

Zvezdana Antos, senior curator

Ethnographic museum, Zagreb, Croatia

zantos@emz.hr

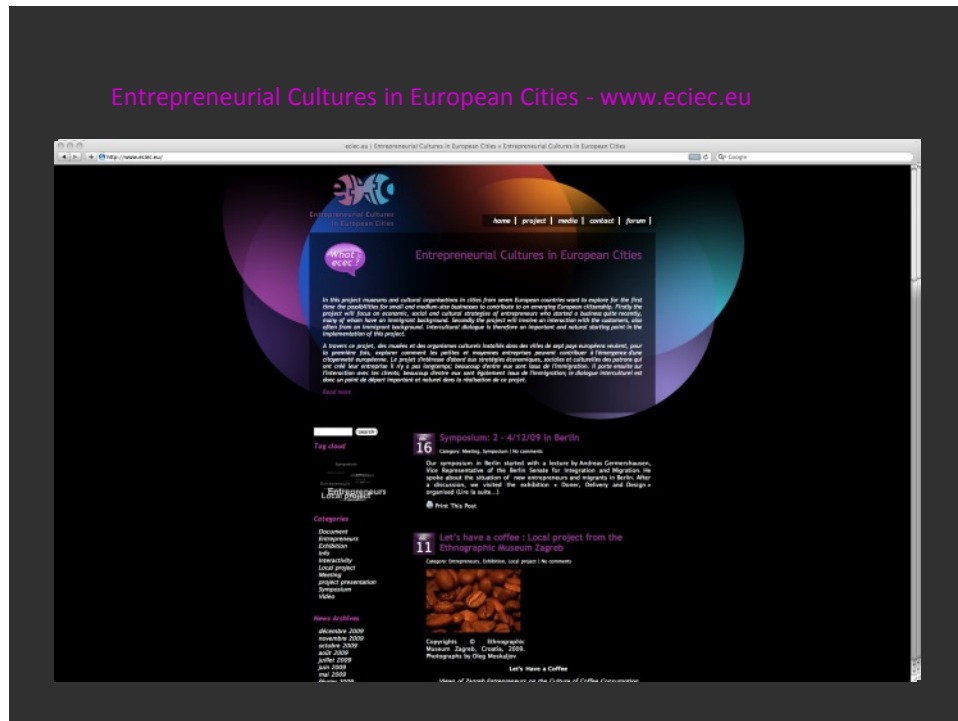
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Let's have a coffee! – Interpretation of items from our daily life

The exhibition *Let's Have a Coffee, Views of Zagreb Entrepreneurs on the Culture of Coffee Consumption* of the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum is a result of the two-year research conducted within the scope of the project *Entrepreneurial Cultures and European Cities* with the financial support of the European Union – Program Culture (2008-2010) aimed at the research of small and midsize entrepreneurship in seven European cities (Amsterdam, Berlin, Volos, Barcelona, Liverpool, Luxembourg and Zagreb)¹. The project focused primarily on economic, social and cultural strategies of entrepreneurs, many of immigrant background. The objective of the project was to prove how innovativeness and creativity are linked to new entrepreneurial initiatives in the sense of promoting interdisciplinary collection of the tangible and intangible heritage of present-day entrepreneurs. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the project, each partner made a contribution from its immediate professional field using specific museum work methodology such as the *outreach method* as an innovative way of attracting new audience to museums. Museum professionals exchanged information at working meetings and presented their results at local exhibitions and at various activities realised in cooperation with entrepreneurs. During the work on the project, the project web site [http://www.eciec.eu/](http://www.eciec.eu) was used to present current research and create a virtual collection

¹ Partners in the project are the Amsterdam Historical Museum (AHM); the Museum of European Culture (MEC), Berlin; the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum (EMZ); the Municipal Center for Historical Research and Documentation of Volos (AHM), Volos; Institut de formation sociale (IFS), Luxembourg; the Barcelona History Museum (MUHBA), Barcelona and the National Museum Liverpool (NML), Liverpool. Associated partners are Imagine Identity and Culture (Imagine IC), Amsterdam; Neighbourhood Museum, Berlin; Centre de Documentation sur les Migrations Humaines (CDMH), Dudenlange (L) and the Tallinn City Museum, Tallinn.

of items. Project results were published in a joint publication and in the Digital Exhibition Kit (DEK)² on DVD, which contains various stories of entrepreneurial cultures told by seven European cities.



The participation in the project was a challenge for the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum, as it enabled us to research a hitherto unresearched subject in the domain of urban ethnology/cultural anthropology in Croatia and to use innovative methods to attract new audience to the museum, and also as a way to collect contemporary items. Since the theme was broad, the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum decided to focus on small entrepreneurs in Zagreb whose business is connected to coffee. The immediate reason for choosing this subject was that coffeehouses and cafés, as places of coffee consumption, offer an interesting perspective for studying contemporary life of urban dwellers and their lifestyles, which are as urban phenomena inevitable parts of the global culture and consumer society (consumerism). In view of the interestingness of the subject matter, we decided to observe it from a broader perspective, i.e. to approach it from a culturological point of view.

²Digital Exhibition Kit (DEK) – DVD-ROM, published by the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum, Editor: Zvezdana Antoš

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how these methods were used in the work on the local project *Let's Have a Coffee, Views of Zagreb Entrepreneurs on the Culture of Coffee Consumption*.

Collecting Tangible and Intangible Heritage of Present-Day Entrepreneurs

In the recent years, the approach to collecting items has changed in many museums. Museums started focusing on the needs of their users and therefore shifted their basic activity from collecting items towards working with visitors. This prompted them to focus their attention to the audience when collecting cultural heritage, i.e. to involve citizens in the documentation of their history and culture. This approach was used in the project *Entrepreneurial Cultures in European Cities*, which referred to interdisciplinary collection of items. The project resulted in numerous local projects during which curators, museum pedagogues and volunteers cooperated with entrepreneurs and took an active part in collecting tangible and intangible heritage. The basic idea was to collect items that are typical for a line of business and with which individuals can identify. In this, it was particularly important to establish contact with entrepreneurs who will recognise the museum as a place that preserves their history and as a place of intercultural dialogue. Searching for characteristic items that present contemporary entrepreneurs and at the same time represent contemporary culture was a new challenge for museums. Thus, for instance, the Museum of European Culture in Berlin collected objects connected to the business of producing and distributing the „Döner kebab“, which symbolise today's global fast food culture brought and developed by Turkish entrepreneurs who immigrated to Berlin. In the museum collection, these objects will not only symbolise an aspect of the fast food culture, but also represent a certain immigrant community in Berlin (the Turks).



„Döner, Delivery and Design – Entrepreneurs in Berlin, MEK 2009/2010.

Zagreb Ethnographic Museum collected items related to coffee consumption and small entrepreneurs in the coffee business, since coffeehouses and cafés are as urban phenomena inevitable parts of the global culture and consumer society (consumerism). On the other hand, cafés are interesting because they emerged in the 1970s as the first forms of private entrepreneurship at the time of socialism and developed into popular meeting-points of Zagrebians. The 1990s, after Croatia gained independence, saw a steep rise of private entrepreneurship, especially cafés, which is witnessed by the fact that 16,000 owners of catering businesses were registered in the register of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts by 2009. One of the reasons why cafés are so numerous is the fact that certain café owners moved to Zagreb from various regions of Croatia and the neighbouring countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania etc.) in the late 1900s with the intention to launch a private business and strengthen and improve their economic status. The historical museum collection contains numerous items symbolising the consumption of coffee since the 19th century to the present day on a daily level, in various cultures. This opened up a new possibility to present items from (national and non-European) collections of the Ethnographic Museum and to link them to contemporary items of our daily life. The collected daily-life items

will be included in the historical collection and thus represent a document of social life in Croatia.



The exhibition *Let's Have a Coffee!*, EMZ 2010.

Ethnographic museums have the task of chronicling the present in their collections and of identifying contemporary items that will meaningfully document it for a future audience. In doing so they should not only collect and preserve our heritage, but also address theoretical aspects of an ethnological, anthropological and museological nature, in order to provide us with an opportunity for extending our knowledge of the items' multiple meanings which, in the case of specific objects documenting mass culture, are subject to change, depending on the scientific point of view, the social environment, and the individual context. Since cafés represent an important form of socialisation, we considered it especially important to present this aspect as well. During research we recorded the film *Let's Have a Coffee!* where we have shown how innovativeness and creativity influenced the coffee entrepreneurship

concept. In this film, the opinions of entrepreneurs were as relevant to us as the opinions of their customers and employees.



Film *Let's Have a Coffee!*

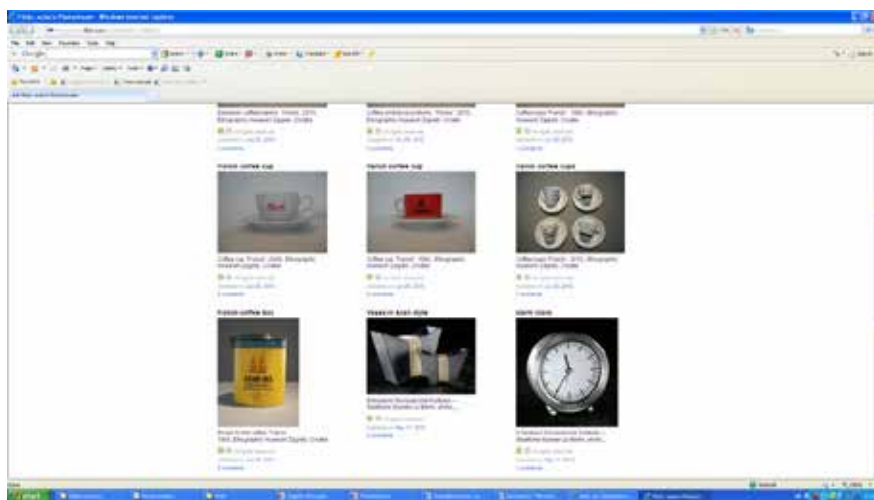
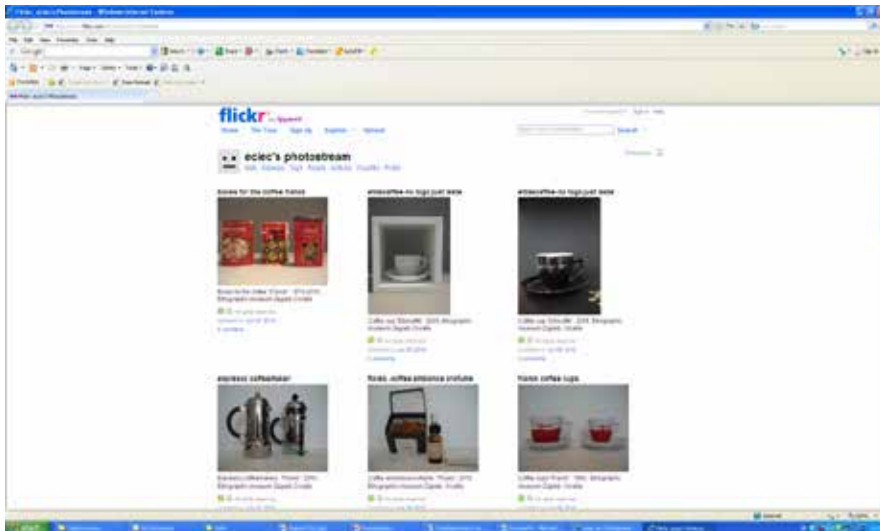
The collected tangible and intangible heritage of contemporary entrepreneurs is an important document illustrating urban daily life and represents a good starting point for researching lifestyles and a good basis for a visual interpretation of the collected items. The tangible culture must be linked to the spiritual and social culture, and individual phenomena must be observed as an integral part of the overall process. In their quest for new collection criteria, museum experts have opened up many old and new topics for discussion, and for a renewed consideration of the meaning of museum inventories.

Virtual collections of items

The practice of collecting the contemporary has shown that a future strategy of collecting items must be based on connecting various disciplines and items with users. An important

medium for collecting the contemporary is photography, which is mostly used in museums. Many museums focus on collecting old and recent photographic material, including material that can be helpful in researching the contemporary. To be able to make an in-depth analysis of the collected material, it is necessary to combine photographs with interviews. Another important issue regarding the collection of photographic material as part of our everyday culture is how to collect photographs made with cell phones and sent via e-mail or SMS, which have become typical phenomena of contemporary life. This issue is especially important in a globalised world where most people maintain contact with friends and family through various media.

Photograph collections are accessible to a broad circle of visitors at special Internet sites such as *Flickr*, where users also have the option of describing and commenting the photographs. An objective of the project *Entrepreneurial Cultures in European Cities* was to create a unique virtual collection through collecting the tangible and intangible heritage of new European entrepreneurs at a proprietary web site. Such collection of items makes it possible to add stories and objects for museum collections. Photographs of items collected in the course of research and work on local projects were uploaded to the ECEC project site and linked to *Flickr*. Exhibits presented together with items from other museums involved in the project became a shared cultural asset. Virtual collections of items are an interesting medium for museums thanks to the multiple possibilities of gathering information about an individual subject.



Virtual collections of items on *Flickr*.

Virtual collecting enables us to experiment with different ways of collecting items, both virtual and real ones. It is interesting that some museums used Internet portals to achieve active cooperation with the community in procuring new items for museum collections. For example, the Museum of Liverpool used *Facebook* as an innovative site to establish cooperation with the local community for its local project „The Secret Life of Smithdown Road“. *Facebook* members could upload contemporary photographs of the street, the shops and their owners to the *Flickr* web site. This enabled the museum to develop a small collection of best-selling items representing the business of individual entrepreneurs, with photo and video documentation. The Amsterdam Historical Museum also used an interactive Internet site as a portal where entrepreneurs, their customers and other interested people

could post their stories, videos, photographs and items related to their neighbourhood shops. Selected exemplars from the collected material will be used for the exhibition to be displayed at the Amsterdam Historical Museum in 2011 and the selected items will become part of the museum collection.

As opposed to the virtual exhibition which enables users to participate in the creation of the collection contents, curators always have the last say when it comes to final decision and selection of items in physical museum collections. Virtual collections of items are also, naturally, subject to numerous debates regarding their durability, the authenticity of data describing an item or photograph and the issue of how to design a virtual collection in the future. Museum professionals have discussed the possibility of collecting items of our contemporary in virtual form only. This theoretical possibility is supported by IT scientists, because digital technology enabled us to record the form and appearance of an item and it thus becomes real. Therefore, they believe that it is not necessary to keep it in a museum collection. Future generations will decide whether to keep items from our contemporary in digital form only, but they must bear in mind that it represents a selective process of collecting data about real items and their appearance in digital forms. With digitalisation, certain problems can occur regarding the way of recording items, because we can never record all details that could be interesting about an item with only one recording. It is always important whether we will use this digital photograph for user education or scientific research. By using new technologies, cultural institutions strengthen the knowledge based on interpretation and contextualisation. Virtual visitors will perhaps better understand and be better prepared for the interpretation of what they saw than in contact with original items. This is why museum professionals have a great role in the selection of items and information to be presented to virtual visitors. In collecting items of the contemporary, museums must combine the practice with theoretical aspects, primarily from the domain of urban ethnology/anthropology and contemporary museum science, which will expand the knowledge about multiple meanings of such items. The relevance of an individual item of global culture changes depending on scientific viewpoints, as well the social and individual

context. In this process, it is necessary to preserve evidence of intangible heritage in addition to tangible items. This information is very valuable even today and will be especially important to future researchers who will study our daily life.

Outreach method as an innovative way of attracting new audience to the museum

As a result of large and sudden demographic changes, especially in West European countries, museums faced a new challenge: they started developing different strategies to establish intercultural dialogue with the intention to draw new audiences to the museum. Using *outreach* work as a way to establishing contact with entrepreneurs as group that does not visit museums, mainly due to lack of leisure time, was an important method applied in the project *Entrepreneurial Cultures and European Cities*.

One of the methods applied is the outreach and participation program³ (*outreach work*), which is used in working with target groups that usually do not visit museums. *Outreach work* raises their interest in museum contents and promotes cooperation with the museum. Working with such groups in and outside the museum institution, museum professionals can involve citizens in diverse museum activities concerning work with collections and exhibitions.

We used *outreach* as a method to inform prospective users about their museum, its work and plans for the future⁴. To come closer to the user, we talked to them at the *café*, where we presented our museum and invited the entrepreneur to cooperate. Entrepreneurs introduced us to some regular customers, who took part in our research. Some entrepreneurs and their customers donated items for our collection, and the process of collecting items lasted for the

³ Tomislav Šola uses the term (outreach and participation programs) for *outreach* in the book: "Essays on museums and their theory, towards a cybernetic museum" (Šola, 2004: 96).

⁴ An example in case is the project of the National Museum Liverpool, where *outreach* work was used to inform the community of new entrepreneurs about plans and the construction of the new Museum of Liverpool.

entire duration of the exhibition. Besides items connected to coffee consumption, during our research we also collected film material about the culture of our everyday life⁵.

These items have a symbolic meaning for entrepreneurs and coffee consumers. The contextualisation of items is today regarded as a major source of knowledge in collecting the contemporary and redefining existing collections⁶. These items were displayed at the museum exhibition and at the project web site.



Boxes for the coffee *Franck*, EMZ (1970-2010)



Franck coffee cups, EMZ (1990)

⁵ During the preparation of the *Let's have a coffee!* exhibition I collected items connected to the daily culture of coffee consumption at cafés for the home inventory collection. Many of such items, like cups, are used by some people to drink coffee at home and have become their favourite cups. Thus, certain items also have an emotional meaning. This is why we have already included several cups from the 1970s into the museum collection. The exhibition featured *Franck*, the first coffee factory in Croatia that sells not only coffee, but also branded coffee cups to entrepreneurs. For this exhibition, the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum received a donation of cups from the 1960s to the present from *Franck* and included them in its home inventory collection. Since *Franck* cups can be seen on terrace tables of Zagreb cafés and they are related to Zagreb entrepreneurs, we recorded the film *Let's have a coffee!* to present the daily culture of coffee consumption. In this way, we contextualised the exhibited objects in daily life situations, and these items now have a new meaning because we enriched them with information about people who used them and what these items meant to them. We also obtained information about the *Inker* factory, which started producing coffee cups for *Franck* in the 1960s. The cups collected for the museum collection reflect the design and taste of the time, as well as the habits of people: in the 1960s, only small cups were used for black coffee, while midsized and large cups, depending of what kind of coffee we are having, came into use in the recent two decades. The recently collected items were also displayed virtually, at the web site of the project *Entrepreneurial Cultures in European Cities*, together with items from other museums who participated in the project. The interdisciplinary approach to collecting items enables the creation of new meanings and interpretation of museum items, this time in virtual form.

⁶ Cups from cafés, i.e. items connected with entrepreneurs, were also placed in context with historical collection items related to coffee consumption rituals in various cultures, including the Ethiopian coffee ceremony that was illustrated with the 19th century coffee set from the non-European collection, a Turkish coffeehouse interior that was reconstructed by items from the 19th and early 20th century Turkey and Bosnia in our non-European and home inventory collections, and the coffee drinking practice in a harem in Bosnia, which was illustrated with 19th century items from the home inventory collection. This approach to the subject enables us to establish a connection between museum collections and item interpretation.

The exhibition „Let’s have a coffee!“ is conceived, starting from its title, as an invitation to users to come together at the museum. Since coffee is extremely important in socialisation and connecting people, we wanted to attract people who are not typical museum visitors with a popular title, actually a phrase used in Croatia as an invitation to chat, to socialise. Our target audience were entrepreneurs, but also their customers, who often find time to get together over a coffee in cafés, but have no time for museums. This time, we invited them for a coffee at the museum: visitors could learn everything about their favourite beverage (coffee as a plant, how coffee arrived in Europe...), which was illustrated with items from European and non-European EMZ collections. Besides this, we organised various workshops, coffee tasting and events where the audience could actively participate.



Outreach work with the intention to draw new audiences to the museum

Through our cooperation with entrepreneurs, we established such a contact that they began coming to the museum to see how others were presented and to establish cooperation with the museum in order to promote their business (advertising coffee machines, green coffee in beauty treatments or promotion of coffee-based perfumes). What entrepreneurs certainly gained from the project was publicity and a new experience. The exhibition was well visited and helped many of them promote their business.

Better interpretation and contextualisation of exhibits was achieved through the presentation contemporary conceptual works of art resulting from investigation of the social relevance of

coffee and used in the exhibition *Let's have a coffee!* at the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum. Delving into social implications of coffee, artists used a specific, conceptual, visual language to present their work. In this, they displayed their views of daily culture, i.e. culture as part of the daily practice and daily life of the most of us⁷. Contemporary art presented in a cultural context enables the audience to better understand it. Involving the community in artistic projects enables the museum to strengthen its position in society, so that it becomes a place of socialisation and expression of contemporary social issues presented through messages. An important objective of ethnographic collections is to strengthen the relationship between museums and their communities and to create archives and documentation about intangible heritage in the museum in order to promote intercultural dialogue. One of the roles of ethnographic museums in the contemporary world, in the context of multicultural societies, is to invent and document intangible heritage that is presented today. Researches are offered numerous perspectives of documenting modifications and especially innovations, which will help them understand historical heritage. The development and application of new practices in ethnographic museums is a challenge to the museum profession, which is faced with a new kind of work and new method of presentation. This enables ethnographic museums to take an active role in the society and act as institutions in the domain of heritage.

⁷ The well-known multimedia artist Dalibor Martinis is an artist who promptly and completely authentically reacts to various social and artistic trends is. He has given a performance of its kind under the title *Coffee with President Dalibor Martinis*. Two artists living in opposite parts of the world, Jasenka Bulj of Zagreb and Vanja Zarić of Sydney, made a photographic record of their socialising "over a cup of coffee". In exhibited photographs of the *Kavica-Coffee* project, they tried to find answers to questions: What does an invitation to coffee mean today? What is hidden in the coffee-drinking ritual that ties us to a table with two cups? The exhibition also features the work of Maja Rožman entitled Beverage for Artists. The work of this artist is a creative process, presented as a performance focusing on the element of giving through brewing coffee which is prepared by the artist based on recipes from the catalogue.

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