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## Musealisation of *Folk Art* - on the Occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ethnographic Museum

- Starting from the concept of *folk art* as a historical phenomenon that refers to particular civic processes of valorisation, selection and representation of *peasant painting traditions*, its role can be considered against the backdrop of specific economic, social and political circumstances of congenial cultural activities, which, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the World War II, included the practices of gathering of ethnographic collections, the formation of the first museum collections and museum activities, the development of artistic crafts, encouragement of home-based handicraft businesses, as well as education in visual arts through professional education. This paper provides a historical overview of the process of affirmation of *folk art*, with an emphasis on musealisation and it is intended as a contribution to the interpretation of the initial collections of the Ethnographic Museum.

**Key words:** Ethnographic Museum (Zagreb)  
Berger, Salamon  
*folk art*, musealisation of *folk art*, history of museum collections

### INTRODUCTION

The syntagm of *the Croatian folk art* was defined by Milovan Gavazzi (1895-1992) as a type of visual art that is inextricably linked with *the Croatian peasant culture* (Gavazzi 1944, according to Vojnović-Traživuk 2012: 107). According to the ethnographic records dating back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, design and decoration of usable objects was the usual activity. In addition, the peasant community

identified particularly talented individuals from whom a proportion of household assets was acquired or even custom-made peasant household altars, sculptures of saints and crucifixes and children's toys, to name a few (comp. Lovretić 1897: 119-124; Ivanišević 1904: 207-208; Lang 1912: 43-48). Products made by local or foreign craft businesses were selected for rural households and hence the concept of *folk art* in the Croatian ethnology most frequently stands for *folk* in the narrower sense, *real peasant art* – products made by peasants to meet their own needs and *peasant art craft* – objects that craftsmen produced for peasants who accepted them as theirs, inherited from tradition, peasant, where the acquired objects could provide a model for innovations (comp. Gavazzi 1944; Senjković 1998: 224-225).

The ethnographic aspect of the issue systematically addressed by Gavazzi<sup>1</sup> in his writings represents a significant shift forward, not only in terms of Romantic notions of *folk art* as “a collective creation, which is intuitively transferred to an individual”, but also “a shift of emphasis from the so-called artistic objects to those that do not have a distinct aesthetic value, yet they are important for an insight into a rural culture. (Vojnović-Traživuk 2006: 5)

In addition to the term *folk art*, other terms were used such as *peasant*, *popular*, *word of mouth*, *traditional*, *folk visual art* or *folk painting* or *folk visual expression*,<sup>2</sup> for the specific type of visual art based on tradition.<sup>3</sup> The term *folk art* besides the frequently used syntagm *folk visual expression*<sup>4</sup> is currently primarily used as a historical determinant that includes the visually designed objects that belong to the *peasant culture* of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and they are primarily stored in the collections of both the regional and the ethnographic museums. These objects are explored in the context of handicraft skills passed on from generation to generation inside the rural communities. “Nevertheless, the question of disappearance of *folk art* has remained open, that is the question of a gap created through the changes in the rural communities and the extinction of traditional handicraft” (Vojnović-Traživuk 2006: 13). Wondering about how to establish a systematic relationship between traditional and recent visual art appearances that contain elements of folklore, Branka Vojnović-Traživuk proposes a folklorist approach to the problem. *Visual folklore* is used in the broader sense that includes overall visual manifestations of traditional culture, with an emphasis on recent traces and the traces of peasant visual art from the past (Ibid.), referring to visual phenomena of the broader cultural, social, spatial and temporal scope, while additionally emphasising their typological character (Vojnović-Traživuk 2012: 108).

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1 In the book entitled “The Croatian Folk Art” published in Zagreb in 1944, Gavazzi pointed out the contextual significance of consideration of objects of *folk visual art* and the necessity of valorisation in terms of the materials and the techniques of their making, the function, as well as the source and the development of ornaments throughout history (Gavazzi 1944).

2 In the “Encyclopaedia of Croatian Art” (1995), Jelka Radauš Ribarić wrote about *folk art* primarily in accordance with Gavazzi's determinants. Moreover, she also used other terms and so she spoke about *popular* or *word of mouth* or *traditional visual art*, as well as *folk visual expression* (Radauš Ribarić 1995: 622 according to Vojnović-Traživuk 2006: 12).

3 Find out more about the terminological and content-based determinants of the terms and the contemporary reflections on *folk art* in: Vojnović 1993, 1995 and Vojnović-Traživuk 2006, 2012, 2016.

4 Find out more in: Senjković 1998 and Vojnović-Traživuk 2001.

Hence, the possibility of distinction between the terms of *visual folklore* and *folk art* is derived from folklorist approaches, albeit the need for their mutual complementation needs to be highlighted in the research.<sup>5</sup>

The emphasis on the visual aspect of *folk art* is linked with the civic culture, which at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century recognised the value of handiwork and stressed the aesthetic component of decorative *folk art*. In the process of civic valorisation of visual art achievements in *folk art* as art, preservation and keeping of beautiful objects, as testimonies of the past, became the tasks of museum institutions in order to use them and ennoble the present. These Central European cultural incentives were primarily expressed during the period immediately preceding the World War I (Vojnović-Traživuk 2006: 9).

Starting from the proposed terms, *visual folklore* as a more comprehensive and a broader concept and *folk art* as a historical phenomenon that refers to identified civic processes of valuation, selection and representation of peasant visual traditions, the specific objective of this paper is to provide a brief overview of the history of musealisation of *folk art*. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *folk art* has been in the focus of collecting of ethnographic objects, the formation of the first collections and institutionalisation of the museum in general. In 1880, the Museum of Arts and Crafts was founded in Zagreb and 1882 saw the establishment of the congenial School of Arts and Crafts, while the Trades and Crafts Museum, which was opened in 1904, transformed into the Ethnographic Museum in 1919.

The revision of the Textile Fragment Collection, as the collection that accounts for the largest proportion of the initial holdings of the Ethnographic Museum, provided an incentive for the preparation of this paper, with a specific objective to provide a concise overview of the emerging holdings in addition to an analysis of the types of objects in initial collections in order to confirm the practices of collection policies focusing on the specific socio-political and cultural events in which affirmation of the concept of *folk art* occurred.

## AFFIRMATION AND POPULARISATION OF FOLK ART

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and especially at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both in Europe and in Croatia questions arouse concerning the relations between art and the people in the context of creation of *national art*.<sup>6</sup> In view of the character of cultural

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5 In the book entitled "Folk Art as a Civic Value", Branka Vojnović-Traživuk explores civic interpretations of *visual folklore* in Dalmatia during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was considered as the *Croatian folk art*. She followed the process of affirmation of the concept of *folk art* in a historical overview and its presence in almost all the cultural activities. In conclusion, she pointed out the polyvalent role of *visual folklore* in terms of extreme capacity of connecting with congenial cultural activities (visual culture, collecting, museography, ethnography), as well as other areas of activity (tourism, economy). Moreover, she pointed out the significant social role of *visual folklore* as a transcultural factor in the process of connecting the bourgeoisie and the peasants (Vojnović-Traživuk 2016).

6 Find out more in: Posavac, Zlatko. 1991 "Iso Kršnjavi as an aestheticist and an art theorist" In: *Newer Croatian Aestheticism: Studies and Essays*, Zagreb: the Croatian Philosophical Society, pp. 213-243.

trends, the concept of *folk art* was interpreted in different ways. Individual areas of interest were gradually being defined based on the records made by the Romantics and the images of rural life with a clearer articulation of those linked with *folk visual art* at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While travel writers and collectors in the (post) Romantic spirit admired “the collective folk-art genius”, visual artists and industrialists at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century actualised and commercialised it, using folk techniques and motifs in the new design (comp. Vojnović 1993: 13-14).

The affirmation of *folk art* occurred in a specific socio-historical context as a global European cultural, political and economic phenomenon. The first collections in Croatia<sup>7</sup> were created in the private practices of gathering of ethnographic collections, while a more systematic collection starting from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was recorded also at the institutional level. An increased interest in *folk art* may be linked with specific events and institutions that occurred and were founded in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The changes occurring in Europe during the Industrial Revolution<sup>8</sup> resulted in the foundation of several institutions that contributed to an increasing interest in traditional forms of both textile and in general folk handicraft. The previously mentioned changes included the so-called World’s Fairs or International Exhibitions, the reform of the school curricula in terms of more practical work, which in turn resulted in the foundation of museums of arts and crafts (Radisavljević 2017: 25).

The European trends of placing pure and applied art on an equal footing, integration of *folk art* into artistic craft and contemporary architecture, primarily the strengthening of the economy and cultural identity through encouragement of organised home-based handicraft, through the development of arts and crafts and education of experts, shaped the Croatian cultural and art space in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Inspiration and models for artistic creation were frequently found in the past and hence at that point *folk art* aroused the interest of the Croatian cultural and intellectual community. The understanding of *folk art* as an original visual art enabled the identification of its economic potential in the development of authentic domestic crafts and domestic manufacturing.

New products, which through their form and decorations more or less reminded of traditional patterns, were adapted to the bourgeois taste, as well as to the bourgeois housing cultures and the culture of clothing and hence their function (tableware, fashion and clothing accessories)<sup>9</sup> was most frequently unknown in the peasant environment. In the “Krijes Booklet” about the Croatian folk handicraft skills and their use, in the

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7 Private collections of Salamon Berger, Srećko Lay, Levin Horvat, Ferdo Hefe, Milka Štanfelj, Milko Cepelić are included in the holdings of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb.

8 Arts & Crafts Movement in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the criticism of the industrial society and its unimaginativeness had its social connotations. Through its programme, the Movement was striving to make the quality of mass products as similar as possible to the quality of the products made by pre-industrial craftsmen. The revival of artistic crafts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was at the centre of attention of European visual art movements within congenial art styles at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Art Nouveau, Art Moderne, Secession, Style 1900 and Art Déco during the Interwar Period.

9 The products included pyjamas, postcard envelopes, leather notebooks, napkin rings, indexes, cigarette cases, as confirmed by archival records from the Documentation of the Ethnographic Museum – the correspondence between Salamon Berger and different domestic and international business associates during the period from 1925 to 1933,

issue about pumpkins dating back to 1918, it was stated that at the exhibition held in Trieste in 1883, “the queen Jelisava” (author’s comment Elisabeth – Sisi) purchased a china tableware set designed by the architect Hermann Bollé inspired by the pumpkin ornaments made by Andrija Lešić from Bošnjaci. The author of the text, Ante Matasović said about Lešić that he decorated pumpkins “in the most beautiful way and he was actually perfect” and that he was such a good master craftsman “that his pumpkins of all sizes have been in demand even abroad.” (Matasović 1918: 22) The holdings of the Museum of Arts and Crafts include a china set manufactured in the Czech Republic around 1882, decorated in accordance with the drafts made by Hermann Bollé inspired by the motifs on decorated Slavonian pumpkins and it was exhibited in the same year at an Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition in Trieste.

The visibility of the Croatian artistic production at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was due to appearances at World’s Fairs, as well as two international exhibitions held in Zagreb. Two world’s fairs and industrial exhibitions from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup> were manifestations of political, social and cultural scene of the countries participating in them, and in addition to industrial and economic achievements, artistic section became an integral part of the overall indicator of national development. Stylistic trends in *visual art* of that period and the inspiration in the repertoire of *folk-art* decor as well as the traditional handicraft techniques were the result of efforts to rehabilitate handicraft in the making of objects of everyday use. Among the members of the broader public, the furniture in the so-called folk style attracted most of the attention, which is understandable concerning the implications of the formation and strengthening of national identity, as well as the opportunity for economic potential of product placement on the competitive European market. “Folk style in different versions had a common denominator in the use of ornaments inspired by ethnographic sources, primarily in case of coloured drawings in India ink or pumpkins with burned multi-coloured motifs and wood carving, while in terms of design, in addition to different interpretations of traditional design, in general the use of the previously mentioned ornaments was not rare on bourgeois furniture” (Brdar Mustapić 2014: 202). References to *folk art* during the design of new products were declarative. The use of folk motifs in craft production was shown both in the affirmation of *new* content and on the values from the past. In this sense, the overall production was historicistic.

Different terms were used in cultural trends, primarily the trends in *visual art* in connection with the revitalisation of artistic crafts based on patterns from peasant handicraft. Hence, *folk* and *domestic craft*, *home-based manufacturing* and *folk* or *popular art* were used. The term *folk art* was the most frequently used term for the concept that was never defined and it was hence occasionally simultaneously used for primary peasant handicraft and sometimes even for new craft products intended for urban population (comp. Vojnović-Traživuk 2016: 19).

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as well as all the preserved lists of objects made by craftsmen, traders and private individuals of different profiles that they sent to specific exhibitions. Find out more in: Bušić, 2009.

10 For example, the Vienna World’s Fair held in 1873, the Budapest Millennial Exhibition held in 1896 and the World’s Fair held in Paris (Paris Universelle Exposition) in 1900.

“While artistic crafts in the cities implied a skill gained through training, a commercial purpose and an individual creative dimension, peasant craft businesses primarily strived to meet private needs and were based on traditional handicraft as a common heritage. Starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, these specific features were normally ignored, while the similarities were pointed out and different terms were used to refer to peasant handicraft. Among them was the term *home-based manufacturing* that shows the contradiction in what at the time was the understanding of rural culture.” (Vojnović-Traživuk 2016: 17)

Upon recent research, different terms - folk, home-based, domestic industry or manufacturing business or craft - have been integrated into a term organised home-based handicraft (Petrović Leš 2006: 58).

A wide range of literature has addressed the issue of Salomon Berger’s efforts (1858-1934) around organising of home-based manufacturing and product placement both on the domestic and the international market both during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a collector and a textile merchant, he exploited his insight into the production process for organising home-based manufacturing. He based his activity primarily on collecting folk motifs from traditional textile products and their use in contemporary fashion industry. During the period from 1888 to 1910, due to a good organisation of activity, as well as his entrepreneurial spirit and high perseverance, Berger participated in 96 exhibitions in Europe, America and Australia, presenting products of the Croatian home-based manufacturing (Gjetvaj 1989: 16). Moreover, according to him, he arranged warehouses and representative offices in Hamburg, Berlin, Monaco, Paris, Chicago, St. Luis and elsewhere (Berger 1913: 6 according to Bušić 2009: 285). Berger involved “peasant women” trained in the Zagreb-based weaving school in the manufacturing of exhibited and sold goods. The latter school “was founded by Berger in 1902 using his own resources, albeit with a promise of financial resources from the royal territorial government” (Bušić 2009: 285). Moreover, he also involved different state-owned companies, craftsmen and individuals. Many of the exhibited objects, as well as most Berger’s collections were subsequently accessioned into the collections of the Ethnographic Museum.<sup>11</sup>

The educator’s role in the promotion of the artistic and folk crafts was assumed by The Arts and Crafts Society<sup>12</sup> run by the President Izidor Kršnjavi (1845 – 1927), founded following the model of similar European vocational and arts associations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a clear task to provide support and popularise art and crafts activities within the overall social development. In addition to specific tasks and results in a large number of projects with long-term positive effect, the social role of such associations and societies was to exert a positive impact on the development of cultural and artistic life through programmes and organised activities. The Croatian Arts and Crafts Society contributed to the establishment of a required institutional infrastructure: the foundation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts was announced during the first year of

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11 Currently the Berger Industry Collection.

12 Initially founded as the Arts Society (1868).

its activity in 1879. It was actually founded in 1880 and 1882 saw the foundation of the conceptually and institutionally congenial Crafts School (comp. Mance 2004: 326).

World's Fairs attracted the public attention to the objects produced by artistic crafts, while peasant women's handicraft assumed an important role in the textile field, as a significant branch of handicraft production. Nevertheless, world's fairs highlighted the fact that this type of women's handicraft production was becoming increasingly rare, in not only the industrialised Europe, but its last traces were vanishing even in the underdeveloped regions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The first museums with a general name Museum of Arts and Crafts<sup>13</sup> appeared against the backdrop of the idea of the foundation of museums that were intended for the preservation of the collected fragments of this vanishing tradition, striving to revive it as much as possible. In addition to the top-quality craft products, they preserved and stored also the products of *folk art* that were easily distinguished due to their aesthetic value (Radisavljević 2017: 25).

Kršnjavi considered a request from Budapest to collect and create a collection of the Croatian folk embroidery for their National Museum, along with the expectation that the objects would be provided with all the required museological data, as a task of the new Museum of Arts and Crafts. He exploited this opportunity to prepare a "Folk Craft Exhibition" in the newly built Academy Palace in Zagreb (currently the Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts). A comprehensive analysis and a description of the preparation for the presentation event based on newspaper articles and archival records has been provided by Žarka Vujić in her text entitled "The Exhibition in Zagreb in 1881":

"The newspaper 'Obzor' dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1881 published the invitation and the programme and the following day it released instructions for trustees and collectors that they needed to follow during the selection of objects for the exhibition (...) The emphasis was placed on originality, antiquity and the origin of the object, as well as a request for collection of folk art for individual types of objects, materials and the method of processing (...) The programme also provided the basics of dividing objects into the following groups: textile, 'craft products made of wood and craft products made of metal', as well as ceramics." (Vujić 1995: 16)

"What there is currently only poor awareness of or what is actually almost unknown, is the fact that, before the Strossmayer artefacts, the premises of the Gallery of Old Masters featured the objects of folk handicraft" (Ibid.: 17).

Among ample correspondence in connection with the organisation of the exhibition, he highlighted a letter by the chaplain Stjepan Stražemanac from Drenovci, who had sent around fifty collected objects, showing concern in case something happens to them. "Take care of these things for me as if they were your own, even more so, because if but one thread of something should go missing, they will pull my eyes out and I would not like that", he wrote to the respected president and he immediately singled out two

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13 South Kensington Museum, currently Victoria and Albert Museum, was founded after the London exhibition in 1852.



gifts to the Society (read: future Museum) - a pumpkin and a distaff.” (Vujić 1995: 17) These were the origins of the ethnographic collections of the Museum of Arts and Crafts.

Kršnjavi was striving to solve the problems in terms of a short period of time available for the preparation for the exhibition, poor interest shown by potential exhibitors and a poor turnout at the local level by personally venturing on a journey to Slavonia, which was like some kind of ethnographic research that resulted in travel sketches *Listovi iz Slavonije* (“News from Slavonia”) (1882) and a discussion *Narodni građevni styl* (“Folk Building Style”) (1887). The interest in ethnological issues shown by Kršnjavi needs to be considered in the context of promotion of artistic crafts through Croatian folk and national artistic features and hence the advocacy of folk or “home-based craft” (Petrović 1992: 153) where his text entitled “Home-Based Manufacturing at the Budapest Exhibition” published in the first issue of  *Glasnik Društva za umjetnost i umjetni obrt* (“The Herald of the Arts and Crafts Society”) (hereinafter “The Herald”)<sup>14</sup> can almost be considered as programmatic. In addition to the theoretical reflections about the origin, he pointed out the practical purpose, as well as the possibilities for supporting home-based manufacturing: “Home-based manufacturing has never been as comprehensively presented as in this current exhibition. The latter has concluded the testing stage and hence the procedure for organisation of home-based crafts needs to be arranged at this point based on the known facts” (Kršnjavi 1886: 16). From the practical aspect, he advocated organisation of co-operatives because it is only through targeted organisation that *folk art* could become a specific segment of the economy. Valourisation of *folk art* was addressed also in other texts published in “The Herald”. Ladislav Mrazović in the text entitled “The Croatian Domestic Industry” pointed out the problems with the definition of domestic folk crafts and/or manufacturing of industry, *folk art* that actually “had no real name” (Mrazović 1888), as well as the issue of artistic value of domestic crafts. The objects made by the domestic folk industry that he pointed out included: “‘tableware / pottery, metal jewellery, fabrics and different embroidery, carvings and different tools’, objects that ‘simple common people make in a special way for their own needs’ which ‘have artistic value’ (comp. Mrazović 1888: 56). The popularisation programme of folk handicraft in “The Herald”<sup>15</sup> was enhanced also by professional papers about products of the peasant craft owned by Ferdo Hefelev with a special emphasis on the technical aspect of the folk craft. Upon the initiative of Kršnjavi, Ferdo Hefelev, an ethnographer and a teacher by profession, collected weaving and embroidery patterns for the museum of the Croatian Pedagogic-Literary Society, currently the Croatian School Museum, most of which in 1919 accessioned

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14 Irrespective of the shortness of the period during which it was published, from 1886 to 1888, during which only eight issues were published, “The Herald of the Arts and Crafts Society” was the first professional journal that was striving to set new standards in scientific writing about arts and crafts issues (comp. Mance 2004.).

15 “While looking for the answer to the question whether “The Herald” actually had the potential to be an effective tool for popularisation of art, it is worth remembering that among all the programmes provided by the Society, it was primarily the programme that focused on transformation of folk handicraft into national economic breakthrough that saw a complete failure. It is enough to follow the reports from the meeting sessions of the Society to become aware of the amount of energy invested into collecting folk artefacts, inviting tenders and the foundation of the weaving school, with certainly minimum results” (Mance 2004: 331). It is important to add the personal experience of Salomon Berger described in “The Tragedy of Our Home-Based Textile Industry” (1907): “One cannot ask from a private business to establish, organise and run an entire branch of industry, primarily when we are dealing with an industry whose benefits are enjoyed primarily by the country and its people” (Berger 1907: 9).



into the collections of the Ethnographic Museum (Petrović 1992: 152).<sup>16</sup> Promotion and improvement of handicraft at schools and the formation of collections was the start of the integration process of *folk culture* into the Croatian schools. The tendency to use folk motifs in the making of the handicraft patterns at school was clear from the order by the Royal Land Government, of the Department of Religion and Education dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1876, which addressed all the Royal Sub-Counties and regencies for elementary schools, as well as the principals of both men's and women's teacher's colleges and all the city halls, with the recommendation of Srećko Lay to all the classrooms (Rapo 1997: 46), the collector who during the period from 1875 to 1884 published a book in 20 volumes entitled "Ornaments in Yugoslav Domestic and Artistic Craft". Many objects from his collection ended up in museums throughout Europe, while a proportion of them accessioned into the collections of the National Museum in Zagreb, from where it was subsequently transferred to the Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Ethnographic Museum (Gjetvaj 1989: 12).

The work of Kršnjavi on the foundation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts that was certainly in connection with the Crafts School is currently known and it has been described both in the professional and scientific literature. During the creation of the collection that would be crucial for the start of the new museum, Kršnjavi was involved in folk handicraft, primarily textile. Jelica Belović-Berndzikowska in the "Catalogue of the Textile Collection of the National Arts and Crafts Museum in Zagreb" (1907) stated as follows "The textile collection is useful both for artistic purposes and for scientific research of the past of the Slavs, their taste and artistic experience." (Belović-Berndzikowska 1907) Against the backdrop of restorative tendencies to promote handicraft businesses to the level of home-based handicraft production, most ethnographic collections with national materials in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had a utilitarian and didactic function (Radisavljević 2017: 109).<sup>17</sup>

The first international art exhibition in Zagreb in 1891 marked the beginning of exhibition activity of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in what at the time the newly built building of the Crafts School. The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue whose preface highlighted the role of the Arts and Crafts Society during the foundation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, as well as the Crafts School, the Weaving School and the promotion of home-based craft businesses in folk style (Kraševac and Tonković 2016: 204). The ethnographic collections were at the centre of attention of some institutions and museums had the role of mediators between the scientific interpretation of *folk art* and the activities in connection with their further use.

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16 Klotilda Cvitešić, a Teacher and the Principal of the Zagreb-based boarding School for Girls founded by Kršnjavi, used her professional knowledge working until 1913 as a curator at the Croatian School Museum where she enhanced the collection of folk handicraft, providing it with the names of the ornaments and the techniques (Muraj 2006: 23).

17 The Viennese Museum of Art and Industry (Museum für Kunst und Industrie), currently the Museum of Applied Arts (Museum für angewandte Kunst) was founded in 1863 with the School of Applied Arts. The Budapest-based Ethnographic Museum was also founded based on such tendencies. Irrespective of the fact that at the Hungarian National Museum (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum) the Ethnological Department was founded in 1872, most objects of Hungarian *folk art* were preserved until 1898 in the depots of the Museum of Applied Arts (Iparművészeti múzeum) (Radisavljević 2017: 109).

The National Museum in Zagreb, opened in 1846, was founded in the same way as a large number of what at the time were national museum projects in Central Europe with the idea of national development and shaping of identity<sup>18</sup> as well as with the Enlightenment ideas of the promotion and development of science. From both the spatial and the organisational aspect, the Collections of the National Museum never saw their potential within an independent state-owned institution and they were never allocated an integral museum space (Vujić 2000: 25). Since the inception of the museum, in addition to the cultural and historical objects, objects were collected “which needed to paint a picture of both the artistry and the life of our so-called common people” as “... in accordance with the full and proper understanding each national museum needs to provide a reflection of the overall folk life both from the past and the present” wrote Vladimir Tkalčić, the first curator of what was to become the Ethnographic Museum (Tkalčić 1922: 73).<sup>19</sup> Starting from 1880, a proportion of the ethnographic collections was separated and allocated to the pupils of the Crafts School intended as a scientific tool.<sup>20</sup>

In the paper entitled “The Pattern of Foundation of the First Museums in Croatia” Žarka Vujić identified the existence of a specific pattern of the foundation of Zagreb-based museums established in the 19<sup>th</sup> or at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in terms of changes of museum concepts. “The foundation lagged behind also at the point of formal or actual implementation (authorisation of the rules, opening of the permanent exhibition), the museum concept would change and there would be changes” (Vujić 2000: 29).

“After the final opening of the permanent exhibition, the Museum of Arts and Crafts started gradually setting itself new tasks – it chose not to be operating to meet the needs of the Crafts School, but to be preserving, storing and exhibiting arts and crafts objects as testimonies of the past. At the point of the authorisation of the rules, in terms of the spatial aspect the National Museum initially separated and organised itself into two and subsequently into several specialised departments, while the Trades and Crafts Museum in less than fifteen-odd years fully replaced the Ethnographic Museum. Consequently, interruptions and transformations are the actual key words required to describe the foundation of the first museums in Zagreb.” (Ibid.: 29-30)

The Zagreb-based Trades and Crafts Museum as “an unusual type of museum intended for the promotion of domestic trade and crafts, rather than studying or any other museological task” (Vujić 2000: 28) is one of a few museums of trade in Europe to have been allocated its functional building. The exhibition space “that showed the extent of the Croatian craftsmanship and home-based craft businesses, was provided in 1904,

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18 Hungary saw the opening of its National Museum in 1802, while Zagreb had to wait for around 30 years for the formal authorisation of the rules and the foundation of the museum as a state-owned institution (Vujić 2000: 24).

19 Vladimir Tkalčić worked in the Archaeological Department of the National Museum from 1917 to 1919, while from 1919 “he was the first Custodian” of the Ethnographic Department of the National Museum in the new premises. After Berger’s retirement, Tkalčić was the Manager and from 1933 the Director. In 1939, he ceded the position to Milovan Gavazzi and was appointed as the Director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (comp. Kolar 1992: 68).

20 The Collection of the Arts Society, while in 1897 and the remaining and subsequently accessioned materials (with the exception of the materials of the exotic peoples) were transferred to the Museum of Arts and Crafts (Tkalčić 1922: 73).

at the point when similar museums in the neighbouring countries transformed their activities and even removed their collections” (Ibid.: 29).

“It is indicative that its permanent exhibition was closed because of shortcomings after a month and a new one was opened the following year, with a completely changed concept. In fact, this small collection of home-based crafts objects was transformed [according to allegations in the daily newspaper *Obzor* from 1905, author’s comment] “into a magnificent ethnographic exhibition” and over the subsequent years it completely exceeded the promotional and the sales character of the Trades and Crafts Museum.” (Ibid.: 29)

According to Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, the ethnographic collection<sup>21</sup> of the Trades and Crafts Museum was actually “concealed under the name of home-based craft businesses in order to justify its existence in the trades and crafts museum” (Kolar-Dimitrijević 1992: 68), while the first exhibitions were intended for its transformation<sup>22</sup> that was completed by 1908 “when the newspaper *Narod* published in Mostar wrote about this museum as a museum for folk embroidery in Zagreb” (Ibid.: 66). After World War I, the Trades and Crafts Museum was quietly closed and its building became the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum and subsequently the Ethnographic Museum when it gained independence. The influence exerted by Salamon Berger, who at the time was a private collector and textile manufacturer and that exerted by his collection significantly contributed to the change in the concept of the Trades and Crafts Museum.

## **FOLK ART AT THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM**

The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb was founded on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1919, when the Land Collection of Salamon Berger,<sup>23</sup> accessioned into the National Museum, became the independent Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum in Zagreb. Upon the foundation of the museum the collections integrated the Berger Collection, as well as the existing ethnographic collections of the Zagreb-based museums: the Ethnographic Collection of the History and Archaeology Department of the Croatian

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21 Milan Krešić in the brochure entitled *Budućnost* (“The Future”) of the Trades and Crafts Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb 1904, wrote about the museum collection of embroidery, pumpkins, decorated animal horns, different models of peasant houses, weaving looms and small wooden objects exhibited on the first floor of the museum, which “were only the inception of the collection that the Chamber is planning to increase over time, to literally transform it into an Ethnographic Collection” (comp. Kolar-Dimitrijević 1992: 66).

22 She pointed out also the political reasons for the re-structuring of the Trades and Crafts Museum against the backdrop of the strengthening of the Kingdom of Serbia and the Serbian efforts towards the penetration to the European market and the promotion of its own industry.

23 The Salamon Berger Collection was acquired on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1918 and after long negotiations and ample correspondence between the Government, the Chamber and the National Museum, on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 1919 the Chamber conceded a section of its premises to accommodate the Berger Collection, albeit at a fee (Eckhel 2006: 11). The collection comprising of 8,183 objects was acquired at the price of 600,000 kuna. Berger used half of the previously mentioned amount for the foundation of an Assistance Fund that was used for acquisition of authentic materials to meet museum requirements (Gjetvaj 1989: 17). The latter fund enabled the museum manager to provide objects through replacement, those that the museum did not have at the time and to enrich the collections (Franić 1935: 6).

National Museum in Zagreb, the Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Royal National Craft School, the Chamber of Trades and Crafts and the Ethnographic Collection of the museum that operated with the Pedagogic-Literary Society in Zagreb, i.e. the Croatian School Museum. A new Inventory Control Register with the shelf mark Et (Ethnographica) was introduced upon the foundation of the Ethnographic Department. The first five entries included the collections that accessioned into the Museum collections upon its foundation (comp. Gjetvaj 1989: 15-18).

The analysis of the type of objects based on the inventory control registers of the fundamental collections<sup>24</sup> shows that the highest proportion of objects is textile, primarily parts of clothing items with embroidered or woven ornaments, primarily parts of caps or bonnets, front - *poculica* and back - *alovci*, unstitched or cut out parts of men's shirts or women's blouses (on the chest and on the sleeves) ornaments from *rubina* (a traditional shirt worn by peasant men) as well as patterns / samples of weaving, embroidery or lace, normally grouped in the so-called tablets, inventoried as *patterns* or *parts of ornaments*, *fragments of lace*, embroidery or weaving. The number of integral clothing items is considerably smaller, with the exception of integral embroidered caps or bonnets, *poculica*, originating from the region of Sisak, Petrinja, Sunja and South-Eastern Zagreb suburbs.<sup>25</sup>

I am hereinafter providing a brief overview of the initial collections that documents the holdings during the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum in the practice of collectors' policy originating in the previously described socio-political and cultural events at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Collection number 2 (tag B) stands for the Salamon Berger Collection, acquired prior to the foundation of the Museum, comprising of 8,183 inventory numbers. In addition to jewellery and Berger Textile Industry objects, textile objects account for the highest share of objects, primarily examples of antique textile techniques and embroidery from Croatia, as well as from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovakia, Romania, Montenegro and Albania. The first thirty inventory tags comprise of women's clothing sets from the Sisak region, as well as individual clothing items, with the highest share of *peča* head scarves and *poculica* bonnets, as well as their front and back decorated parts from the suburbs of Sisak and Zagreb<sup>26</sup> and parts of ornaments from the blouses – from the chest and the sleeves and fragments of lace.

The Collection number 3 (tag BK) with 1,206 inventory tags, acquired from Salamon Berger for the Trades and Crafts Museum, includes pottery, decorated wooden objects, doodled pumpkins, jewellery, weapons, household assets, textile rugs and a large num-

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24 Besides the shelf marks Et. 1 (corresponds to the former shelf mark AH) it includes the materials from the Archaeology and History Department of the Croatian National Museum, which, in addition to the *domestic materials* also includes the objects of *non-European* origin.

25 In accordance with the information from the Inventory Control Register, Documentation of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb and the Records about the performed revision of the Textile Fragment Collection from the holdings of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Documentation of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb.

26 The suburbs of Sisak, Sunja, Križevci and Eastern and South Eastern suburbs of Zagreb.

ber of items of woven and embroidered textile inventoried as *chest items, embroidery, sets of patterns*, primarily from the region of Slavonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Collection number 4 (tag ŠM) the collection of the ethnographic materials of the Croatian School Museum with 922 inventory tags comprises primarily of fragments and patterns of weaving, embroidery and lace. The Collection was intended for pedagogical and didactic purposes. In addition to several sets of traditional national costumes and clothing items from Northern Croatia, Slavonia and Bosnia, there is a smaller number of decorated wooden objects (distaffs and the so-called “small decorated wooden objects”) and jewellery. Most weaving and embroidery items were donated by the teacher Milka Štanfelj.<sup>27</sup>

The Collection number 5 (tag UO), the ethnographic collection of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, comprises of 4,503 inventory tags. In addition to items of traditional national costumes, the largest number of items are series of *peča* head scarves, *poculica* bonnets and parts of *poculica* bonnets, as well as fragments of weaving and embroidery, primarily again from the region of Posavina and Slavonia. The Collection includes *weaving and embroidery patterns* by Srećko Lay and *tablets of patterns* by Ferdo Hefe.

The abundance and the characteristics of the inventoried textile from the initial collections of the Museum are in accordance with the concept of collecting fragments as samples of textile handiwork, as well as the concept of *folk art* as a potential model for new production and revival of artistic crafts in the previously mentioned context. The category of weaving and embroidery patterns, not only, but in that sense integrated into cardboard looms (tablets with patterns by Hefe, Lay and Berger) and the so-called *uzornik*, patterned weaving and a high share of textile fragments, primarily parts of clothing items with embroidered or woven ornaments – parts of *poculica* bonnets, unstitched or cut out parts of men’s shirts or women’s blouses and *skute* – parts of women’s dress or skirt, are currently integrated in the Textile Fragment Collection, while fragments and lace patterns are included in the Lace Collection. Most objects were inventoried in the previously described collections, while textile parts were accessioned into the collections of traditional national costumes over the years.<sup>28</sup>

The extent to which the issue of valorisation, selection and presentation of textile handiwork patterns have been integrated into the collections of the Ethnographic Museum has been shown by the figures obtained through the revision of the Textile Fragment

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27 A letter by Milka Štanfelj entitled “My Fated Collection” has been preserved in the Registry of the Ethnographic Museum in which a description was provided of the way in which the Folk Embroidery Collection was created and its pathway from the Croatian School Museum to the Ethnographic Museum during the period from 1901 to 1919, Documentation of the EMZ, Archives I /13.

28 12 different tablets of weaving and embroidery patterns accessioned the collections from the legacy of Milko Cepelić, The Register on Accessioning of the Collection of Milko Cepelić (9<sup>th</sup> June 1920), Documentation of the EMZ, Archives I/24; upon a change in collectors policy of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the ethnographic materials were deaccessioned until the 1940’s, several more series of weaving and embroidery patterns were documented in the Registers on the Handover and Acceptance of Objects of Ethnographic Significance, handed over by the management of the Croatian State Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb to the Croatian State Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, (on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1944 and the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1945) Documentation of the EMZ, Archives II/ 2.

Collection (2016)<sup>29</sup> out of 8,099 inventoried objects. The figures certainly show the initial collector's interest focused on ornaments and object making techniques, based on stylistic visual trends of that time and inspired on the repertoire of *folk ornaments*. The preserved techniques of traditional handiwork corresponded to the efforts towards the revival of handiwork in the making of objects in everyday use. Simultaneously with the positive valorisation of original folk handiwork that has been disappearing over time, *folk art* was presented as a special form of museological recording of *folk culture*.

Berger himself, complaining in his brochure entitled "A Proposal for the Promotion of Our Home-Based Folk Handicraft on the Occasion of the Exhibition by the *Zagrebački zbor* (the predecessor of the Zagreb Fair) in Autumn of 1932" about

"abnormal occurrences during the destruction of unique objects and positive values of *folk art* products, he stated as follows: 'some associations and private individuals are still continuing with unproductive and actually destructive work, acquiring, for example, antique original embroidery and weaving and then changing them and using them in different ways and for different purposes, rather than striving to promote the production of new objects based on the model provided by attractive antique originals, which need to be preserved as cultural monuments, not only for our nation, but for the global cultural community'" (Berger according to Franić 1935: 3).

In Berger's opinion museum is a "living temple of our racial art" and "model cell" in which everyone will be given the opportunity to gain insight into antique techniques and common patterns of *folk ornaments*, as that is the only way in which home-based craft can be revitalised (comp. Ibid.).

During the first years after the foundation of the museum, the museum collections comprised of a total of around 20,000 objects (Gjetvaj 1989: 20). During the first two years of operation of the Ethnographic Department, the management succeeded in acquiring a large number of objects primarily from the regions from which up to that point there had been no materials or slightly any at all.<sup>30</sup> The acquisition was performed through the network of the service of museum trustees or during field research. In the "Instructions for the Trustees of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb" (hereinafter "The Instructions") (1922) the mission was defined in which, among other things, the role of the Museum was highlighted in the preservation of original *folk art* as a potential model for new production: "The role of the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum is to present the entire life and culture of our people, primarily of

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29 The number of objects in the Textile Fragment Collection determined through revision shows the need for its reorganisation and transformation with the ultimate goal of overall professional processing. Due to non-unified criteria for the definition of a textile fragment – a part of the traditional national costume / a clothing item and the definition of a weaving and embroidery pattern, as well as due to different approaches to the collections of traditional national costumes into which some textile fragments were accessioned and through the logic of content and interpretation, in 2018 a proposal was put forward concerning the change of the name of the collection into the Collection of Weaving and Embroidery Patterns.

30 The largest number of objects from five fundamental collections "is from the Sisak region, i.e. from the suburb of Sisak from which the traditional costume typical of the region along the Sava River originates. The latter area encompasses the region by the Sava River, in terms of length starting from around Velika Gorica to Jasenovac and in terms of its largest width ranging from Moslavina to Samobor Hills" (s.n. 1922: 76), based on the information provided in the Ethnographic Acquisitions dating back to 1922.

peasants, which has to the greatest extent preserved our folk features (s.n. 1922: 347). In addition to “scientific research on the features of our people, and humans in general” the task of the museum is to “promote all the school education and the expansion of education in general; to be a source of incentives for art and craft and finally, as an institution of high culture to represent a part of our entire culture”. The Museum management founded the institution of trustees striving to collect as intensively and as quickly as possible “such objects, primarily peasant objects produced by home-based handicraft businesses that have been increasingly disappearing”. Moreover, (Ibid.) “The Instructions” mention the section of applied *folk art* for which objects need to be acquired “of any type, which show the intention of their maker, to use the forms based on the gems of *folk art* for the purpose of using them to meet the needs of the higher ‘lordly’ culture” (s.n. 1922: 349).

Salamon Berger, the Director of the Ethnographic Museum from its foundation to 1925 when Vladimir Tkalčić took over, who by that time had been the only curator, actually until his death he held the title of Honorary Director and he actively participated in the Museum activities. “Berger’s letters and memos, preserved in the Documentation (...) prove that, irrespective of previous disappointments and decisions about stopping the protection of the products of the Croatian home-based manufacturing, he did not abandon his efforts until his death at the beginning of 1934.” (Bušić 2009: 285)

Following the polysystem theory approach in the research of the Croatian traditional textile handicraft<sup>31</sup> within a broader socio-historical context in which textile was produced and used, Katarina Bušić in her paper entitled “Salamon Berger and the Start of Exhibition Activity of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb” (2009) shows that what at the time was the notion of *folk textile art*, primarily through the activity of the Director Salamon Berger, affected both the domestic and international exhibition activities of the Ethnographic Museum, from its foundation to the start of the World War II. Based on archival records, formal and personal letters written by Salamon Berger to different business associates both in the country and abroad, the author was striving to deepen the existing insights about early exhibitions of the Ethnographic Museum, which were defined by Berger’s efforts around the promotion of home-based craft businesses and the presentation of *folk art*, were primarily limited to textile and small wooden objects (including doodled pumpkins) intended for sale on both domestic and international markets. The museum exhibition policy affected the formation of the broader social perception of folk (textile)<sup>32</sup> art during that period (comp. Bušić 2009: 281-282). In both the domestic and international exhibition activities, Berger included a large number of associates – co-operatives, craft workshops, individuals involved in fieldwork and he strived to involve also state institutions and companies that provided market-adjusted

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31 Polysystem theory was considered as a tool that “shows that we follow who *the producers and the consumers of folk art* were; how it changed and how complex *the institution* in connection with *folk art* was; how the *repertoire* for production and consumption of products changed; what types of *products* were considered folk art; and finally, what changes occurred in the trends of the *market* on which *folk art* products were promoted both in a specific region and during the specific period” (Bonifačić 1997: 154).

32 In the previously mentioned text, the author addressed the issue of textile products.



products<sup>33</sup> within the scope of their activities. Due to the fact that Berger's ideas and his work coincide with those that in the 1920's and in the 1930's were the main goals of activities of individual civic associations and *Seljačka sloga* (Peasant Concord), a cultural and educational organisation of the Croatian Peasant Party, "a conclusion can be reached that from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the start of the Second World War home-based crafts almost continuously had protectors and promotors (Bušić 2009: 288). Nevertheless, upon the World's Fair held in 1939 in New York, changes were evident in terms of selection and presentation of materials in favour of presenting entire sets of traditional national costumes and exhibiting objects of everyday use. The common concept of previous exhibitions, according to the details provided in Berger's letter<sup>34</sup> with the international exhibition in Barcelona in 1929, was that exhibitions need to feature only "... our beautiful and new products of domestic work, which are the only ones worthy of affirmation abroad..." and that the practices that need to be abandoned are those in which "...old, unclean and stitched up ethnographic objects, which only have scientific significance and exhibited to the international public only degrade the cultural and artistic life of our people..." (Berger according to Bušić 2009: 288).

The first permanent exhibition of the Ethnographic Museum was opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1922<sup>35</sup> in accordance with Berger's concept. Photographs of crammed exhibition halls evoke the role of a study collection. In Mirko Kus-Nikolajev's words, from the Preface to the first museum guidebook entitled "Walks through the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb" (1927): "Objects need to be studied, as well as brought into connection with the life from which they resulted and whose expression they are. Each of the ornaments that a patriotic female lyceum student copies for her attire is a segment not only of artistic, but also the general spiritual culture of our people" (Kus-Nikolajev 1927: 19). According to the guidebook, different types of materials were exhibited from throughout Croatia and the neighbouring regions, as well as objects of non-European cultures. Within the partially changed exhibition from 1935, "Applied Folk Art" was separated into a special unit on the first floor of the exhibition space. It included the lace from the island of Pag, different wool knits from Slavonia, woven bags, money pouches and belts from Dalmatia, leatherware, clothing and textile furnishings, as well as "the Director Berger's keepsakes" (comp. Gjetvaj 1989: 40; Bušić 2009: 294).

Out of the temporary exhibitions in connection with the topic addressed in this paper, it is important to mention the exhibition by the academy-trained painter Srećko Sabljak held in 1922 and highly praised in the press at the time. Within the interpretation of folk motifs in new craft products, primarily carved wooden items, he exhibited also the works by his apprentices, protégés of the Lepoglava prison and his exhibition of wooden objects made following the model of museum exhibits dating back to 1931.

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33 Find out more about names of individuals, associations and institutions, as well as types of ordered objects in Bušić 2009.

34 From Berger's letter to Eleonora Švrljuga, the finance minister's wife, "Salamon Berger (official letters and private writings), 1926-1933" (Documentation of the EMZ).

35 The first exhibition at the Museum was staged in July 1920 on the occasion of the visit of the Regent Aleksandar Karadorđević and it remained open to the public for only two months.

Connecting the folk and the peasant with the bourgeois and academic visual expression has always been linked with the need to define a recognisable *national style*, irrespective of whether it was the case of applied art items or attempts to formulate visual art theories. Efforts were made to create a contemporary *folk art* through interpretation of folk motifs using a contemporary visual expression in the design of decorative and usable objects. The *folk art* in question would include autochthonous national characteristics, putting the Croatian production in the context of contemporary tendencies brought together by the appearance of Art Déco (Galjer and Klobučar 2012: 78). The ethnographic objects, currently stored in museums, became accessible to a broad urban public, providing inspiration to a large number of architects, painters and sculptors. In 1925, the Ethnographic Museum published “The Collection of Croatian Folk Ornaments” and by 1934 six more issues were published. Over time, the idea about original artistic craft production was complemented by the need to develop an authentic style of the overall Croatian visual art. At the theoretical level,<sup>36</sup> these trends mark “the start of the emancipation of *folk visual art* from the imposed utilitarianism and transfer to the area of scientific interest” (Vojnović 1993: 16).

According to Vjera Bonifačić, the conceptual and terminological dilemma about what is the “real” *folk art*, the art originating from rural areas or the applied art in urban areas, was solved in the 1930’s, when ethnologists, in connection with the relatively newly established Ethnographic Museum (1919) and the Chair of Ethnology at the University of Zagreb (1924) started mastering “the institution” of *folk art* through the authority of their scientific methods and classifications (comp. Bonifačić 1997: 147).

By the publication of Gavazzi’s book entitled “The Croatian Folk Art” (1944) that transition can be followed in the ethnological papers of that time in which individual segments of the phenomenon were addressed from the theoretical aspect. Mirko Kus-Nikolajev, the author of the previously mentioned museum guidebook, worked in the Ethnographic Museum from 1925 to 1933. In his work, he promoted the research on both cultural dynamics and cultural processes in the interpretation of visual features in the Croatian *folk art*. In 1935, he published a text in “The Herald of the Ethnographic Museum” in Zagreb. The text in question was entitled “Folk Ornaments” in which he adopted an innovative approach to the research of *folk visual expression*, introducing what at the time were actual sociological, aesthetic and psychological theoretical hypotheses in analysis of ornaments. In accordance with the European theoretical thought in the field of sociology and art history of his time, in the ornaments he identified “the essence of life of folk art” and pointed out that an ornament is a means of expression for peasants, an artistic idea “in which their feelings, thoughts and notions are concentrated” (Kus-Nikolajev 1935: 43). He also wrote about the problems of organised home-based handicraft, emphasising the fact that at the point when handicraft items became a market product “under the circumstances”, losing their integrity and originality and becoming only “nice copies” (comp. Kus-Nikolajev 1934: 185).

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36 The painter Ljubo Babić used the term *folk art* referring to the visual art activity of peasants, which was to become a model for those educated in visual art in their intentional quest for an original expression (Vojnović-Traživuk 2006: 10).

In this context, a more systematic professional and scientific analysis is required of the position of doodled pumpkins between the praised artistic originality of, what once was, primarily shepherds' work for own use, those revitalised and commercialised in the process of activity of organised home-based handicraft businesses and those that over time, as stated by Zdenka Lechner at the end of her text entitled "Pumpkin doodling in the region of Županja" (1983) "did not lose a connection with the tradition and deserve to be included in folk art" (Lechner 1983: 85). The Doodled Pumpkin Collection of the Ethnographic Museum currently comprises of 724 objects – decorated pumpkins and the tools used for their decoration, originating during the period spanning from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to this day. Decorated, *doodled* pumpkins are a part of the initial collection and the history of the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum, which has been confirmed by the oldest samples taken over from the Croatian National Museum (the oldest decorated pumpkin with a carved year 1805), the Museum of Arts and Crafts, The Trades and Crafts Museum and private collections. A large number of objects accessioned into the collections in 1926 from the so-called Complementary Collection of Salamon Berger. The tradition of pumpkin decoration – *doodling*, has been more or less continuous, recorded in the region of North-East Croatia, near Županja, Đakovo, as well as a part of Vinkovci and Slavonski Brod region.<sup>37</sup> Based on professional literature and museum acquisitions, a conclusion can be reached that pumpkin decoration in the region of Županja was the most prolific. Hence, it is important to highlight the village of Gradište, in which pumpkin doodling during the period between the 1920's and the 1930's occurred within organised home-based handicraft businesses.<sup>38</sup> Irrespective of the fact that the round surface of the pumpkin was decorated by master *doodlers* modifying the basic ornaments, recognisable work by individual masters can still be identified and traced.<sup>39</sup> The creative and individual dimension of the signed and recognisable author's work brings closer the artistry of pumpkin doodles to the notion of artistic.

The text by Antun Matasović entitled "Slavonian Border Pumpkins" dating back to 1922 points out that "in the absence of real pumpkin ornaments, other patterns were resorted to. These primarily originated from school drawing books, textbooks and calendars" (Matasović 1922: 158). Moreover, he praised harmony and elegance of our older doodled pumpkins, which "are never stereotyped, but regularly show artistic

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37 The oldest known doodled pumpkin, dating back to 1734, has been housed in the Museum of Slavonia in Osijek. It is a rare example among pumpkins with a scenic depiction, a scene from life (border guards and policemen (?) with rifles, a sabre and a flag, cavalry or infantry) was accepted as an exception, rather than as a first-class document "also because its origin was being questioned" (comp. Lechner 1983: 82).

38 Also Kršnjavi in *Listovi iz Slavonije* ("News from Slavonia") (1882), admired that shepherd's work and considered it worthy of encouragement within home-based manufacturing. The information about organised home-based handicraft business has been collected about Gradište where 1925 is considered as a crucial year or perhaps a few years earlier (Lechner 1983: 79).

39 Pumpkin doodling reached the pinnacle at the end of the 19th and over the first decades of the 20th century, when recognisable handwriting of individual masters can be tracked, such as Andrija Lešić, Antun Blaževac, Antun Mikinac, Franjo Kovačević, Franjo Ivkovic and Mato Kadić. At the end of the last century the work by Marta Dretvić, Ilija Dretvić, Kata Žigmundovac and Marice Stojanović accessioned into the Collection, while Gradište remained one of the last centres in which this artistry is still vital.

inventiveness and independence (Ibid.).”At present, at the point when pumpkin doodles are dying out, new pumpkin doodlers do not have valuable new patterns” (Ibid.). He did not consider the peasant work for the Zagreb Women’s Association for the Preservation of Folk Art as “the Croatian folk art pumpkins, because the peasants making them were aware of the fact that they were making them for the gentry” (Ibid.: 159). The ornaments were conspicuously regular and some were favoured, “these pumpkins are attractive, but they give an impression of good factory products, as they lack the warmth of sincere artistic work” (Ibid.). Also in peasant households pumpkins were at the time only decorative objects, according to Matasović. In those regions where pumpkin doodles were no longer cultivated, he recommended to doodle following specific patterns, which needed to be made in accordance with the ornaments on older pumpkins (Ibid.). That was done by a teacher from Zagreb Draga Kovačević-Dugački<sup>40</sup> in the album entitled “Folk Motifs from the Pumpkins” with a description, names, typology of motifs and drawings, which “as it appears, was used by pumpkin doodlers as a source of patterns, rather than pumpkins” (Lechner 1983: 80). The album was approved and recommended by the Department of Religion and Education in Zagreb for all the elementary, civic, secondary and vocational schools. Is it possible also in this case to speak of an example where “members of urban population firstly individually conduct a research on traditional artistry and acquire knowledge and skills from peasant women and men and then in organised (and modified?) form yet again spread it throughout rural areas” (Muraj 2006: 23).<sup>41</sup>

Yet another promoter of folk handicraft was Ženka Frangeš “one of the most educated women in Zagreb of her time” who “expressed her own liberal spirit and artistic affinities through different forms of cultural activism” (Galjer and Klobučar 2012: 66). Studying home-based craft businesses (weaving, embroidery, carpet making, lace making, wood carving, pottery, basket weaving, pumpkin doodling and manufacturing of children’s wooden toys) prompted her to establish the Women’s Association for Preservation and Promotion of the Croatian Folk Arts and Crafts in Zagreb in 1913.<sup>42</sup> In the 1920’s, she published discussions and exhibition reviews in the field of home-based manufacturing and artistic crafts in magazines and journals “*Obzor*”, “*Hrvatska njiva*”, “*Radiša*”, “*Seljačka prosvjeta*”, “*Narodna zaštita*”, “*Dom i svijet*”. The commercial and economic aspects were significant in the operations of the Association, striving to transform home-based craft businesses into a fundamental factor of national economy, where the consciousness of national identity was clearly pointed out and among the crucial

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40 Folk motifs from the pumpkins were collected by Draga Kovačević-Dugački, a teacher in women’s public school II in Zagreb. The year of publication was not provided, yet in accordance with the information provided by the professor Milovan Gavazzi, Ph.D., it was in 1924. (Lechner 1983: 80).

41 The conclusion reached by Aleksandra Muraj about the activity of the educator Klotilda Cvetišić in lessons in handiwork at schools and the use of motifs from *domestic folk art* and practised courses in home-based handicraft in rural environments.

42 At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Croatia saw the foundation of several women’s associations for the promotion of traditional textile handiwork. The first Association for Folk Weaving and Embroidery was founded in 1908 in Petrinja. Women’s Associations were involved in exhibitions by *Zagrebački zbor* (the predecessor of the Zagreb Fair) and through Berger’s mediation they exhibited and sold their works also in some international exhibitions (Bušić 2009: 287).

determinants of the constitutive Rules (comp. Galjer and Klobučar 2012: 67-68).<sup>43</sup> While striving to meet its objectives, the Association closely co-operated with *Seljačka sloga* (Peasant Concord), a cultural and educational organisation of the Croatian Peasant Party (comp. Bušić 2009: 287). In the World's Fair held in Paris in 1900, several hundred exhibited pumpkins collected upon the initiative by Ivo Mallin, Ph.D., who at the time was the Head of the Department for National Economy, attracted "general interest of the international public", as stated by Ženka Frangeš in her text written for the *Dom i svijet* ("Home and the World") magazine in 1922. The text entitled "Pumpkin Doodling in Slavonia" (1922) showed a saviour's role of individuals from educational circles and "the Croatian folk art enthusiasts", like the professor Marko Peroš from the Crafts School in Zagreb who proposed different ways of preservation of *pumpkin doodles* in schools, as well as the teacher Vladoje Ivakić in Slavonia. He attributed the benefits of revitalisation and commercialisation to the Women's Association for the Preservation of the Croatian Folk Art (comp. Frangeš 1922). During the interwar period "pumpkin doodle makers from Gradiška flooded Zagreb with their products", while from 1928 to 1933 they even had an exhibition pavilion in the *Zagrebački zbor* (the predecessor of the Zagreb Fair) (comp. Lechner 1983: 79).<sup>44</sup> After the events organised by the Croatian Radiša Society from 1919 and 1920, the Zagreb Fair located at the address in Savska street, at the time still referred to as the *Zagrebački zbor*, was the venue in which, in addition to other economic activities, exhibition of *products of home-based folk craft businesses* was intended to commercialise that activity (comp. Muraj 2006: 32). During that period, too, many objects were accessioned into the Museum collections.

Successive documenting<sup>45</sup> of carved wooden objects can be tracked in the Collection of Household Objects, the Furniture Collection, the Collection of Tools and Accessories for Textile Processing, the Collection of Smoking Accessories, the Collection of Traditional Economy and, until the latest reorganisation of museum collections, the Collection of Distaffs and the Collection of Decorated Wood. Aesthetic valorisation of the decorativeness of the decorated *kepčija* (carved wooden cups), *vodir* (wooden carrying cases for whetstones), *britvenica* (razor boxes), *lopar* (wooden shovels for taking the bread out of the oven), distaffs, walking canes, shelves, chests... found its safe haven in practical use of new products for the urban market. What objects and in what way objects were made in crafts schools and handicraft associations is yet to be recorded and systematically arranged. The same applies to the changes occurring in rural wood carving, additional activity of gifted individuals and they were linked with the changes in techniques and tools that affect the visual expression. I certainly believe that a more

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43 The Rules of the Women's Association for Preservation and Promotion of Folk Popular Art and Crafts in Zagreb, Zagreb, 1913, 3-4.

44 After the year 1950, they saw a further market expansion and they supplied companies involved in activities in connection with tourism and folklore in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade (Lechner 1983: 80).

45 Upon museum reorganisations of work and organisational structure over the years, the last entry made by the Section of Folk Art can be seen in the Statutes dating back to 1966, while the organisational structure in 1977 included a collection of small decorated wooden objects, pumpkins doodles, smoking pipes and a collection of distaffs arranged in the Section of Folk Handicraft and Traditional Crafts that studies all the forms of folk handicraft, with the exception of textile (comp. Gjetvaj 1989: 52-55).

systematic research of visual folklore is required in our professional practice, not only in textile collections.<sup>46</sup>

In the 1930's, the Ethnographic Museum participated in the exhibitions at the *Zagrebački zbor*. Gjetvaj recorded "The Fisheries Exhibition" and "The Exhibition of Applied Folk Handicraft", both held in 1935 (Gjetvaj 1989: 94). In the text entitled "The First Exhibition of Applied Folk Art in the Autumn Exhibition at the *Zagrebački zbor* in Zagreb (1936), Ivo Franić, Director of the Museum from 1935 to 1939, pointed out the difference between folk popular art, "precious unique items" of peasant art intended to meet the needs of the village and pulling away from the irruption of urban culture and the applied popular art, "adroitness of the peasants to artistically create popular art based on crafts, which can meet many urban needs" (Franić 1936: 213). It certainly needs to be highlighted that, according to Franić "the materials were arranged clearly and professionally, in an effort to point out the type of use, performance technique, the use of original professional ornaments and the school that they belong to" (Franić 1936: 213).

According to Vjera Bonifačić, *folk art* as cultural activity started fully functioning as a "semiotic system, hence as indisputable generally accepted cultural activity in Croatia" (Bonifačić 1997: 147), only starting from the 1930's as a result of the canonisation of the scientific model of cultural and historical approach to research of textile (and other) products of *folk art* in the leading relevant institutions. That was also due to the activities performed by *Seljačka sloga* (Peasant Concord), which, abandoning former efforts to bring together *the peasant* and *for the gentry, urban* (foreign), in the 1930's started moving in the opposite direction, returning to the original, antique, autochthonous – *ours, peasant* and *domestic* (comp. Bušić 2009: 282). The objects of *original folk art* from that time until the present day have almost exclusively been collected in ethnographic museums and exhibited and interpreted depending on their actual intended use in different contexts, while the objects of "applied popular art" made in home-based craft businesses for (international) urban market after the Second World War have been sold as "folk handicraft", but have rarely been exhibited or preserved in museums (comp. Bonifačić 1997: 147).<sup>47</sup>

By the end of the interwar period, the peasant textile artistry, besides other handicraft activities, received state support in the form of planning of the Central Institute for the Promotion of Home-Based *Folk Craft*, whose activity was halted by the start of the Second World War (comp. Muraj 2006: 34). According to Branka Vojnović-Traživuk, long presence and the success of the use of the idea of *folk art* under the framework of different state policies "confirm its folklore character" (Vojnović-Traživuk 2016: 146).

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46 The manufacturing of traditional children's toys within organised home-based handicraft was documented in detail and recorded in the Collection of Traditional Children's Toys, since the Collection Manager Iris Biškupić-Bašić has been systematically professionally and scientifically keeping abreast also of the contemporary manufacturing.

47 The Ethnographic Museum has a Souvenir Collection, objects from Croatia, as well as from other parts of the world.

## THE FINAL WORD ON “OUR TOGS”<sup>48</sup>

Musealisation is a process in which objects, characteristics and ideas associated with them are transferred from the living context into the museological. The identified and theoretically devised process of musealisation affects the contemporary understanding and retroactive interpretation of the creation and development of collections and museums in general. Historical museology unveils a wealth of examples of heritage musealisation, taking into consideration conceptual changes of incentives for the selection and transfer of objects from the primary context into the museological, or the motivation and character of collecting (comp. Maroević 2005).

The European trends of putting the pure and applied art on an equal footing, integration of folk expression into artistic crafts and contemporary architecture, primarily the strengthening of the economy and cultural identity through encouraging organised home-based handicraft, as well as through development of arts and crafts and education of experts, have shaped the Croatian cultural and artistic space during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that point, in addition to historicistic inspiration for artistic creation following the models from the past, *folk art* also attracted the interest of the Croatian cultural and intellectual community. The notion of *folk art* as original visual art expression enabled the identification of its economic potential in the development both of authentic domestic crafts and of domestic production.

The Arts and Crafts Society with its President Izidor Kršnjavi took over the role of illuminators in the nurturing of artistic and *folk crafts*. In addition to actual tasks and results in a large number of long-term projects, the Society contributed to the establishment of the required institutional infrastructure. Upon positive valorisation of *original folk handicrafts* that have been disappearing over time, *folk art* imposes itself as a special form of museum evidence of *folk culture*. Amid the renewing trends, most ethnographic collections had a utilitarian and didactic function, while the museum discourse representative of the area of Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century represented a concept of the museum of arts and crafts. The first founders of the Museum of Arts and Crafts headed by Kršnjavi “included rags and the remains from *peasant folk art* in the first collection in that museum” (Franić 1936: 3). Kršnjavi himself wrote as follows “Even on this very day four museums compete in collecting artistic craft objects and three of them focus on peasant artistic crafts” (Kršnjavi 1980: 181 according to Petrović 1992: 153). From the first concepts of Zagreb-based museums (and their changes) a conclusion can be reached that the first incentive for the foundation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb (1880) was ethnographic, while the initial name of the existing Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb (1919) was the Trades and Crafts Museum (1904).

The efforts made by Salamon Berger, the first Director of the Ethnographic Museum, around organisation of home-based manufacturing and product placement both on the

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48 Izidor Kršnjavi considered “our togs”, “rags”, identified as “art gems” as textile patterns that were crucial for the start of operations of the Crafts Museum, i.e. the Museum of Arts and Crafts (Petrović 1992: 152 and Muraj 2006: 21-22).



domestic and international markets in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are well documented and publicised. As a collector and textile merchant, he exploited his insight into the production process for organising home-based manufacturing. He based his activity primarily on collecting folk motifs from traditional textile objects and their use on contemporary textile in fashion industry. The exhibition industry of the Ethnographic Museum throughout Berger's term of office as the Director and his active involvement affected the shaping of the broader social perception of *folk art* during that period.

A brief overview of the collections during the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum brought together through the Collection of Salamon Berger and the ethnographic collections of the Croatian National Museum, the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the Trades and Crafts Museum and the Croatian School Museum, documents the practice of collection policy with the origin in the described socio-political and cultural occurrences. The analysis of the type of objects of the initial collections of the Museum shows that these were mostly textile objects, primarily parts of clothing items with woven or embroidered ornaments and lace fragments. The category of weave and embroidery patterns is currently integrated in the Textile Fragment Collection. Their abundance and characteristics correspond to the concept of collecting fragments as patterns of textile handicraft, which is certainly in accordance with the initial collector's interest focused on design and techniques of making of objects, based on stylistic visual trends at the time and the inspiration in the repertoire of *folk ornaments*. Traditional models and inspiration in the collected ethnographic materials provided an incentive for the museum activity that advocated the affirmation of *folk culture* as a national value, while the Ethnographic Museum found itself in the role of the mediator between the scientific interpretation of *folk art* and the activities focused on its further use.

Starting from the notion of *folk art* as a historic phenomenon that refers to actual "civic aesthetic valorisation of peasant work" (Vojnović-Traživuk 2006: 13), we can consider its meaning in specific economic, social and political circumstances. A historical overview of the processes of affirmation of the notion of *folk art* with an emphasis on musealisation in the connection between cultural activities from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the Second World War is a contribution to the interpretation of Textile Fragment Collection "our togs", on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Museum.

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