

Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb – getting ready for a hyper-connected environment

Since it was established, almost a hundred years ago, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb has seen many changes in its environment. However, the second decade of the 21st century may bring challenges that pose an extra burden for a traditional heritage institution. One of the key issues for museums today is how to stay relevant for their audiences in a hyper-connected world that creates a completely different context and rules of operation.

In order to cope with new demands, museum professionals are pursuing new philosophies, rethinking their roles and taking into account realities like digital power, instantly connected audiences or global crises. Museums care about huge and valuable collections, they are often housed in buildings whose maintenance is demanding, their activities require substantial public support and the inflow of young professionals with new skills is insufficient – all these things have an impact on the Ethnographic Museum, too.

How to address these issues is a challenge for the museum management. The ability to use existing resources in the best possible way and the attempt to open new opportunities for development and growth seem to be the only way out. Museums that have approached their goals in a strategic way and have taken a broader scope may hope for a better future. Therefore, the Ethnographic Museum has a marked path to follow, learning from the experience of others and finding strength to abandon former practices. Positive developments that have been already achieved like the promotion of intercultural dialogue may additionally help the museum to reach its goal – to become a friendly and interactive place for visitors. The museum is not only a place for learning but also a communication platform where users can create new ideas, foster innovation and seek creative solutions.

Creativity gives the museum a new vitality to pursue its mission with passion and expertise. In order to be able to meet those needs, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb needs to develop new skills and promote philosophy summarised in the sentence “**a museum is not about what it contains but about what it makes possible**”.

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