 6, 1920*  
*Like the last two letters, this one was also taken to the post office by a trusted guard. We have almost become friends. This would not work without a good tip, of course. You've no idea how sick I am of this Italian country! I used to admire old palaces and churches, Roman and Etruscan monuments, crockery, and other archaeological finds. Now I loathe it all ... It seems that we won't get out of this internment any time soon. There has been some talk, however, that we might be released but I refuse to keep up hope. I don't want to be disappointed like several times before. Sorry I'm so disheartened.*  
*As always, I am with you in my thoughts!* *Your Josip*  
(Dular 1983: 404 and 413)

**The Flour Mill and the Sawmill in Vavtovec (Between World War I and II, and Afterwards)** – Jože-Josip Štular (\*1885)  
*"The old Štular leaving the flour mill and the sawmill to both of his sons, that wasn't good," said Zorin. "Didn't he learn anything from the episode with his brother Janez? They say that there's no benefit from partnership. The brothers have once again set up the sawmill and the flour mill, of course, but at the same time got into such debts, God help them! And when they were required to settle their debts our country, and indeed the whole world, was stricken by the crisis that forced people to buckle under it ..."*  
*After the war, the brothers divided their shared property. Francelj chose the sawmill and the flour mill came down to Jože. Soon afterwards, however, the authorities closed down a number of sawmills, and the one in Vavtovec was not destined to operate long, either. After her husband's death, Fani sold the flour mill. It is now owned by strangers.*  
(Dular 1983: 433)



Postcard of the actual village of Vavta Vas from about 1915; private archives.

Me – My Personal World: The Krka Flows Onward ...

**Jožek Štular (\*1915)**  
*My eye has halted on the spotted documents, yellow with age and slightly bent around the edges, here and there damaged by bookworms, which had been lying on the bottom of a heavy chest for a long time. They were cold, bound with a black and yellow string, which at the time was used to bind court and other imperial documents ... Now I am unfolding and perusing these yellowed pieces of paper ... I can feel the clumsy hand of my great-great-grandfather Matija, the hand of his son Franc and of his children from his second marriage, Jože, Janez, and Neža, the hands of their children – all the way to my father's hand. ... Yes, yes, everything passes! But the Krka flows onward ... as if eternal.*  
(Dular 1983: 9; 435)



These texts are not the only component of the cohesive thread of our exhibition. In order for *An Individual's Journey* to become more recognizable as a linking, recurring element, each of the white canvas panels with the above texts (there is one in each exhibition room) have been furnished with the same three pictures, that of a face, a leafy tree, and the sun above the horizon. These images change from panel to panel yet each of the sets of similar images symbolizes a specific period of time that directs a human life: positions of the sun above the horizon, ranging from sunrise to sunset) indicate the daily cycle while the images of the same tree, captured in different seasons, portray the yearly one. Images of faces portray the universal course of human existence from birth to death: a child's face is followed by the face of an adolescent, of an adult, and finally of an elderly man. These faces were taken from the author's family photographic legacy, which greatly enhances the messages of the exhibition about the connection between the material and the symbolic, the documentary and the illustrative.

The first and the final display panel of *An Individual's Journey* differ from each other. Their principal objective corresponds to the aims of the introductory and the concluding chapter of the exhibition: to highlight a specific theme as universal, seemingly timeless, and summarize and present it as the starting point for the present and the future. As a result, textually and graphically they do not include the aforementioned periods of time in which an individual's life takes place. Instead, we have used a documentary photograph of the



Characters from the novel in real life: the author (on the left) with his sisters and brother on a boat on the Krka around 1940, with the village bell tower in the background; private archives.



Faces on the panels and those introducing *An Individual's Journey* in the first exhibition area are the faces of actual people: with the permission of the author's two sons, the writer's family photos were used for the purposes of our exhibition.

“eternally” flowing Krka River and the nearby Vavtovec (Vavta Vas), which also shows the very flour mill and the sawmill that play such an important role in the many generations of the Štular (Dular) family. The constant flow of every river namely contains instability, which may be understood as the dynamic principle of life, or as the flow of time. On the introductory panel, the image and the significance of the river is illustrated by a symbolic drop of water ricocheting from the water surface, and at the same time just before falling into the river stream and fusing with it into a whole (like the life of an individual in relation to a long shared history of people). In the final panel, the images of the river and the village next to it are supplemented by the outline of the narrator (author Jože Dular), who recounts stories from the past and simultaneously creates a new one – his own.

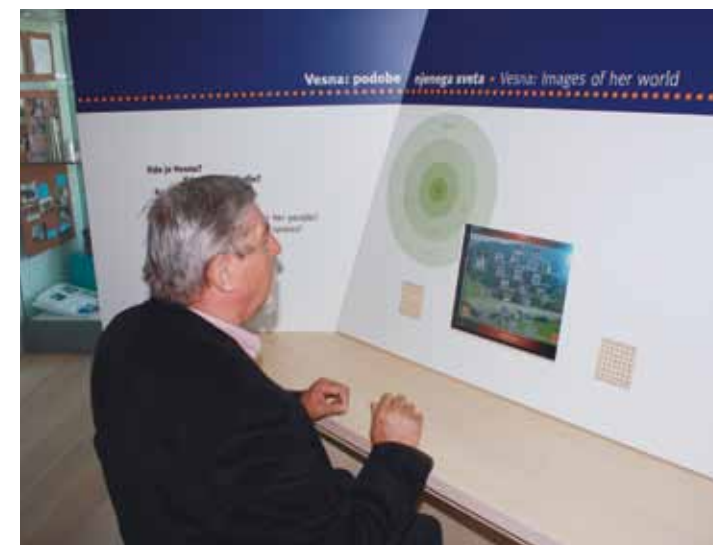
**Dular, Jože** (Vavta Vas, 1915 – Metlika, author and museum director. He obtained his B.A. in Slavic Studies, Romance Studies, and Comparative Literature. He worked in publishing and as a teacher. He was Director of the Bela Krajina Museum in Metlika (1951 – 1981) and Director of the Slovenian Firefighting Museum in Metlika (1969 – 1981). In addition to his particular area of scientific research, which focused on the ethnography and history of Bela Krajina, he also wrote about some notable people from this area. His literary work was dedicated to the region of Dolenjska and its people, to whom he devoted, among other things, a collection of short stories titled “*Ljudje Ob Krki*” (*People Living along the Krka*) and the novels “*Krka Umira*” (*The Krka is Dying*) and “*Krka pa teče naprej*” (*The Krka Flows Onward*).

## Vesna: A Mosaic Video Portrait

Nadja Valentinčič Furlan

The exhibition titled *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* offers a comprehensive presentation of human existence, actions, feelings, and mentality. By using objects, texts, photographs, and audio and audiovisual messages it conveys to its visitors different ways of expressing our identities. At the same time it poses questions in the first person singular, thus inviting the curious visitor to reflect on them and search for their own answers. Finally, it challenges them to share in different ways their insights about themselves with other museum visitors. The audiovisual medium embraces this dual principle of the exhibition in a similar manner.

Audiovisual messages included in the seven exhibition chapters show records of everyday and festive moments, various customs of the yearly cycle, certain work procedures in bygone occupations, and narrations, such as life stories of Slovene women working in Alexandria and of their descendants, fairy tales, and life experiences. While the linear audiovisual messages are shown on ordinary screens, the narrations and impressions from family life are available interactively on touch screens, in accordance with the mosaic principle of the exhibition.



Mosaic portrait Vesna is positioned at the end of the *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* exhibition. SEM, 2010 (photo by A. Kofol).

Following the example of the recurrent textual theme under the heading *An Individual's Journey*, we have prepared an audiovisual cohesive thread, a **video portrait of Vesna** from the village of Grant in Baška Grapa. Its purpose is to show, on the one hand, how the seven exhibition chapters can be discerned in the life of a modern young woman, and on the other to invite visitors to provide their feedback in the same medium. This project corresponds to modern principles of museology, particularly the participation of visitors and the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, and the Museum invites them to co-create its program. It also reflects the efforts of museums to link institutions, the media, social groups, and individuals in order to achieve the greatest possible flow of knowledge, while at the same time promoting understanding and tolerance among members of different social, professional, age, religious, national, and other groups.

The content structure of the portrait is generally based on the concept of the exhibition, although adapted to this particular medium and to life circumstances of the film subject. It explores issues that are also addressed at the exhibition: *Who are you? What is your family to you? What is your home to you? Where is your home? Which people are close to you? With whom do you spend your working days and with whom do you share feast days? How do you experience the country you belong to? Which nation do you feel to be yours? What makes you travel to foreign countries and live among strangers? Who are you, then?* In order to correspond to the seven exhibition chapters, we have selected typical situations that reveal Vesna's role within her family, community, region, nation, country – and indeed the entire world.



Introductory page of the interactive content *Vesna*. SEM, 2009 (concept by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, interactive application by Peter Gruden).

Vesna was filmed in everyday and festive situations, in her family circle, her village environment, and in the urban setting of Ljubljana, where she had lived as a student. We have obtained recordings from the 2008 visit of people from Rut and Grant to Innichen/San Candido in South Tyrol, Italy. The ancestors of the population of the upper part of Baška Grapa had namely migrated from South Tyrol to this area in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Contacts between the two communities had been preserved until late 19<sup>th</sup> century and were then reestablished three decades ago.

Vesna was asked about herself and her relationship with her home, family, village community, country, nation, language, and faith. She recounted her experience of Egypt, discussed her values, and revealed how she imagined her future. While filming the portrait, her wishes, along with the wishes of her parents, on what should remain private, were taken into consideration.

In agreement with the exhibition authors, Vesna's identities are conveyed in a manner similar to the narrations<sup>1</sup> and home videos on family life<sup>2</sup>, namely as a mosaic portrait with many short video clips. In order to do this, an interactive touch screen was placed in the museum living room situated at the end of the exhibition.

The mosaic portrait consists of 21 short clips depicting Vesna's narrations combined with fragments from her life. They show various activities undertaken by Vesna, her family, and her village community, and present her in various relationships, often also revealing symbolic meanings. While the clip titled *To Rut* indicates the connection between the villages of Rut and Grant, Vesna's visit to the family grave on her mother's side also shows her emotional con-

nection with her ancestors. The final clip, *Apple Harvest*, conveys Vesna's close connection with her home and with nature, which in addition to work ethic are high on the list of her values.

Access to Vesna's world and identities is possible by clicking on one of the twenty-one icons arranged on the computer touch screen in the shape of a tree. In the background is a photograph showing a glimpse through a window of Vesna's home in Grant. The undulating green landscape with the flowering field is the image of her world. The entrance page of the mosaic portrait invites visitors to select short video clips by clicking on the icons; when the selected clip ends the application automatically reverts to the starting page. The order of viewing can be adapted to suit an individual or a small group.

The color scale on the left-hand side of the entrance page indicates the clips' link with the seven exhibition chapters. The two features below are the *Colophon* with data on the mosaic portrait's authors and the *Invitation*; the top right button serves to select either the Slovene or the English language. The larger icon, titled *Two-Minute Summary*, is a visual summary with an invitation to make a video portrait. This condensed presentation was prepared in the hope that, although possibly tired after examining the exhibition, and maybe already satiated with an opulence of sounds, images, and texts, visitors will nevertheless decide to spare another two minutes to view it.

The open form of the *Vesna* mosaic portrait contributes to the understanding of an individual's multiple identities, which are accessible in any desired order yet impractical to show outside the context of the exhibition. This is why a linear film titled *Vesna from Grant* was made in 2010. It was first screened for the public in March 2011 at the international film festival Days of Ethnographic Film in the Kinodvor movie theatre in Ljubljana. It is also available at the exhibition in the *Gallery of Portraits*.

The linear portrait is more condensed than the mosaic one. It focuses on Vesna's most prominent identities, physically bound to Grant, Rut, and Innichen; those associated with Ljubljana and Egypt have been omitted. Footage and both audiovisual products are stored in the Ethnographic Film Department of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

The second aim of the mosaic portrait project, namely our invitation extended to visitors to contribute their audiovisual narrations and video portraits, is discussed in the *Gallery of Narrators* and the *Gallery of Portraits*.

## Filmography

***Vesna*.** Research and interview by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; filming by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, Peter Paul Crepaz, and Jaka Kleč; editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interactive application by Peter Gruden; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2009; duration 35 minutes.

***Vesna from Grant*.** Research and interview by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; filming by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, Jaka Kleč, and Peter Paul Crepaz; editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan and Urh Vrenjak; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2010; duration 19 minutes.

1 ***Aleksandrinke in njihovi potomci / The Alexandrian Women and Their Descendants*.** Narrated by Alberta Gregorič, Franc Faganel, and Marija Černe. Research and interview by Daša Koprivec; filming and editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interactive application by Peter Gruden; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2009; duration 9 minutes.

***Moj svet skozi ... pravljice / My World through ... Fairy Tales, Moj svet skozi ... spoznanja / My World through ... Experience*.** Narrated by Fanči Vidmar, Marija Cvetek, Ljoba Jenče, Marijan Česnik, Ana Zablatnik, Ashike Biakeddy; concept by Janja Žagar; interview, filming, and editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interactive application by Peter Gruden; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2008; duration 19 minutes.

2 ***Raubarjevi / The Raubar Family*.** Filmed by Hanzi Reichmann; selected by Polona Sketelj; edited by Hanzi Reichmann and Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interactive application by Peter Gruden; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2008; duration 11 minutes.



Select Literature

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VALENTINČIČ FURLAN, Nadja: Avdiovizualne vsebine na drugi stalni razstavi Jaz, mi in drugi: podobe mojega sveta. *Etnolog* 20, 2010, pp. 213–238.

VALENTINČIČ FURLAN, Nadja: Vesna iz Granta = Vesna from Grant. In: *Dnevi etnografskega filma = Days of Ethnographic Film*. Ljubljana: Slovensko etnološko društvo, 2011, pp. 40–41.

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VALENTINČIČ FURLAN, Nadja: Visual Anthropology in Museums: The Case of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum: In: *Visual Anthropology: Personal Experiences and Institutional Aspects / Vizualna antropologija: Osebne izkušnje in institucionalni vidiki*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2015, pp. 177–204.

## Reflections of Visitors





## My Life, My World: Personal Exhibitions of Visitors

Janja Žagar

Museum living room is designed to provide a break after viewing the exhibition and intended for reading, writing, conversation, and so forth. The area, which resembles a cozy home environment, offers opportunities for the type of museum work that is based on personal approach, interaction, and integration (photo by J. Žagar).



From the very beginning, an integral part of the permanent exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World* was the idea about complementary, educational programs. These would be created by museum experts in the form of temporary thematic exhibitions and related programs but could also involve lay individuals and various groups. All of them should contribute to the understanding and feeling of Us / Ours as a source of self-confidence yet, at the same time, advance acceptance of those who are different and promote coexistence with Others.

Authors of the exhibition were looking for ways to overcome the classic methods of communicating with visitors. It was not our intention to merely educate, entertain, or offer people an opportunity to socialize and utilize their leisure time. In addition to provoking our visitors' rational feedback we also wished to elicit their emotional response; give meaning to their self-questioning and active involvement in museum programs;

and motivate them and provide an opportunity to talk about themselves, thus participating in highlighting important issues. But how could we do all this?

Our initial concept was to address visitor groups before and after viewing the exhibition and also engage them in conversation during their tour and afterwards. Next, we have upgraded this by proffering an invitation to record their narratives, which we have named a *Gallery of Narrators*. We also created thematic talks with visitors under the heading *Chatting and Socializing*, where

we were trying to find answers to key exhibition issues together with random participants of these discussions. The following step was to work with a more permanent and rounded group in order to create a more relaxed and confidential atmosphere and obtain better results. Our educational programs have their own permanent location that functions as a connecting element between the beginning and the end of the exhibition. Since it contains many elements of a relaxing private space we have named it the *museum living room*.

We have enriched our educational program to include what we have termed visitors' personal exhibitions, linked by the common title ***My Life, My World***. Following the example of the cohesive thread of the exhibition, excerpts from a life story in literary form, which we have named *An Individual's Journey*, and the film mosaic *Vesna*, we invite visitors to create exhibitions about themselves

and their life, which should be based on their personal possessions, photographs from personal or family albums, preserved documents, home movies, their private collections, etc.

Personal exhibitions are a form of self-portrait narratives translated into museum language. They contain authorial accents, personal details, and individual peculiarities that depict the lives of individuals not as a static or otherwise generalized (un)reality but function as a form of self-definition and identity. Even when their authors include other people in their narrative and speak about them through their memories, they also talk, whether unwittingly or intentionally, about themselves. During the preparation of such an exhibition, they relive events from different periods of their lives. They feel as if they were "tidying" their past, which includes their affiliation with many of their roles, people, institutions, and places. They become more aware of the connection of their life story with the common past, and their personal heritage with the common and also museum heritage. And last but not least, they are glad to be able to share their story with others.

Together with their authors, museum curators profit and learn from these personal stories as well, even though our role is quite different from that in the preparation of professional exhibitions. Our task here is to mentor and encourage people to speak about themselves and about current issues related to the various social groups to which they belong – in a way they themselves experience and interpret them. Social matters are thus presented in a concrete, albeit subjective manner. Since the society and its relevant issues cannot be addressed merely in terms of professional distance we had to learn about the importance of steering away from our professional as well as personal assessments of which social identity of an individual or a group would be most wor-



thy of highlighting. Which among the personal and family matters should be singled out? Which story should be evaluated as "significant" or "exceptional"? It is the authors who have to decide what to conceal and what to modify. Each personal exhibition has to be a reflection of their own choices and accents, which are the result of the diversity of people's personalities, individual paths in life, and subjective views of the world around them. Their subjective estimate of the boundaries between the public, the private, and the intimate is an integral part of this process.

We have therefore deliberately waived to copy the rigidly prescribed guidelines of the permanent exhibition, deciding instead on the flexibility that best stimulates the process of self-exploration. Presented in display cases and on panels, each personal exhibition is furnished with a booklet containing its author's extended memories and reflections on their lives, important events, ex-

Museum living room is also an area for sharing memories, experiences, and opinions: members of a study group discuss their stories and examine photographs; March 2012 (photo by J. Žagar).

Personal exhibitions of museum visitors are a venue for recounting things about themselves and their life through photographs and other private possessions. They are also suitable for the presentation of groups of people, where personal and collective experiences intermingle (photo by J. Žagar).

periences, feelings, insights, people and places as well as objects embedded in their memories. These reflections in printed format remain accessible even after the exhibition is closed and replaced by another one; they may be also published on our museum's websites and thus acquire a permanent form (see <http://www.etno-muzej.si/spletne-razstave-obiskovalcev-ob-stalni-razstavi-jaz-mi-in-drugi-podobe-mojega-sveta>).

Various museum-related events are organized alongside the personal exhibitions. Their openings, which may be public or reserved just for the author's families, friends, and acquaintances, are accompanied by guided tours, tailored to each group of visitors, of the permanent exhibition, which serve as a link between the institutionalized and personal exhibitions. Cooperation with one author yields cooperation with others, and new exhibitions and events are being created. Together with new groups of visitors, they contribute to greater diversity and vibrancy of museum events, greatly enhancing the interest of visitors in the museum.



Personal exhibitions also entail various events, such as music and art workshops; thematic workshops that provide insight into specific worlds of different social groups; etc. (SEM Documentation).

An important part of documenting personal memories and private collections is the documentation of these objects in the context of their home environment: Vilma Kavšček's collection of decorative plates (photo by J. Žagar).

Through this museum experience we try to explain how personal and shared heritage, whether family, local, regional, ethnic, national, or global heritage, or else museum collections or personal objects, is created and how many meanings it may produce. Even the most personal stories, objects, and meanings touch upon issues that are shared by all. For museum experts, personal exhibitions and work with visitors denote an opportunity to register an endless assortment of objects and stories associated with them. They also enable us to learn what different parts of the society perceive as heritage.

Personal exhibitions organized in our museum so far are characterized by a great variety of their authors' approaches, which we definitely perceive as "added value." In its variability, adaptability, and inclusiveness, the project has already become a unique, essential, and constantly updated part of the permanent exhibition. It may herald future creative forms that due to the current social dynamics we are still unable to conceive.

## Gallery of Narrators and Gallery of Portraits

Nadja Valentinčič Furlan

While in *Vesna: A Mosaic Video Portrait* we have presented identities of a young Slovene lady, this article addresses the other aim of the mosaic portrait,<sup>1</sup> which was designed to trigger a two-way audiovisual communication: our visitors have been offered an opportunity to assume the role of active film subjects, or researchers equipped with a camera. They were invited to make a video portrait of their friends, relatives, acquaintances, or their self-portrait, and send it to our museum. At the same time, they were given an easier option, namely to entrust the museum film crew with narrations about themselves and their positioning in the world. It has quickly turned out that visitors prefer to participate if the museum film crew takes over the media and technical aspects of filming.

### Gallery of Narrators

In order to see how the portrayed person define themselves, every interview generally begins with the question "Who are you?" While some people introduce themselves by their first name or also add their family name, others begin their introduction by stating their place of origin ("I am from Ljubljana") or their national affiliation ("I am Slovene"); some list a whole range of identity designations. In the editing studio we select parts of narrations that best reflect narrator's personal experiences and evaluations, while we avoid generalizations and criticism of others. When narrators are frank and speak about themselves their accounts are frequently quite emotional and filled with energy, which is what most attracts the viewer. Records of internal mental processes, when we see the narrator gaining new insights about their life, are especially valuable.

After selecting relevant parts of the footage, we create the final product that aims to best reflect the narrator's personality. Understandably, this is not a com-

Olga Pivk – Vidmar narrating (on the left), filmed by voluntary cultural mediators Brigita Rupnik and Janez Doler. April 2011 (photo by A. Kofol).



<sup>1</sup> *Vesna*. Research and interview by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; filming by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, Peter Paul Crepaz, and Jaka Kleč; editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interactive application by Peter Gruden; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2009; duration 35 minutes.



plete portrait or biography, nor was that our purpose. The narration mirrors current insights of the participant into his or her life and mind-set, and at the same time also their awareness that the recorded material is intended for the public use. Each narrator determines the extent to which they will share their personal information with the crew and later also with the viewers, thus setting the boundary between the private and the public. Listening to some of the narrations, we get an impression that certain things have not been expressed – but this, after all, is a common situation in life as well. Only two people have decided to protect their identity, one is identified with first name only and the other one with initials.

The original narrations, which last between five to eighty minutes, are shortened to three or up to five minutes. Upon discerning their essential parts, we equip them with intermediate captions relating to the seven exhibition chapters, and edit them into seamless video narratives. Once they are published on our website, the narrators are notified and given an opportunity to suggest corrections. Most of them are pleased with the final product, and many express their approval. One narrator felt that a certain passage was missing, therefore we reedited the video. The edited narrations<sup>2</sup> can be watched on the interactive unit situated in the living room of the second permanent exhibition under the titles **Gallery of Narrators** and **Gallery of Portraits**; the *Gallery of Narrators* is available also on the Slovene Ethnographic Museum's website <https://www.etno-muzej.si/sl/digitalne-zbirke/galerija-pripovedovalcev>.

Our experience indicates that visitors do not fear the camera and trust the filming crew. In the first years of this project, they generally decided to participate on the spur of the moment when, after having viewed the exhibition, they encountered the crew; later on, they increasingly wished to prepare for the filming. While the spur-of-the-moment narrations were relatively short, the latter often give the impression that their narrators thoroughly rethought their lives and identities. Many narrators are extremely proud to contribute to the mosaic of narrations and thus co-create the exhibition narrative and its related contents.

*Gallery of Narrators* is a growing collection of personal stories that enables visitors of our exhibition and of the museum's website an insight into other people's reflections on themselves, their surroundings, loved ones, the nation, the country, religion, language, heritage, their otherness or the otherness of others, their values, and their views on life and death, which are fundamental identity issues. Aiming for a wide selection of people of different ages, genders, occupations, nationalities, experience, values, as well as narrative styles, we welcome each narrator, and in particular representatives of all disadvantaged groups and minorities.

### Gallery of Portraits

In fact, none of the visitors has sent their portrait for our *Gallery of Portraits* since the beginning of this project. First, we included two films from our own film production, *Vesna from Grant*<sup>3</sup> and *Memories of a Nabrežina Fisherman*<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> The footage and the videos are archived and stored in the museum's Department for Ethnographic Film.

<sup>3</sup> **Vesna iz Granta / Vesna from Grant.** Research and interview by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; filming by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, Jaka Kleč, and Peter Paul Crepaz; editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan and Urh Vrenjak; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2010; duration 19 minutes.

<sup>4</sup> **Spomini nabrežinskega ribiča / Memories of a Nabrežina Fisherman.** Research and interview by Polona Sketelj; filming and editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2004; duration 13 minutes.

which were aimed to attract other contributors. We also add video portraits and stories that are an integral part of our visitors' personal exhibitions (from the exhibition cycle *My Life, My World*)<sup>5</sup> as well as those from other temporary exhibitions<sup>6</sup> organized in our museum. Attention is also paid to relevant films screened at various events and film festivals, which is how we have come across an excellent film by a young anthropologist about love capable of overcoming physical limitations.<sup>7</sup> With the permission of the portrayed people, film authors, and producers we include them in the *Gallery of Portraits* because they offer an insight in the lives, feelings, reasoning, and specific real-life situations of individuals and social groups of which they are part.

The *Gallery of Portraits* and the *Gallery of Narrators* complement the museum's permanent exhibition *I, We, and Others: Images of My World*. They enhance the social responsibility of the museum and broaden the media space in Slovenia.



Introductory page of the *Gallery of Narrators and portraits*.

<sup>5</sup> **Alojzij Vončina za osebno asistenco / Alojzij Vončina for Personal Assistance.** Concept, interview, and filming by Elena Pečarič; produced by YHD – Društvo za teorijo in kulturo hendikepa, 2012; duration 5 minutes (made for the exhibit YHD – Društvo za teorijo in kulturo hendikepa: Osebna asistenca je naša eksistenca, SEM, 2013).

**Slike iz peska Stanke Golob / Sand Pictures by Stanka Golob.** Author Ivan Merljak; editing by Boštjan Abram; produced by Vihra Video, 2009; duration 9 minutes (acquired for the exhibit Stanka Golob: Ko v pesku lebdijo zgodbe, SEM, 2014-2015).

**Božja napaka / God's Mistake.** Authors Eva Matarranz, Anna Savchenko, and Catarina Leal. Produced by Luksuz Produkcija, 2014; duration 23 minutes (acquired as the programme for the exhibit LGBT: Razstava štirih, SEM, 2017-2018).

**Janez.** Authors Urša Kastelic in Andrea Celija; produced by Projekt ART-SOC; coordination by Ekvilib Inštitut within the Globalna Sofa program, 2012; duration 12 minutes (acquired as the programme for the exhibit LGBT: Razstava štirih, SEM, 2017-2018).

**Srečanje z ljudmi iz tovarne porcelana / Meeting People in the Porcelain Factory.** Directed by Michal Reich; filmed by Michal Reich and Arkadiusz Schwed; 2018; duration 5 minutes (made for the visiting Polish exhibit Ljudje iz tovarne porcelana / People from the Porcelain Factory, SEM, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> **Marko.** Authors Nina Vareško, Matilda M. Dobro, Tanja Vuzem, and Sašo Petan; produced by Luksuz Produkcija and Kralji Ulice, 2008; duration 17 minutes (acquired for the exhibit Življenje na ulici: O brezdomstvu na Slovenskem, SEM, 2010-2011).

**Ne-kdo (Življenje je kolaž) / Some-one (Life Is a Collage).** Author Yuliya Molina; Podobe enakosti / Equality in Focus project; produced by Zavod Apis, 2015; duration 4 minutes (acquired within the exhibit Migracije, SEM, 2015-2016).

<sup>7</sup> **Odneseš te bom na morje / I Will Carry You to the Seaside.** Research and filming by Manca Filak; editing by Manca Filak and Žiga Gorišek; produced by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana University, 2012; duration 35 minutes.

They also give voice and image to people who are often overlooked by the public media or depicted in a distinctively one-dimensional manner. In both *Galleries*, the voices and images of all our worlds are equal and have been created to encourage reflection and spread understanding among people.

### Filmography

**Gallery of Narrators.** Concept and editing the collection by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan; interviews conducted by Brigita Rupnik. Narrators: Bernarda Potočnik, Janez Doler, Brigita Rupnik, Darja Butina, Irena Uhan, A. P., Jarmila Trček Brezigar, Laura Ličer, Stanislav P., Nataša Stergar, Martin Marchesich, Olga Pivk Vidmar, Žiga Valentinčič Furlan, Saša Kampič, Meri Bozovičar, Edo Bučar, Martin Koprivec, Marko Ogris, Ernest Pirnat, Marko Račič, Vincenc Aleksander Valič, Dana Valič Klanjšček, Anja Koren, Matjaž Šporar, Viktorija Rozman Btenc, Zdravko Škerjanc, Franc Zajtl, Tanja Oblak, Nevenka Brajdič Grušovnik, Stanka Golob, Zala Gruden, Nino Batagelj, Jasmina Ahmetaj, Marjan Breščak, Francisco Soto Bravo, Franc Javornik, Ivana Petan, Žarko Kuč, Martin Strel, Ahmad Ahmadi, Mojca Kavčič Perko, Manca Juvan Hessabi, Zoran Grgič, Suzana Tratnik, Salomé, Roman Kuhar, Aleš Hadalin, Marko Prpič, Patricija Sadar J., Guillermo Daniel Escalante Rodriguez, Ana Hribernik, Vitomir Pretnar, Jana S. Rošker, Mateja Juričan, Josip Orbanič, Nesa Vrečer and Boris Hajdinjak. Filming by Janez Doler; video editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, Boštjan Abram, Nino Batagelj, and Janez Doler; produced by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2011-2018; total duration 290 minutes, <https://www.etno-muzej.si/sl/digitalne-zbirke/galerija-pripovedovalcev>.

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### Photographs

Slovene Ethnographic Museum Documentation Department; Shutterstock; NASA; private archives of the Dular family; Andrej Dular, Marko Freljih, Marko Habič, Andreja Kofol, Polona Sketelj, Miha Špiček, Boštjan Zupančič, Janja Žagar, Nena Židov.



# I, We, and Others: Images of My World

## Colophon of the Exhibition

**Exhibition Concept:** Janja Žagar

### Exhibition Chapters

**I – The Individual:** Janja Žagar

**My Family – My Home:** Polona Sketelj

**My Community – My Birthplace:** Nena Židov

**Beyond My Birthplace – My Departure:** Inja Smerdel

**My Nation – My Country:** Andrej Dular

**My Otherness and Foreign Otherness – The Wide World:** Marko Frelj, Daša Koprivec

**Me – My Personal World:** Janja Žagar

### Cohesive Threats of the Exhibition

**An Individual's Journey:** after the novel *Krka pa teče naprej* (1983) by Jože Dular

**Vesna: A Mosaic Video Portrait:** Nadja Valentinčič Furlan

**Architectural Layout and Exhibition Equipment:** INKLA plus d.o.o., Aleš Bratina

**Design and Graphic Design:** Eda Pavletič, (logo) Boštjan Pavletič

**Central Scenic Elements:** INKLA plus d.o.o., Julij Borštnik, Katja Oblak, Jožef Vrščaj – in cooperation with the exhibition authors

**Audiovisual Content:** Nadja Valentinčič Furlan – in cooperation with the exhibition authors

**Animation, Interactive Applications, and Soundscapes:** Peter Gruden – in cooperation with the exhibition authors

