

# ICOM

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of museums

South East Europe

NEWSLETTER

2026



ICOM SEE IN 2025



CONFERENCE PAPERS

NEWS FROM SEE REGION

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES IN 2026



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 ICOM SEE

## LOOKING BACK

Dear all,

Being part of the ICOM network is not just having a good / free card for many museums around the world. The membership is a VIP ticket to many opportunities and access to a vast network of experts and professionals.

Museum work was my first wish after finishing university, but the situation in Slovenia in the “transition years” after gaining independence and reshaping the political system, whole society and values was difficult. Culture and cultural heritage were not a high priority and jobs in museums were rare. I worked as a project associate, researcher, teacher and public servant. I was fortunate that all jobs and tasks were in one way or another connected with cultural heritage and different approaches to safeguarding and developing cultural heritage. As we say – my wish came true in 2014 and one of my first actions was an application for ICOM membership. Sharing knowledge, information and getting the opportunity to meet and work with excellent colleagues gave me strength and “power” to improve my skills and gain competences for my everyday museum work. Besides active participation in ICOM Slovenia, I followed the work of different international committees and the Regional Alliance ICOM SEE. So, being part of the Regional Alliance ICOM Southeast Europe was and still is a great honor and one of the most important parts of my career. Entrusted with the leadership of the RA ICOM SEE for two mandates (2019–2022 and 2022–2025) gave me new challenges and of course additional work, but most importantly, being a Chair ensured me co-operation with exceptional colleagues from the SE region and beyond. I am happy and grateful to have the opportunity to thank all who participated in the many activities, projects and events that we organized and delivered in the last two mandates – from 2019 to 2025. It was a challenging period: we faced the pandemic, reshaped methods of connection and co-operation, worked on redefining the museum definition, faced many crises – big and small, celebrated the 15th and 20th ICOM SEE anniversaries (2020 and 2025) and remained focused on the permanent mission to strengthen the museum community in our region.

Thank you for your trust, support and friendship.

**Alenka Černelič Krošelj, ICOM SEE Chair 2019–2025**

## LOOKING AHEAD

Dear all,

It is a privilege to take on the role of Chair of the ICOM SEE Regional Alliance and to build on years of dedicated work by colleagues from across South East Europe who have shaped this vibrant professional community. Over time, ICOM SEE has grown into an important platform for dialogue, collaboration and mutual support among museum and heritage professionals in a region marked by diversity, shared histories and common challenges.

As Director of the Museums of Croatian Zagorje and a museum professional whose career has been closely linked with sites such as the Krapina Neanderthal Museum, I have seen first-hand how museums can connect communities, foster curiosity and strengthen a sense of belonging. I believe that our regional cooperation is essential for addressing key issues facing museums today, from digital transformation and climate-related risks to social inclusion, community engagement and the safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage.

In the coming period, ICOM SEE will continue to support knowledge exchange, joint projects and capacity-building activities that respond to the specific needs of our member countries, while also contributing actively to broader ICOM priorities and global museum debates. We will work to make the voices and experiences of South East European museums more visible within the international arena, and to encourage cross-border initiatives that promote solidarity, innovation and professional ethics.

I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me and in the new Board, and I look forward to working with you to further strengthen our network and its impact. Together, we can ensure that ICOM SEE remains an open, dynamic and supportive community for all museum and heritage professionals in our region.

**Jurica Sabol, ICOM SEE Chair**

## ICOM SEE IN 2025: MEETINGS, WORK & OUTCOMES

ICOM SEE's 2025 activities were strongly shaped by the 27th ICOM General Conference in Dubai and by the launch and consolidation of the special project "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool". The year began with strategic online meetings in January and May, where Regional Alliances and ICOM SEE discussed priorities for ICOM Dubai, coordinated regional projects and prepared the roll-out of the new reputation-focused training programme. In parallel, ICOM SEE representatives took part in several key international conferences in Europe, contributing to debates on museum trends, inclusivity, sustainable development and cultural policy in times of financial and political pressure.



From spring to autumn 2025, ICOM SEE intensified its presence through conferences and workshops across South-East Europe and beyond. The international conference "Borderless Museums. Redefining Museum Narratives and Inclusivity" in Nova Gorica/Gorizia in May, part of the European Capital of Culture GO! 2025, highlighted cross-border cooperation and

ICOM SEE members attending the General Conference in Dubai.

new narratives for inclusive museums. In the same month, ICOM SEE contributed to the "Meet, See, Do: Museum Trends" conference in Zagreb and the "Open Culture!" International Conference in Bratislava, focusing on effective museum leadership, risk mitigation and cultural funding in crisis contexts. In September, ICOM SEE addressed regional perspectives on sustainable development at the "Maritime Heritage and Sustainable Development Goals" conference in Tivat, linking maritime heritage to the wider 2030 Agenda.

A central line of action in 2025 was the international training programme "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool", implemented in partnership with INTERCOM and regional committees. The first edition, held in Zadar in May, launched the ICOM Special Project through an international museum forum and workshop that combined conference sessions with a structured curriculum on reputation-building, trust and leadership. The second edition in Trebinje in September further developed this work through expert inputs and practical exercises, enabling participants to test and adapt tools for strategic reputation management in diverse institutional contexts. The programme concluded with a wrap-up meeting at Museo Correr in Venice in November, which reviewed outcomes, refined the methodology and prepared the Manual of Reputation Experience as a key output for future use in the ICOM network.



Left: Kaja Širok addressing ICOM SEE members at the annual meeting in Ljubljana. Right: Goranka Horjan speaking at the opening of the workshop "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool" in Trebinje.



The autumn period culminated in ICOM SEE's active role at ICOM Dubai 2025, where the Regional Alliance held its main annual conference "Youth and Intangible Heritage: Museums as Connectors" on 12 November. This session, together with participation in the SOMUS/Regional Alliances workshop "Museums and Communities: Critical Perspectives on Participation and Human Rights" and the INTERCOM panel "How to integrate emerging leaders into ICOM", positioned South-East Europe at the centre of global discussions on youth, participation and human rights in museums. These contributions directly addressed the core themes of ICOM Dubai – youth power, intangible heritage and new technologies – and underlined the relevance of ICOM SEE's regional experience for broader debates on the future of museums in rapidly changing communities.

The year closed with the ICOM SEE Annual Meeting and elections for the 2025–2028 Board in Ljubljana on 2 December, coupled with a dissemination session on the "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool" project. The gathering also marked the 20th anniversary of ICOM SEE, with special awards presented to members who have shown exceptional dedication and active engagement in strengthening the regional museum network over the years. This final meeting of 2025 consolidated the year's achievements, ensured the transfer of knowledge from the special project, and set the direction for the new mandate—a fitting end to two decades of shared work that has brought museum professionals across South-East Europe closer together.

# ICOM SEE IN 2025

**8 JAN**

Online Regional Alliances meeting with ICOM President Emma Nardi (strategic priorities ahead of ICOM Dubai 2025)

**18-21 MAY**

International conference "Borderless Museums. Redefining Museum Narratives and Inclusivity", Nova Gorica (Slovenia) / Gorizia (Italy), within GO! 2025 – European Capital of Culture, with ICOM SEE contribution

**28-29 MAY**

"Meet, See, Do: Museum Trends" conference, Zagreb City Museum (Croatia), with ICOM SEE contribution on museum leadership and risk mitigation

**16 SEP**

Conference "Maritime Heritage and Sustainable Development Goals", Tivat (Montenegro), within The Ocean Race Europe 2025 programme, with ICOM SEE presentation on sustainable development in the region

**7-8 NOV**

Wrap up meeting on "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool" at Museo Correr, Venice (Italy), review of outcomes and methodology, planning future use of the project's tools

**2 DEC**

ICOM SEE Annual Meeting and elections for the 2025-2028 Board at MUZA – Slovenian Banking Museum and Art Gallery in Ljubljana (Slovenia)

**14 MAY**

ICOM SEE coordination meeting marking International Museum Day

**19-21 MAY**

International museum forum and training workshop "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool", Zadar (Croatia), launch of ICOM Special Project

**29-30 MAY**

"Open Culture! International Conference", Bratislava (Slovakia), panel "Cultural policies for better financial stability?" with ICOM SEE participation

**21-24 SEP**

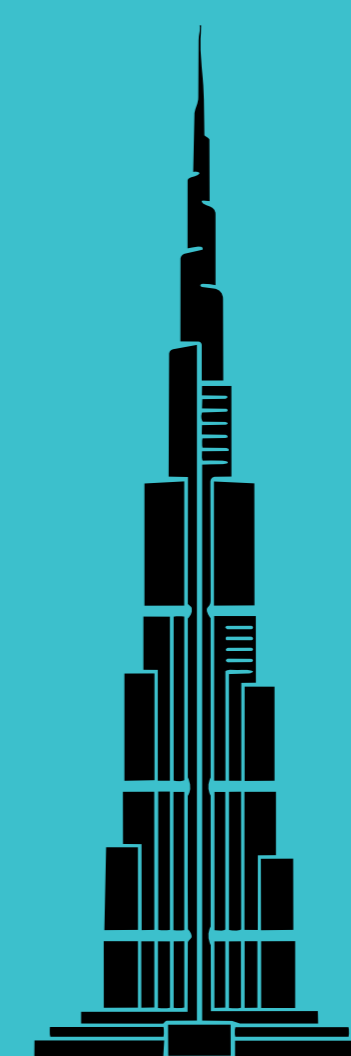
Second edition of the International Museum Forum and training workshop "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool", Museum of Herzegovina, Trebinje (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

**11-17 NOV**

ICOM SEE Annual Conference "Youth and Intangible Heritage: Museums as Connectors" and Annual Assembly within ICOM Dubai 2025 General Conference (Dubai, UAE)

SOMUS/Regional Alliances workshop "Museums and Communities: Critical Perspectives on Participation and Human Rights" at ICOM Dubai 2025, with active participation of ICOM SEE representatives

Panel "How to integrate emerging leaders into ICOM" within the INTERCOM programme at ICOM Dubai 2025, with ICOM SEE representation



## CONFERENCES

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE YOUTH AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE: MUSEUMS AS CONNECTORS

11-17 NOV 2025 | DUBAI (UAE)



In 2025, ICOM SEE successfully held its main annual conference as part of the ICOM Dubai 2025 General Conference, hosted on 12 November 2025 within the framework of ICOM Dubai. The event brought together 39 participants, all ICOM members, underscoring a strong level of engagement and continuity within the regional alliance.

ICOM SEE at the General Conference in Dubai.



The conference, held in English, focused on the theme “Youth and Intangible Heritage: Museums as Connectors”. It explored the role of museums as key spaces linking younger generations with intangible cultural heritage in contemporary societies. Through presentations and discussion, participants reflected on how museums can serve as platforms for transmitting and reinterpreting living traditions – from rituals, performing arts and craftsmanship to oral history and social practices.



Speakers at the ICOM SEE Annual Conference in Dubai.

Particular attention was given to the active role of young people as cultural carriers, co-creators and advocates, and to innovative forms of participation such as educational programmes, youth-led initiatives and participatory and digital tools. The session also examined institutional strategies that foster intergenerational dialogue, creativity and the long-term sustainability of cultural practices, highlighting both conceptual and practical challenges in involving youth in safeguarding intangible heritage.

The programme included 8 contributors and 6 presentations, with speakers representing Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania. In addition to its formal outcomes, the conference created a genuinely inclusive space for museum professionals, researchers and youth representatives from Southeast Europe and beyond, and clearly aligned with the broader themes of ICOM Dubai 2025 related to intangible heritage, youth and the future of museums. Discussions pointed to the need for continued interregional and inter-committee collaboration and suggested that this gathering should serve as a starting point for a longer-term dialogue on youth-centred, participatory approaches to living heritage in museums.

Conference papers are provided in the following sections of this newsletter.

## YOUTH AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE: MUSEUMS AS CONNECTORS

18–21 MAY 2025 | NOVA GORICA (SLO) / GORIZIA (ITA)

The international conference “Borderless Museums. Redefining Museum Narratives and Inclusivity” took place from 18 to 21 May 2025 in the conurbation of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy), as part of the European Capital of Culture GO! 2025 – Nova Gorica–Gorizia. Organized by ICOM Europe in collaboration with ICOM Slovenia, ICOM Italia, ICOM SEE, EGTC GO and the GO! 2025 public body, the event brought together museum professionals, scholars and cultural practitioners to examine how museums can transcend political, social and symbolic borders. ICOM SEE Chair Alenka Černelič Krošelj delivered a presentation together with Jurica Sabol, about the cross-border collaboration project “Borderless: Croatian Zagorje & Posavje Museum Network” during the session on Cross-Border Museum Collaboration. ICOM SEE Treasurer and Secretary Urška Purg co-facilitated a workshop with Andreja Bjelan on “Mitigating Risks in Conflict, Crisis and Natural Disasters: Building Resilience in Museums,” exploring strategies and tools for museums operating in challenging environments.

Left: The visual identity of the conference “Borderless Museums. Redefining Museum Narratives and Inclusivity”. Right: A group photo of the conference participants.



## MARITIME HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

16 SEP 2025 | TIVAT (MNE)

The conference “Maritime Heritage and Sustainable Development Goals” was held on 16 September 2025 in Tivat, Montenegro, in the Multimedia Hall of the Tivat Municipality, as part of the wider program linked to The Ocean Race Europe 2025 and hosted by the Museum and Gallery Tivat in cooperation with local and academic partners. ICOM SEE was represented by Alenka Černelič Krošelj (chair) and Urška Purg (secretary/treasurer), with the presentation »ICOM SEE Regional Alliance and Its Role in Sustainable Development in the Region”.

Left: Participants of the conference “Maritime Heritage and Sustainable Development Goals”. Right: Alenka Černelič Krošelj and Urška Purg attending the conference on behalf of ICOM SEE.



## PROMOTING ICOM SEE

### MEET, SEE, DO: MUSEUM TRENDS

28–29 MAY 2025 | ZAGREB (CRO)

Meet, See, Do: Museum Trends was an international museum conference held at the Zagreb City Museum on 28–29 May 2025, organized by the Balkan Museum Network in partnership with the Museum of the City of Zagreb and NEMO – Network of European Museum Organizations. The event focused on museum trends – current challenges, innovations, and emerging practices shaping the future of museums, with particular attention to the context of Southeast Europe. ICOM SEE was represented by Alenka Černelič Krošelj (chair) and Urška Purg (secretary/treasurer), with the presentation »Effective Museum Leadership in Mitigating Risks in Conflict and Crisis”.

Opposite page: Participants of the conference “Meet, See, Do: Museum Trends”.

## OPEN CULTURE! INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

16 SEP 2025 | TIVAT (MNE)

The panel “Cultural policies for better financial stability?” was organized on 29 May 2025 as part of the Open Culture! International Conference held at the Old Market Hall in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 29–30 May 2025. The conference addressed the worsening situation of the cultural sector in Slovakia and across Europe, focusing on political interference in artistic freedom, severe cuts to cultural budgets and increasing polarization between conservative and progressive forces. Alenka Černelič Krošelj took part in the discussion on »Cultural funding in times of crisis«, contributing a perspective grounded in museum practice and regional experiences of maintaining financial stability in challenging political and economic contexts.

Left: The visual identity of the “Open Culture!” conference. Right: A group photo of the conference participants.



## WORKSHOPS

### MUSEUM REPUTATION AS A LEADERSHIP TOOL

19–21 MAY 2025 | ZADAR (CRO)

21–24 SEP 2025 | TREBINJE (BIH)

The training workshop “Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool” was implemented as part of a broader international project coordinated by INTERCOM – the International Committee for Museum Management – with the overarching goal of strengthening museum reputation as a foundation of leadership, public trust, and institutional sustainability. Within this framework, the project aimed to empower museum professionals to develop value-based leadership, enhance their institutions’ visibility and credibility in tourism-intensive and socially pressured environments, and foster museums’ role as active community platforms rather than passive heritage repositories. By focusing on reputation as a strategic instrument of leadership, the project also sought to support museums in addressing sensitive social issues, such as depopulation, discrimination, and cultural diversity, while maintaining professional standards and ethical integrity.

Developed under the coordination of INTERCOM and supported by ICOM’s Special Project Grant, the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia and local partners, the project was implemented in 2025 in three countries – Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,



The visual identity of the workshops and meetings held as part of the project “Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool”.

and Italy – through two international training modules and a concluding wrap-up meeting. The program brought together more than fifty museum leaders, curators, and educators from South-East Europe to build capacities in reputation management, communication, and community-oriented leadership, creating a network of practitioners committed to long-term collaboration. In this way, the project generated not only immediate learning outcomes, but also durable professional relationships and a shared framework for thinking about reputation as both an ethical compass and a practical leadership tool.

The training workshop “Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool” was implemented as part of this broader initiative in two editions, in Zadar (Croatia) and Trebinje (Bosnia and Herzegovina), in close collaboration with and under the leadership of INTERCOM – the International Committee for Museum Management. In Zadar, the international museum forum with training workshop took place from 19 to 21 May 2025 at venues including the Rector’s Palace and the Museum of Ancient Glass, bringing together museum professionals from Croatia, the wider South-East European region, and international experts to launch the ICOM Special Project “Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool”. The program combined conference presentations, expert-led discussions, and a structured training curriculum focusing on reputation-building, trust, and museum leadership, with specific attention to sustainability in tourism-burdened cities such as Zadar and Dubrovnik. Through interactive exercises, participants worked on defining institutional purpose, developing value-based branding, and aligning everyday decision-making with professional ethics and community expectations.

Left: From the workshop in Zadar Right: From the workshop in Trebinje.





A group photo of the workshop participants in Trebinje.

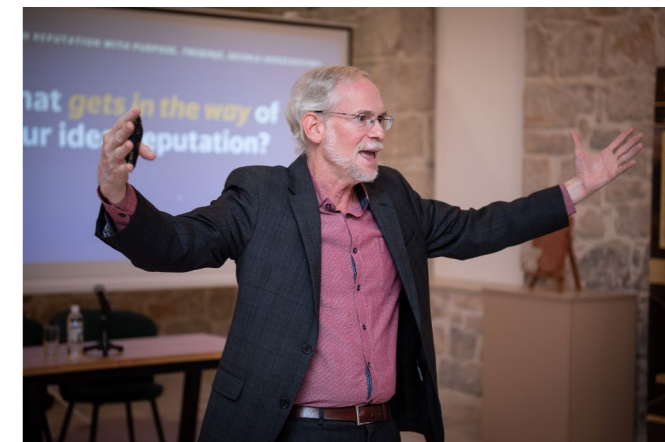
The second edition was hosted at the Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje from 21 to 24 September 2025, again as an International Museum Forum with Training Workshop. Under INTERCOM's guidance, the Trebinje workshop deepened the work started in Zadar through expert lectures, interactive exercises, and case studies addressing strategic reputation management as a key leadership competency. Sessions led by invited specialists, including James Heaton (Tronvig Group, New York) and Cecilia Martin (Cultural Connection, London), explored brand purpose, audience trust, emotional engagement, and long-term reputation planning, while mentoring sessions and consultations enabled participants to translate these concepts into concrete institutional strategies. The overall program thus resulted not only in upgraded skills and knowledge, but also in tangible project outputs and follow-up initiatives in participating museums, demonstrating how a reputation-centred approach can reinforce museums' relevance, resilience, and social responsibility.

In addition, ICOM SEE contributed as a project partner to the publication Manual of Reputation Experience, produced within the framework of the project Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool and published by INTERCOM. The publication represents a key intellectual and practical outcome of the project, bringing together theoretical perspectives,

Left: Cecilia Martin leading a workshop in Trebinje. Right: Workshop participants visiting the Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje.



Left: Jadran Antolović leading a workshop in Trebinje. Right: James Heaton leading a workshop in Trebinje.



methodological approaches, and case studies developed through the training activities in Zadar and Trebinje. ICOM SEE actively participated in the conceptual development of the manual, as well as in the research, collection, and preparation of regional case studies that reflect specific challenges and practices of museums in South-East Europe. The manual provides museum professionals with a structured set of tools and guidelines for understanding and managing reputation as a dynamic and value-based process, closely linked to institutional purpose, ethical standards, and community engagement. It addresses key themes such as transparency, sustainability, audience trust, and strategic communication, while also incorporating insights from surveys and workshop discussions that mapped reputational challenges of mid-sized museums operating outside capital centres and within tourism-driven contexts. By combining expert knowledge with field-based experience, the publication serves as a practical guide for museum professionals seeking to strengthen institutional resilience and public legitimacy, while contributing to the broader international discourse on the evolving role of museums as socially responsible and community-oriented institutions.

A group photo of the workshop participants in front of the Herzegovina Museum in Trebinje.



## MUSEUMS AND COMMUNITIES: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

12 NOV 2025 | DUBAI (UAE)



The SOMUS/Regional Alliances Workshop (12 November) titled “Museums and Communities: Critical Perspectives on Participation and Human Rights” was organized within the framework of the 27th ICOM General Conference, ICOM Dubai 2025. Conceived as a collaborative session between SOMUS and ICOM’s Regional Alliances, the workshop examined how museums can work with communities in ways that move beyond tokenistic participation, foregrounding social museology approaches and the ethical responsibilities of museums towards human rights, social justice and decolonial practices. Representing ICOM SEE, Alenka Černelič Krošelj, Jurica Sabol, Lili Šturm, Urška Purg and Tamara Nikolić Đerić actively contributed to the discussion, bringing perspectives from Southeast European museum practice.

Participants of the SOMUS workshop “Museums and Communities: Critical Perspectives on Participation and Human Rights” in Dubai.



The panel “Future-oriented leadership in ICOM: Integrating emerging voices”, co-organized by INTERCOM, ICOMON and ICOM SEE in Dubai.

Damon Monzavi (ICOMON) and Marine Mkrtychyan (ICOM Armenia), moderated by Martha Ikabongo (INTERCOM), discussed how fresh perspectives from early- and mid-career professionals can enrich strategic discussions on museum leadership, social engagement and institutional change. Drawing on experiences from different regions and committee contexts, they mapped existing pathways such as mentorship schemes, early-career networks, leadership training programmes and co-opted roles in boards and working groups, while also identifying gaps in transparency, succession planning and representation that still limit meaningful participation.

The conversation addressed several key themes: how to bridge generational gaps in expectations and working styles; how to ensure diversity and inclusion when identifying “emerging leaders”; and how to create governance models in which younger professionals are not only “consulted” but share responsibility for future-oriented decisions. Particular attention was given to the need for clear, accessible routes into ICOM structures – from national committees to international committees and regional alliances – and to the importance of mentorship that is reciprocal, where established leaders also learn from the digital skills, collaborative practices and community-oriented approaches that younger colleagues bring. By linking theoretical frameworks on leadership with concrete committee practices, the session aimed to inspire further research, pilot initiatives and policy changes within ICOM that would embed emerging leaders more firmly in the organisation’s strategic development.



## FUTURE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP IN ICOM: INTEGRATING EMERGING VOICES

15 NOV 2025 | DUBAI (UAE)



The panel “Future-oriented leadership in ICOM: integrating emerging voices” was organized on 15 November 2025 as Session Three (14:15–14:35) within the INTERCOM programme at the 27th ICOM General Conference in Dubai, as part of a broader thematic block “Future scoping: in conversation with young museum leaders of the future”. Framed as a concise, high-intensity discussion, the session examined how ICOM can move from declarative support for younger generations towards concrete mechanisms that embed emerging professionals in its decision-making processes. It connected directly to the conference’s wider debate on new leadership models and twenty-first-century competencies, asking what kinds of skills, values and perspectives future museum leaders bring, and how these can be better reflected in ICOM’s governance, committees and regional structures.

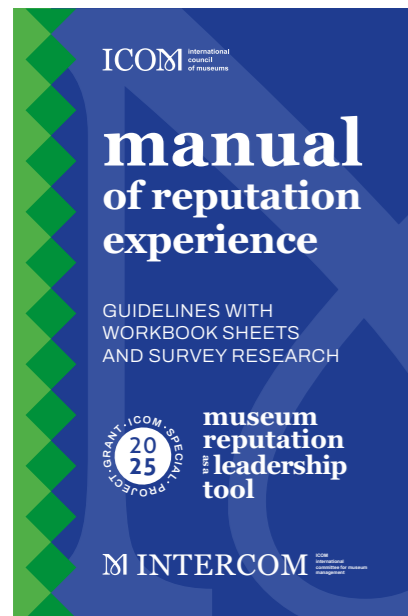
Designed as a short, focused panel, the session “Integrating emerging leaders into ICOM decision-making” explored both conceptual questions and practical entry points for new generations. Panelists Alenka Černelič Krošelj (ICOM SEE), Reena Dewan (INTERCOM),



## MEETINGS

On 8 January 2025, representatives of ICOM SEE took part in an online Regional Alliances meeting with ICOM President Emma Nardi, dedicated to strategic priorities for Regional Alliances in the lead-up to the 27th ICOM General Conference in Dubai and to strengthening their role within ICOM's governance structure. The meeting addressed communication, project cooperation and the visibility of regional activities in the global network.

On 14 May 2025, ICOM SEE held an internal online coordination meeting to review ongoing projects, prepare contributions to ICOM Dubai 2025 and discuss follow-up to the "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool" initiative and other regional activities. The meeting also served to align positions on key agenda items relevant for the forthcoming General Conference and statutory meetings, convened on the occasion of International Museum Day 2026.



Left: Cover of the publication "Manual of Reputation Experience". Right: Final meeting of the project "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool" in Venice.

A two day wrap up meeting on the "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool" training program was held on 7–8 November 2025 at Museo Correr in Venice. This concluding workshop brought together representatives of INTERCOM, ICOM SEE and other project partners to review the outcomes of the Zadar and Trebinje editions, analyze feedback from participants and refine the methodology developed for the training. Discussions focused on how to integrate reputation building more systematically into museum leadership practices, how to adapt the tools to different institutional and regional contexts, and how to disseminate the project's results through future training, publications and conference presentations. The Venice meeting thus served as a strategic platform to consolidate lessons learned and to plan the long term use of the project's materials within the wider ICOM network.

On 2 December 2025, the Regional Alliance of the International Council of Museums for South-East Europe (ICOM SEE) held its annual meeting and elections for a new Board at MUZA – Slovenian Banking Museum and Art Gallery in Ljubljana, officially confirming the new leadership for the 2025–2028 mandate. On the same occasion, ICOM SEE organized a dissemination session on the outcomes of the project "Museum Reputation as a Leadership Tool" in the museum's conference room, bringing together museum professionals and representatives from member countries across South East Europe.



Promotion of "Manual of Reputation Experience" during the annual meeting in Ljubljana.



The dissemination event, which presented key findings, tools and recommendations developed in the framework of the ICOM Special Project Grant, was the final activity of the project, co financed by several partner institutions.

## ELECTIONS

On Tuesday, 2 December, the Regional Alliance of the International Council of Museums for South-East Europe (ICOM SEE) held its annual meeting and elections for the new Board at MUZA – Slovenian Banking Museum and Art Gallery in Ljubljana. The event officially concluded the mandate of the outgoing leadership and appointed the new members who will guide the Alliance in the coming term.

The former Board, serving with dedication and professionalism, consisted of:

Alenka Černelič Krošelj (Chair),  
Virgil Ștefan Nițulescu (Vice-Chair),  
Lidija Milašinović (Vice-Chair),  
and Urška Purg (Secretary).

During its mandate, this team focused on strengthening regional visibility within the wider ICOM network, encouraging participation of SEE museums in international programmes, and promoting cross-border collaboration through conferences, training activities and thematic working groups. Under their leadership, ICOM SEE contributed to discussions on museum ethics, sustainability, and the role of museums in societies marked by post-conflict realities, migration, and demographic change, positioning the alliance as an important platform for dialogue in the region.

The newly elected Board is composed as follows:

Jurica Sabol (Chair),  
Lidija Milašinović (Vice-Chair),  
Alma Leka (Vice-Chair),  
Alenka Černelič Krošelj (Treasurer),  
Matija Dronjić (Secretary).

With members representing different parts of South-East Europe and diverse professional profiles, the new leadership is expected to continue building on previous achievements while introducing fresh perspectives on regional cooperation, digital transformation, and community engagement. Priority areas discussed at the meeting included supporting smaller and mid-sized museums, enhancing training opportunities for emerging

professionals, and further integrating ICOM SEE activities with global ICOM priorities such as sustainability, diversity, and social inclusion. By combining institutional continuity with new mandates, the Board is well positioned to coordinate future projects, initiate partnerships with other regional and international bodies, and advocate for the role of museums as active agents of dialogue, peace, and cooperation in South-East Europe.

The new ICOM SEE board for the 2025–2028 mandate period. From left to right: Matija Dronjič, Alma Leka, Jurica Sabol, Lidija Milašinović and Alenka Černelič Krošelj.



Presentation of the Special Recognition for an Outstanding Contribution to ICOM SEE.



Together, these Special Recognition diplomas not only celebrated individual achievements but also highlighted the collective effort behind ICOM SEE's development over the past decade. By honouring founding figures, former chairs and key members of the Secretariat, the Ljubljana ceremony symbolically linked the origins of the Regional Alliance with its current and future work, sending a strong message of continuity, gratitude and shared responsibility for the role of museums as platforms for dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding in South East Europe.

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO ICOM SEE

During the annual meeting of the Regional Alliance of the International Council of Museums for South East Europe (ICOM SEE), held on 2 December 2025 at MUZA – Slovenian Banking Museum and Art Gallery in Ljubljana, a special awards segment was dedicated to recognising individuals who have played a key role in shaping and strengthening the Alliance. ICOM SEE introduced a series of Special Recognition for an Outstanding Contribution to ICOM Southeast Europe diplomas, honouring both long standing leaders and collaborators whose work has significantly advanced regional cooperation.

Special recognition was first awarded to Mila Popović Živančević, founder of ICOM SEE and its first Chair, in acknowledgment of her pioneering role in establishing the Regional Alliance and defining its mission within the wider ICOM network. Her early leadership laid the foundations for the long-term development of ICOM SEE as a platform connecting museums and museum professionals across South-East Europe. A diploma was also presented to Alenka Černelič Krošelj, ICOM SEE Chair from 2019 to 2025, whose mandate was marked by intensive programme development, international visibility and project-based collaboration. In parallel, special recognition was given to Goranka Horjan, ICOM SEE Chair from 2016 to 2019, for her support to ICOM SEE programmes, international activities and projects. Further recognition went to members of the outgoing leadership team. Urška Purg, Secretary and Treasurer from 2022 to 2025, was recognised for her organisational, financial and coordination work during a period of demanding projects and international engagements. A diploma was also awarded to Matija Dronjič "for exceptional promotional efforts and invaluable support during the period 2016–2025", highlighting his contribution to the visibility of ICOM SEE and communication with members and partners.



## FORMER ICOM SEE CHAIR GORANKA HORJAN ELECTED ICOM TREASURER 2025–2028



Dr Goranka Horjan, director of the Dvor Trakošćan Museum, has been elected Treasurer of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) for the 2025–2028 mandate at the General Assembly held during the Triennial Conference in Dubai. Her election recognises more than 25 years of leadership in museum and heritage management, as well as her long-standing commitment to transparent governance, financial sustainability and international cooperation within ICOM. Nominated by INTERCOM, ICOM Croatia and ICOM SEE, she builds on her previous roles as Chair of INTERCOM and ICOM SEE, member of the ICOM Executive Board (2010–2016) and active participant in European platforms such as the European Museum Forum and Europa Nostra, further strengthening the visibility of Croatian museum professionals in the global museum community.

Top left: Goranka Horjan at the ICOM leadership elections in Dubai. Top right: Announcement of the elected ICOM Treasurer. Bottom: The new ICOM Executive Board for the 2025–2028 mandate period.



## PRESENTERS' CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE ICOM SEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN DUBAI

**JURICA SABOL**  
MUSEUMS OF HRVATSKO ZAGORJE  
GORNJA STUBICA / CROATIA

### MUSEUMS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE THE MENTAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Over a period of two months, four workshops were held at the premises of the Museums of the Croatian Zagorje (MHZ), where psychological counselling and painting or pottery modelling took place in parallel. The workshops were tailored to children facing challenges such as social difficulties, anxiety, and difficulties in developing social skills, and who were already attending psychological counselling at the Institute of Public Health of Krapina-Zagorje County (ZZJKZŽ). Through creative activities such as painting and pottery modelling, participants had the opportunity not only to develop their artistic skills but also to work on their emotional health in a safe and supportive environment. The programme was flexible and adapted to the needs and progress of the participants, with the aim of encouraging self-confidence and social integration.

Currently, psychological counselling for young people is conducted on the premises of the Institute of Public Health, where support is provided to secondary school students facing various emotional and social difficulties. While these services are important and necessary, research suggests that the success of psychological counselling can be improved if the process is deinstitutionalised and carried out in less formal, more comfortable, and more creative environments. The literature shows that artistic stimuli, such as painting, modelling, or other forms of expression, can positively affect emotional well-being, reduce anxiety, and encourage introspection and social connection. By using art as an additional therapeutic tool, the counselling process becomes more holistic, allowing young people to express themselves in a way that complements verbal therapy and helps them open up more easily and overcome personal challenges.

The purpose of the project was to provide support to secondary school students in dealing with emotional and social difficulties through an integrated approach that combines psychological counselling and creative artistic activities. Through art workshops in the authentic setting of the Museums of the Croatian Zagorje, participants had the opportunity not only to address their emotional challenges but also to connect with the cultural tradition of the area. The project sought to provide young people with a safe and supportive environment outside the institutional framework, in which they would be able to express their thoughts, feelings, and creativity freely, thereby increasing the effectiveness of psychological counselling and the overall quality of their mental health. The aim was to reduce anxiety, encourage the development of social skills, and improve the emotional well-being of young people by using art as a tool for self-expression, reflection, and stress reduction.

1. **Increasing the mental well-being of young people** – Through a combination of psychological counselling and creative activities, the aim was to help young people cope with emotional difficulties such as anxiety and social problems and to improve their emotional stability and self-confidence.
2. **Developing social skills** – The project provided a space for practising social skills through group interaction, creative workshops, and counselling, which helped young people better cope with social situations and develop healthier interpersonal relationships.
3. **Encouraging creative expression as therapy** – By using artistic activities such as painting and pottery, the aim was to enable young people to express themselves in ways that support introspection and emotional release, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the therapeutic process.
4. **Deinstitutionalisation of counselling** – The project aimed to move psychological counselling from formal, institutional spaces to more relaxed, creative, and stimulating environments (museums and cultural spaces), thus creating a more comfortable framework for young people, reducing feelings of stress, and increasing engagement.
5. **Preservation and valorisation of cultural heritage** – Through activities conducted in the Museums of the Croatian Zagorje, the project aimed to connect young people with the cultural heritage of the area, thereby promoting a sense of community, identity, and respect for tradition.
6. **Increasing accessibility of psychological support** – The project aimed to enable young people from different social backgrounds to access the necessary psychological support more easily, thus reducing barriers to accessing mental health and psychological services.

A detail from the workshop at the Museums of Hrvatsko Zagorje.

A detail from the workshop at the Museums of Hrvatsko Zagorje.



7. **Increasing awareness of the importance of mental health** – Through educational activities and discussions within the workshops, the project aimed to raise awareness among young people about the importance of mental health, reduce the stigma surrounding psychological support, and encourage open discussion of emotional challenges.

The quality control of the project was carried out through an evaluation questionnaire that was distributed to the participants before the start of the project and after its completion. The questionnaires contained questions related to emotional state, social skills, anxiety, and the general well-being of the young people in order to assess their progress and the impact that the project had on them. The pre-project questionnaires provided baseline data on the initial state of the participants, while the post-project questionnaires allowed for a comparison of changes in their mental health and personal development. This procedure enabled an assessment of the effectiveness of the project, the identification of areas for improvement, and the provision of guidelines for the further development of the programme and future initiatives.

The evaluation results show that, at the end of the workshops conducted within the project, participants reported a slightly lower level of general emotional distress, higher motivation, and improved social skills. During the workshop cycle, participants reported a slightly lower level of negative emotions such as nervousness, helplessness, and sadness, as well as a slightly greater openness to conversation. Participants demonstrated a high level of initial motivation, which was further strengthened during the project through active participation, creative expression, and openness to new experiences. The final assessments show high satisfaction with the content, atmosphere, and workshop leaders. Of particular note is the growth in the sense of personal development, interpersonal connection, and confidence in expressing opinions. A comparison of self-assessments at the beginning and end of the cycle indicates growth in self-understanding and understanding of others, the development of new skills, and increased emotional resilience. In their final impressions, participants highlighted the positive and supportive atmosphere and stated that they would recommend the programme to others, which confirms the achievement of the set project goals.

The analysis was conducted on a limited number of properly matched questionnaires, which somewhat reduces the breadth of the conclusions; however, the obtained results indicate a slightly lower level of general psychological distress at the end of the workshop cycle and confirm the value of the project. It is recommended to continue systematic monitoring and

evaluation in future cycles in order to further confirm the reliability of the findings and enable a deeper analysis of the effects of the programme on the development of the emotional and social competences of the participants.

In addition to the analysis of the evaluation questionnaires completed by workshop participants, a qualitative assessment of the course of the workshops by the project facilitators was also taken into account in order to assess the effectiveness and value of the programme. Some of the observed limitations relate to the method of participant recruitment and the size of the groups. In future implementation, it should be taken into account that participation in the programme should be exclusively voluntary and that the group size should be reduced to eight participants in order to achieve greater group cohesion, which would contribute to more efficient work.

Despite the results of the evaluation questionnaires, the qualitative assessment indicated a decrease in motivation and willingness to cooperate among a large number of participants, which made the implementation of the planned activities more challenging. It is possible that the problems in cooperation were the result of fatigue and decreased concentration, given that the workshops were held immediately after classes.

Given the discrepancy between the qualitative assessment of the workshop facilitators and the results obtained from the analysis of the evaluation questionnaires regarding participants' motivation and interest, it is possible that these differences relate to participants whose questionnaires were not included in the analysis due to the previously mentioned inability to match the initial and final evaluation questionnaires.

Among the observed limitations, it is also important to mention the noticeable difficulties participants experienced in connecting the designed artistic and psychological activities. Given this observation, and with the aim of better integrating the activities and consequently achieving a more effective contribution to the project outcomes, it is suggested to consider the inclusion of an art therapist who could, through the principles of art therapy and visual creativity, more effectively integrate artistic and psychological activities. This would contribute to the achievement of the project goals—improving the psychological well-being of young people and encouraging creative expression as a form of therapy.

## MATKO MIOČ & URŠKA PURG

MUZA MUSEUM AND GALLERY  
LJUBLJANA / SLOVENIA

# FROM BANKARIUM TO MUZA: DIVERSIFYING FUNDING AND REPOSITIONING A PRIVATE MUSEUM FOR PUBLIC VALUE

## INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the strategic transformation of the Slovenian Banking Museum—formerly Bankarium—into MUZA Museum and Gallery. It examines how strategic leadership and advocacy, supported by mission-aligned content, enabled the institution to move from a single-source funding model to a diversified financial strategy. Initially founded in 2021 and fully funded by NLB Group, the museum rebranded in 2024 to bridge financial heritage with modern and contemporary art, establishing a hybrid funding model and a resilient organisational structure. Presented at the ICOM Dubai Conference 2025, this case study explores the future of museums in rapidly changing communities. The primary focus was to move beyond total private support to achieve long-term sustainability and public value.

Left: Entrance to MUZA. Right: Exhibition detail in the MUZA gallery.

## STRATEGIC REBRANDING AND IDENTITY EVOLUTION

The institution was founded in 2021 as Bankarium – The Slovenian Banking Museum, a project fully funded by Slovenia's largest private bank, NLB Group. However, the leadership soon faced a common institutional challenge: ensuring long-term sustainability and public relevance without relying solely on private support. In 2024, the institution rebranded as MUZA. This shift was not merely aesthetic but served as the groundwork for a new hybrid funding model. By reimagining the institution to bridge financial heritage with modern and contemporary art, MUZA established a unique cultural identity that appeals to a broader audience.

## PHYSICAL EXPANSION AND REGIONAL COLLECTION

A significant physical expansion accompanied the rebranding. With the addition of a contemporary art gallery, the exhibition space grew from 500 square metres to 1,500 square metres. Completed in March 2025, this space now houses one of the largest private art collections in South-Eastern Europe, containing over 4,000 works from the 20th and 21st centuries. This physical and artistic growth positioned the museum as a regional cultural hub where “money meets art”.

## STEPS TOWARDS FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

A core pillar of MUZA's strategy is a sustainable funding model designed to reduce reliance on the founder. The institution has already shifted from 100% founder support to a hybrid model in which 30% of funds are generated from its own sources. By 2030, the museum aims to reach 70% self-financing. New revenue streams driving this growth include:

- Event and conference space rentals.
- Co-produced exhibitions and partnerships.
- Educational programmes linking finance and art.
- A redesigned museum shop with curated, mission-driven products.





Left: Visitors in the MUZA exhibition space. Right: The MUZA team.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCACY

As outlined in the strategic roadmap, advocacy was the primary driver of this institutional transformation. This process operated on two critical levels:

- **Internal Advocacy:** A coordinated campaign among museum leadership, curators, and board members was essential to this shift. It focused on aligning their vision to elevate MUZA's role as a public cultural institution with significant regional impact.
- **External Advocacy:** These efforts successfully engaged cultural stakeholders and the general public, building widespread recognition of the museum's new relevance and attracting broader community support.

### IMPACT AND GROWTH

The rebranding and repositioning of the institution, together with an awareness of the importance of advocacy, have yielded significant and measurable results across all key performance indicators. Visitor numbers have seen a remarkable increase of nearly 400%, while sales in the museum shop have grown by 500% following the introduction of curated, content-driven products. Furthermore, participation in financial literacy workshops has risen by 200%, successfully engaging audiences across all age groups. As a result of these strategic shifts, the venue has transformed into an increasingly active hub that hosts a diverse range of both cultural and corporate events.

### CONCLUSION

The transformation of MUZA offers a practical example of how a museum rooted in the financial sector can reinvent its funding model through proactive leadership and a clear vision. By fostering a strong internal culture of advocacy, the institution has ensured financial sustainability without compromising its commitment to public service. Ultimately, this journey illustrates that institutional and financial transformation is, at its heart, "all about the people".

## LILI ŠTURM

MGLC – INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF GRAPHIC ARTS  
LJUBLJANA / SLOVENIA

# FORUM: AN EMPTY FIELD IN AN EXHIBITION – A SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

## FORUM

*An open field. An uncontrolled space.*

*Self-expression. Freedom to speak.*

*Keeping dreams alive.*

*A space where we challenge, loosen, question, predict, imagine, demolish and rebuild.*

The International Centre of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana is a museum of contemporary art whose identity rests on the heritage of one of the oldest graphic art biennials in the world and on the art of printing from the 20th and 21st centuries. One of its roles is to ensure that art is accessible to and co-created by as wide a circle of people as possible. For this reason, part of its educational strategy is devoted to exploring alternative approaches to the transformation of art through the field of education. This approach is particularly used in work with young people and adolescents in the course of primary education (the final cycle) and secondary education.

"Is this even art?!" It is with this notorious and oft-heard remark, which expresses the proverbial incomprehensibility of contemporary art, that secondary school pupils and young people often enter the gallery space. In fact, we regularly encounter it at exhibitions of contemporary art, and it is the starting point for many a debate. Every time we want to explain that "this something" is in fact art, we realise that, due to the nature of the subject, we will never really succeed in explaining it. But is it really necessary? "I am convinced that even pupils who are convinced that what they are looking at is not art can still get a great feel for the exhibition," commented a pupil from Gimnazija Poljane in Ljubljana during one of the round tables at the Cultural Bazaar,<sup>1</sup> organised on the topic of contemporary art and its (mis)understanding in dialogue with programme creators, teachers, and pupils.

Besides, young people are well aware that a museum or gallery is not a school, and visiting such an institution is not a trip. On the contrary, it often requires greater engagement than regular school lessons. All this naturally forces the attentive curator-educator in a museum or gallery to overcome obstacles and seek the best, most innovative, and different approaches to engaging young people in experiencing the world of art.

In this article, I touch upon the analysis of some of the programmes that we have organised in recent years at MGLC for young people aged 12 to 19. What all these projects have in common is an empty, uncontrolled field, which I refer to as a "forum". It denotes both a physical and symbolic space that acts as an affirmation of the transformative power of art. I understand the "forum" as one of the potential educational practices at the heart of contemporary art, as a place for socialising, developing curiosity, imagination, and dialogue, which can represent an alternative to classical school education. Contemporary art has the particular trait that, in the field of interpretation, those who learn and those who teach can occupy a fairly equal position. This opens up a gap that can remain empty or be filled with a variety of activities.

1 The Cultural Bazaar is the largest educational platform in Slovenia, bringing together more than a thousand experts from the field of culture and art as well as education and training. The professional meeting is held once a year in early spring at Cankarjev dom in Ljubljana.

To continue, I will analyse certain programmes that raise the question of “empty space” or the “forum”. Let us take a look at how we at MGLC Ljubljana work with specially conceived sensory spaces within exhibitions, how we engage the body experiencing art, and how we cultivate a homelike atmosphere within the institution.



### THE FORUM AS A TRANSFORMATIVE SPACE WITHIN THE EXHIBITION SPACE: HOW DOES AN EXHIBITION SMELL

What constitutes space? Smell! What makes space tangible? Touch!

There is no doubt that sensory approaches attract a lot of attention when working with young people. In our case, two senses that are considered rather underestimated were of particular interest: touch and smell. Both are highly spatial. Touch is the sense that opens and closes the boundaries of space; it creates proximities, distances, and relationships.

Some years ago, we put on an exhibition of David Lynch's work, the first presentation in Slovenia of the cult American director, who is less widely known as an outstanding artist and printmaker. The exhibition featured seventy of his lithographs and a selection of his experimental and animated films. By intertwining the expressive, grotesque, and direct address, a distinctive Lynchian atmosphere was created. The last room of the gallery led into the Lynch Lab, a temporary gallery studio, a space where visitors could recreate their impressions of the exhibition. We especially encouraged young people to respond. They had the opportunity to express themselves spontaneously through performative and visual gestures directly on the walls, or by drawing with their fingers on fur fabric that allowed printing, thereby creating clear, simple drawings or messages. The opportunity for uncontrolled, playful touching unexpectedly relaxed and relieved the young participants. It intuitively connected with the suggestive power of the exhibition and the weight of Lynch's imagery, while the coarse, direct contact between body and material enabled a distinctly intimate experience and dialogue with oneself.

Another distinct spatial sense is smell. In sensory museology, smell is considered a kind of “time machine” that connects us with emotions and triggers associations and memories. The approach based on smell was used in the Secret Garden programme, which was organised alongside the Zmago Jeraj exhibition. Zmago Jeraj is one of the most prominent and prolific Slovenian visual artists of the second half of the 20th century. The exhibition, organised by MGLC in spring 2024, presented a selection of his works and, with its innovative design featuring a subtle play of colours, shadows, and light, created a special atmosphere and a sensory viewing experience. The selected works dealt with the relationship and transition

MGLC (detail). Photo: Lili Šturm. MGLC Archive.

Lynch Lab. Photo: Petra Derganc. MGLC Archive.



Secret Garden. Photo: Urška Boljkovac. MGLC Archive.

between interior and exterior space, between inside and outside, between open and closed. Motifs of boundaries, barriers, and enclosures raised the question of “here” and “there”. Is this side any different from the other, and if so, how? Is one of these “worlds” our world, while the other is foreign and unknown? We wanted to convey these questions of physical and symbolic spatiality, this message about the concept of space and how we can experience it, to visitors, especially young people, which is why the “spatiality” of the exhibition also spilled over into the shaping of the Secret Garden concept. Indeed, the “garden” could be understood as the most beautiful example of the flow between inside and outside, as a symbol of the ever-present transition between a person's intimate space and the outside world; a space to which we can always safely retreat, as in the hortus conclusus.

The Secret Garden in the exhibition represented a special creative and sensorially meditative corner across two gallery rooms. It included a printmaking workshop, donated by the Jarše Youth Centre in Ljubljana, where we explored innovative artistic approaches, the expressive potential of motifs, the language of colour, and concepts of spatiality through experimental workshops on screen printing, stencil printing, and various collage techniques.

At the heart of the Secret Garden was a specially constructed and sensorially designed chamber. With its darkness, it evoked a primordial cave, where precisely its dimness allows us to illuminate our thoughts and feelings more clearly. It invited an “immersion” in a world that may not yet be sufficiently visible or known on a cognitive level but is sensorially closer than we might imagine; the “cave” helped us get closer to what we called the poetry of Jeraj's visual world. It was essential that we relied on the basic senses: sight, hearing, and smell. The carefully considered and exceptionally sensitively designed lighting, the work of intermedia artist Toni Soprano Meneglejte, physically connected the space like a blue thread. With the sound of birds chirping in nature, we wanted to move beyond the gallery walls into the endless green environment of Tivoli Park, which surrounds MGLC. The greatest emphasis, however, was placed on a specially designed therapeutic scent, which we developed over several months with the exhibition's starting points in mind and in collaboration with certified aromatherapist Ana Marija Ličina. We noticed that the scent played a key sensorial role; it helped the young people establish a broader context for the exhibition and define the reality of the artist's visual world.

## THE FORUM AS A SPATIAL ACTIVITY THAT COMPLEMENTS THE EXHIBITION SPACE: BODY AS PENCIL

Whenever we organise movement and dance interventions at an exhibition, we raise the question of control and physical intervention in the space of the artwork. How can materials enter the space and transform it, and how is all this further shaped by our own bodily interventions? The dance-movement approach is an opportunity to explore visual art with the body: the body becomes a brush that draws lines, numbers, colours, shapes, and shadows in relation to what is being observed. In movement and dance expression, we are confronted with processes of attunement, mirroring, imitation, and exchange, which are in fact a reflection of the experience of the exhibition. Such interventions clearly show the effect an artwork has on us and also point to the ambivalence of understanding artworks, which can simultaneously attract and repel us.

During the guided tour, the young participants were invited to enter the spaces of the artworks and engage through touch. They chose their own space in the work and touched selected parts of the artwork with their bodies, creating their own bodily figures. In this way, they interacted with and appropriated the space of the artwork, while the bodily figures they created clearly revealed their subconscious relationship to the artwork. The involvement of the body in the perception of the artwork and space emphasised the dominance of the whole and, at the same time, the power of the detail. The movement interventions were accepted as a beneficial physical ritual that can add new meanings to existing content, strengthen attention and mindfulness, and readily domesticate the exhibition space.

## FORUM: RESIDENCY

### WE INVITE YOUNG PEOPLE TO “OUR HOME” AND PROVIDE THEM WITH A SPACE AND CONDITIONS FOR REFLECTION, ACTIVITY, AND ACTION

The residency programme for young people is an example of how young people can be included in the core activities of an institution.

Most recently, we organised KUL Adventure in October 2025 as part of the 36th Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts. As a museum, MGLC assumed the role of producer, host, and facilitator within the programme, while leaving the participants in control of the process and content. How was the programme structured?



Movement interventions at the exhibition Honza Zamojski, Middleman. Photo: Gregor Gobec. MGLC Archive.



Biennale KUL Adventure. Photo: Urška Boljkovac. MGLC Archive.

A small group of secondary school pupils aged 15 to 17 were invited to take part in a residency over several days to explore, create, live, and socialise in the heart of Tivoli Park, where MGLC Švicarija, one of the branches of our institution, is located and functions as a residential and cultural creative space. We provided them with on-site accommodation, meals, a tour of the exhibition, opportunities to meet the artists, and the necessary production conditions for their work. Mentors were present but remained in the background. During their residency, the young participants wrote a poem together, produced a printed zine, and made a short film about their experience, which has been posted on the MGLC social media channels.

Some thoughts from the observation process and final evaluation:

- *At first, everything was a bit weird because we didn't know what was going to happen. On our side, we were afraid that things would "get out of hand", but they were probably afraid that we would be breathing down their necks.*
- *They took seeing the Biennale seriously, and after that, we had a good old natter. We were in for a surprise, as they really got into it.*
- *The concept of the zine took quite a bit of discussion and a critical approach to the work. In the end, though, we made a really cool product.*

### HOW DID WE UNDERSTAND THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ENTERED THIS FIELD OF THE FORUM?

What all the programmes and approaches discussed had in common, and especially the last programme described, was the fact that we gave the young people a creative space that they themselves controlled. On this occasion, the development of ideas, the level of critical engagement, as well as the degree of reflection and plurality of voices also evaded the control of authority. More important than the public event and its rhetorical persuasiveness, even

though this is an indispensable part of the whole, were the process and collective work that encouraged ideas and solutions. They were able to express their views independently and individually. In the evaluation, they reported that they were very satisfied with the activities and socialising, and that they felt appreciated. They felt responsible and trustworthy.

Contemporary art and the activities of young people converged at a point where both pointed to something missing in society; indeed, contemporary art deals with many issues that directly concern young people. What is typical of both is a disregard for the canon, as well as overtaking time and the existing system. The experience of engaging in dialogue with contemporary art was a testing ground for exploring, not breaking down, boundaries. We may conclude that the activities carried out were at least partly reflected in the empathy, prosocial attitude, self-confidence, and self-expression of the young people, as well as their interpersonal relationships and the time they allowed themselves for dialogue.

In the joint poem they performed at the last residency, they put it like this: “... we shall see where this paper takes me ...”

All I can say is: I hope we meet again soon on our next joint adventure!

## EDLIRA ANDONI

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# INNOVATING TRADITION: YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN SAFEGUARDING AND REINTERPRETING LIVING HERITAGE IN ALBANIA

## INTRODUCTION

Living heritage plays a central role in shaping cultural identity, collective memory, and social cohesion. Unlike material heritage, which is preserved through physical conservation, living heritage is sustained through practice, transmission, and continuous reinterpretation by communities. It encompasses traditions, knowledge systems, performing arts, crafts, and social practices that are passed from one generation to the next. The vitality of such heritage depends largely on the active participation of community members, particularly younger generations who inherit, adapt, and reinterpret these traditions within contemporary contexts.

In Albania, living heritage is expressed through a rich variety of cultural practices. Among the most prominent examples are iso-polyphonic singing, recognised by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage; the crafting and wearing of the traditional xhubleta costume; oral storytelling traditions; traditional crafts; and ritual celebrations connected to seasonal cycles and community life. These practices embody local knowledge, collective memory, and social values, and they continue to function as important markers of cultural identity.

However, the transmission of living heritage faces increasing challenges. Rapid urbanisation, migration, globalisation, and changes in lifestyle have transformed traditional systems of knowledge transmission. In many cases, younger generations grow up distanced from the environments where these traditions were historically practised. As a result, the sustainability of living heritage increasingly depends on innovative strategies that actively involve young people in its safeguarding.

This paper explores how young people in Albania are becoming key actors in the preservation and reinterpretation of living heritage. Through educational initiatives, community projects, digital technologies, and institutional programmes, young people are not only learning traditional practices but also redefining their meaning in contemporary society.



Figure 1. Iso-polyphonic singing.



Figure 2. Folk dance concert performed by young people.

## YOUTH AND LIVING HERITAGE: PARTICIPATION BEYOND TRANSMISSION

Living heritage should not be understood as a static survival of the past but as a dynamic and evolving cultural process. Traditions remain meaningful only when communities continue to practise, reinterpret, and adapt them to changing circumstances. Within this process, young people play a crucial role. They are not simply passive recipients of knowledge; rather, they actively contribute to shaping how traditions are practised and understood.

In Albania, increasing attention has been given to young people's participation in heritage-related activities. Cultural institutions, educational programmes, and community organisations have recognised that engaging young people is essential for ensuring the continuity of traditional practices. These initiatives encourage young people to learn directly from practitioners, document local traditions, and explore creative ways of presenting heritage to wider audiences. Such involvement also strengthens intergenerational dialogue. When young people interact with elder artisans, musicians, or storytellers, they gain access not only to technical skills but also to broader cultural knowledge. This exchange contributes to the transmission of values, social memory, and community identity.

## EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES: LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE

One of the most effective mechanisms for connecting young people with living heritage is the education sector. Schools, cultural centres, and local organisations have developed programmes that integrate heritage learning into extracurricular activities and community initiatives.

In several Albanian regions, including Gjirokastra, Kruja, and Përmet, local schools have collaborated with cultural institutions and UNESCO-supported programmes to establish heritage clubs. Within these clubs, students participate in workshops where they learn traditional practices such as iso-polyphonic singing, folk dance, and elements of costume production (Figs. 1–2). These sessions are often guided by master practitioners from the local community, ensuring that knowledge is transmitted directly from experienced cultural bearers. The educational value of these programmes extends beyond performance training. Students frequently engage in documentation activities, including recording songs, interviewing elders, and collecting stories related to local traditions. Through these activities, they develop research skills while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of community knowledge.

Such initiatives demonstrate the importance of experiential learning. By participating actively in heritage practices rather than merely studying them theoretically, young people develop a deeper understanding of their cultural significance. Moreover, the interaction between generations fosters mutual respect and reinforces the social bonds that sustain cultural traditions.

## REVIVING TRADITIONAL CRAFT KNOWLEDGE: THE CASE OF XHUBLETA WEAVING

Another important example of young people's engagement with living heritage can be observed in the revival of xhubleta weaving in northern Albania. The xhubleta is a distinctive traditional garment historically worn by women in the northern regions of Albania. Characterised by its bell-shaped structure and intricate decorative patterns, the garment represents a unique form of craftsmanship and cultural symbolism (Fig. 3).

Over the past decades, however, the tradition of xhubleta production has faced serious decline. Migration, the high cost of materials, and the disappearance of traditional apprenticeship systems have significantly reduced the number of skilled artisans capable of producing the garment. In response to this situation, several initiatives were launched to revive the craft. Beginning in 2022, workshops were organised in northern Albania where elder weavers began teaching younger women the complex techniques involved in producing the xhubleta. Participants learn every stage of the process, including wool preparation, dyeing, loom weaving, and the creation of symbolic embroidery patterns. These workshops represent more than technical training. They function as spaces for cultural exchange and collective memory, where older practitioners share personal experiences, stories, and symbolic interpretations associated with the garment. Through this process, young participants gain access to a broader cultural framework in which the xhubleta functions not only as clothing but also as a representation of identity, social status, and regional heritage. The revival of xhubleta weaving illustrates how traditional knowledge can be revitalised when opportunities are created for intergenerational learning. The traditional craftsmanship and use of the xhubleta were inscribed in 2022 (17.COM) on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

## YOUTH-LED HERITAGE INITIATIVES

In addition to institutional programmes, Albanian young people are increasingly initiating their own heritage-related projects. These grassroots initiatives often combine cultural documentation with contemporary communication tools, particularly digital media. One example is the young people-led movement Tradita Ime ("My Tradition"), founded by university students in Shkodra. The initiative focuses on documenting local customs, dances, and family traditions through short videos shared on social media platforms such as Instagram and



Figure 3. Xhubleta is a complex, handcrafted garment made of hundreds of narrow wool strips sewn together to form a sculptural, bell-like skirt that flares from the waist to below the knees.

TikTok. By presenting heritage in visually engaging and accessible formats, these students reach audiences that might otherwise remain disconnected from traditional culture.

What distinguishes these projects is the way in which young people reinterpret heritage through their own perspectives. Instead of presenting traditions as static artefacts, they highlight their emotional, social, and personal significance. In doing so, they create new narrative frameworks that resonate with contemporary audiences while remaining rooted in local identity.

Similar initiatives have emerged in cities such as Korça and Elbasan, where young people's groups conduct oral history projects. Students record interviews with grandparents, artisans, and local practitioners, documenting stories about daily life, craftsmanship, and community traditions. These recordings are then compiled into digital archives that are accessible to libraries, museums, and local cultural institutions. Such projects not only preserve valuable knowledge but also empower young people to become active interpreters of their cultural heritage (Fig. 4).

## TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR HERITAGE INNOVATION

Digital technology has opened new possibilities for connecting heritage with younger audiences. In Albania, several experimental projects have demonstrated how technological tools can enhance heritage interpretation and accessibility.

In Tirana and Gjirokastra, for example, university students in history, archaeology, and technology have collaborated to create augmented reality (AR) heritage tours. Using mobile devices, visitors can explore historical sites while viewing digital reconstructions of past environments or listening to narrated stories connected to specific locations (Fig. 5). In Gjirokastra, an AR walking tour of the historic bazaar allows users to visualise aspects of daily life during the Ottoman period. Through digital storytelling, visitors learn about traditional crafts, trade networks, and social interactions that shaped the city's cultural landscape. Importantly, many of these narratives are created and narrated by young local participants, giving them an active role in interpreting their heritage.

Another digital development involves online archives of traditional music and storytelling. Young musicians and students collaborate to record and curate local songs, folktales, and oral traditions. These materials are then shared through online platforms, making them accessible to wider audiences while preserving the voices of local communities.

Such initiatives demonstrate how technology can function as a bridge between tradition and innovation, enabling heritage to circulate beyond its geographic origins without losing its cultural context.

Figure 4. Student documenting and interviewing elders.





Figure 5. Platforms like #ReLivingHeritage invite young people to upload their own videos or images showing traditional practices.

### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND HERITAGE POLICIES

Institutional frameworks also play an important role in encouraging young people's participation in heritage activities. In Albania, the Ministry of Culture has introduced several programmes aimed at strengthening connections between young people and cultural heritage. One such initiative is the Heritage Guardians programme, which organises workshops, heritage walks, and practical demonstrations in schools and youth centres. Cultural professionals collaborate with artisans and community members to create interactive learning environments where young participants can explore traditional skills and knowledge.

Museums have also begun to adopt more participatory approaches. Events such as Living Heritage Days, organised by museums in Tirana, Kruja, and Berat, provide opportunities for young people to demonstrate crafts, music, and performances learned through workshops or community programmes. These events transform museums from static exhibition spaces into dynamic cultural platforms where heritage is actively practised and shared. Through such initiatives, institutions support not only the preservation of cultural traditions but also the development of new forms of community engagement.

### CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Despite the positive developments described above, several challenges continue to affect the sustainability of living heritage in Albania. Migration from rural areas to urban centres has reduced the number of young people living in regions where many traditional practices originate. At the same time, many experienced artisans and cultural practitioners are ageing, and the transfer of their knowledge to younger generations remains uncertain. Limited financial resources also restrict the scope of heritage initiatives, particularly at the local level. Many community-based projects rely on temporary funding or volunteer work, making long-term continuity difficult. Nevertheless, the examples discussed in this paper demonstrate that when appropriate structures and opportunities are provided, young people show strong interest in engaging with their cultural heritage. Their participation introduces new perspectives, creative interpretations, and innovative methods of documentation and presentation.

### CONCLUSION

Young people's engagement is essential for the safeguarding and revitalisation of living heritage in Albania. Through educational programmes, craft workshops, digital initiatives, and community projects, young people are actively contributing to the transmission and reinterpretation of traditional practices. Rather than merely preserving heritage as a static

inheritance, they are transforming it into a dynamic cultural resource that continues to evolve in contemporary society. By combining traditional knowledge with digital technologies, creative expression, and community collaboration, Albanian young people are redefining what it means to safeguard heritage in the twenty-first century. Their participation ensures that living heritage remains meaningful, adaptable, and connected to the realities of modern life. In this sense, young people do not simply inherit tradition—they actively shape its future.

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### ISIDORA (BANJAC) ŽIVKOVIĆ

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA  
BANJA LUKA / BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

## MUSEUMS IN MOTION – HERITAGE IN THE HANDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE NEW APPROACHES TO COOPERATION IN THE MUSEUMS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina have partnered on the continuation of the project Museums in Motion, with the aim of developing innovative methodologies for engaging young people in the understanding and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first edition of the project Museums in Motion was implemented in 2019. The methodological framework established at that time was subsequently applied and further developed in the current iteration of the project. In this phase, workshops for primary and secondary school students were organised and conducted by curators from the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The principal aim and central focus of the project were to familiarise young participants, through workshops and interactive, participatory approaches, with the collections of these institutions, their professional practices, and the broader role and function of museums within society.

Given the project's demonstrated success and relevance, it was decided to revisit and expand the Museums in Motion initiative during 2025 and 2026. While the core methodology



has remained consistent, centring on participatory workshops and interactive learning, the conceptual scope and objectives have been broadened.

The new edition of the project, titled *Museums in Motion: Cultural Heritage in the Hands of Youth*, continues as a joint initiative of the two institutions. Its principal aims include the enhancement of intercultural dialogue, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the active involvement of young people in the processes of preserving and promoting cultural heritage. The programme seeks to engage participants with forms of knowledge and experience that are typically absent from formal education systems.

The project is implemented within the framework of the *Dialogue for the Future* initiative, jointly carried out by UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme, and UNICEF. In this edition, particular emphasis is placed on cultural heritage, its meaning and societal role, with a focus on both the tangible and the intangible heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The workshops aim to raise awareness of what constitutes heritage, as well as of the frameworks through which it is recognised and presented.

Ten primary schools located in the following cities were selected for the implementation of the project: Bosanska Krupa, Doboj, Glamoč, Gornji Vakuf–Uskoplje, Milići, Mostar, Stolac, Teslić, Tuzla, and Zvornik. The workshops are designed for children aged 11 to 15, corresponding to students from grades six through nine. During the second half of 2025, both museums engaged in the conceptual development of the workshops, the selection of participating schools, and preparatory coordination, preceding the project's implementation, which commenced in the first half of 2026. It is important to note that the selected schools responded very positively to the initiative, demonstrating a strong interest in participation.

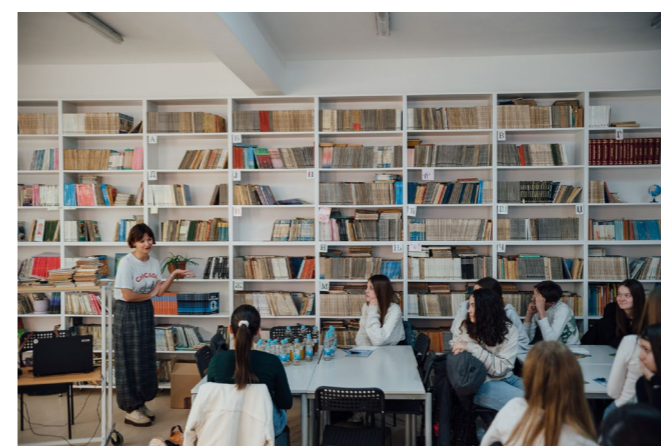
A key innovation in relation to the first edition of the project is the introduction of a multi-day residential programme, *Ambassadors of Culture*, to be held in the first half of June 2026 at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska in Banja Luka. Two students from each participating school will be selected to take part in the residency, on the basis of their engagement and the artworks they produce during the workshops. The residency will bring together participants from different cities, providing an opportunity for mutual acquaintance and the exchange of experiences gained through the workshop process. During the programme, additional activities will be organised, involving mentors from various fields, including art history, archaeology, and music. In this way, the residency continues the dialogue on the significance of heritage, while simultaneously enabling participants to further develop and deepen their previously acquired knowledge.

The methodological approach established during the first edition of the project has been retained: both museums independently select their curators and collaborators and autonomously conceptualise their respective workshops. This text focuses exclusively on the contribution of the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska, specifically on the workshop developed and implemented under its auspices. The workshop, titled *Mosaic of Cultural Heritage*, was conceived by Isidora Živković, art historian and curator of

Museums in Motion. Workshop in Doboj. Photos: Dalibor Danilović.

the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska, and Miroslav Drljača, Professor of Art Education Methodology at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Banja Luka. It is structured as a visual arts workshop in which students explore and artistically interpret the cultural heritage of their immediate environment.

The introductory segment of the workshop is dedicated to defining the concept of heritage<sup>[1]</sup>, followed by a discussion of its meaning and social function. Special emphasis is placed on the role of UNESCO and its World Heritage List, which enhances the visibility of heritage and recognises it as a value of universal significance. As a particular case study within the broader discussion of this field, the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina is examined, with a focus on its heritage inscribed under UNESCO protection. The introductory lecture also encompasses examples of preservation and interpretation, which in this case are presented through specific instances of artistic practice. Given that the students' assignment involves the creation of a visual artwork, works belonging to the corpus of contemporary art, produced by artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, are introduced as a referential framework and as illustrative examples of how heritage can be presented and safeguarded. Such examples demonstrate the ways in which artists interpret cultural heritage and how it can be employed within the context of contemporary art, thereby representing one of the approaches through which it may be further popularised while simultaneously being preserved.



Museums in Motion. Workshop in Teslić. Photos: Dalibor Danilović.

The central task of the workshop involves the creation of an artwork on a square panel of uniform dimensions, primarily using collage techniques, with the possibility of incorporating additional materials such as paper, textile, cardboard, or drawing. The process of research and conceptual development begins after the introductory lecture and discussion. During this phase, students produce sketches and engage in dialogue about the selection of motifs and their potential transformation into signs or symbols. The emphasis is not placed on realistic representation but rather on personal interpretation through symbolic, ornamental, or abstract forms, thereby fostering the development of visual thinking and the capacity for formal reduction.

Given that the thematic framework is oriented towards the exploration of cultural heritage, the workshop encourages students to identify and reflect upon elements from their own environment that may be understood as heritage. Proceeding from the premise that cultural heritage is not a static assemblage of elements but an integral part of the everyday life of a community, the workshop invites participants to observe their surroundings and recognise the values that shape them. At the conclusion, each student briefly presents their work and explains the chosen motif. Although each participant produces an individual artwork, all works are ultimately integrated into a collective whole: they are assembled into a large mosaic or puzzle, symbolically uniting diverse local narratives, experiences, and perspectives on cultural heritage.

The workshop seeks to cultivate awareness of both tangible and intangible heritage, while also motivating participants to develop a personal and reflective relationship towards heritage and the spaces they inhabit. Students from different regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina are thus provided with an opportunity to engage with the cultural heritage of their immediate environment and to interpret it through their own creative expression.

The individual works, once assembled into a collective mosaic, form a visual portrait of a particular place. When works from different schools and cities are brought together, they create a large-scale composition composed of numerous individual elements. This collective mosaic may be exhibited in a gallery, cultural centre, or school, where it functions as both a testament to collaborative work and a symbol of the diversity of local cultural identities. In this sense, the workshop extends beyond an educational process and becomes a form of public presentation of creative engagement with cultural heritage.

Although the workshops developed by the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina are conceptually distinct, they are grounded in shared premises and oriented towards a common thematic field. Their shared outcome lies in the production of artworks that testify to the diversity of interpretations of heritage, as well as to its potential to serve as a unifying element that evokes a sense of collective belonging.

During the Ambassadors of Culture programme, a form of collective exhibition will be organised at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska, presenting the works produced throughout the workshops. In addition to fostering visual literacy, this shared final outcome, the exhibition, contributes to strengthening a sense of community and belonging. In this way, Museums in Motion simultaneously connects students, schools, and local communities.

Such a model of museological practice, in which museum work is directly connected to local communities and the educational system, has the potential not only to raise awareness of cultural heritage but also to enhance the visibility and accessibility of museum institutions. The workshops, together with the residency programme, encourage participants, as future custodians of heritage, to critically engage with heritage as a living phenomenon and to articulate their relationship to it through contemporary visual language, with the support of curators and specialists in art education methodology.

The project's conceptual framework further aims to foster a sense of collective belonging and active participation among young people in the field of heritage, employing creative tools to raise awareness of its cultural, historical, and identity-related significance. By decentralising museum activities and promoting inter-institutional collaboration, Museums in Motion offers a model for inclusive and sustainable heritage education in multicultural societies.

Museums in Motion. Workshop in Teslić (left) and Zvornik (right). Photos: Dalibor Danilović.



# MUSEUM NEWS FROM THE SOUTHEAST EUROPE

## ICOM BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

### ALMA LEKA

#### TWENTY YEARS OF CELEBRATING ICOM'S INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY (IMD) AND THE EUROPEAN NIGHT OF MUSEUMS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (2006–2026)

Every year since 1977, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has organised International Museum Day (IMD), a unique moment for the global museum community. On this day, participating museums plan creative events and activities aligned with the annual theme, engage with their audiences, and highlight the important role museums play as institutions that serve society and its development. Each year, ICOM's Advisory Committee proposes a socially relevant theme, enabling museums to present achievements, address challenges, and emphasise their role in society. This shared focus allows museums worldwide to amplify their message through collective action.

The aim of International Museum Day is to raise awareness that 'museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures, and the development of mutual understanding, cooperation, and peace among peoples'. It is celebrated each year around 18 May, with activities lasting a day, a weekend, or even an entire week.

#### FROM THE HISTORY OF ICOM'S INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

##### 1951

The idea for International Museum Day emerged in 1951. Prior to its official establishment, ICOM gathered the international museum community at a meeting titled Museums and Education to discuss museum accessibility. The concept of International Museum Day was inspired by the frameworks developed during this meeting.

##### 1977 – RESOLUTION

International Museum Day was first celebrated on 18 May 1978, following the adoption of Resolution No. 5 in 1977 at the ICOM General Assembly in Moscow. The resolution called for the creation of an annual event '...to further unify the creative aspirations and efforts of museums and to draw the attention of the global public to their activities.' It also emphasised that museums are key instruments of cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

##### 1992 – FIRST THEME

As the event continued to grow and attract more museums, ICOM introduced its first official theme in 1992: Museums and the Environment.

### 1997 – FIRST OFFICIAL POSTER

In 1997, ICOM launched the first official poster, dedicated to combating the illicit trafficking of cultural property. The poster was adopted by 28 countries.

### 2011 – STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION

In 2011, institutional partners, a dedicated website, and a communication toolkit were introduced, marking a turning point for the event. That same year, ICOM became a patron and partner of the European Night of Museums, an event held on the Saturday closest to 18 May.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE CELEBRATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (2006)

May is the month in which the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrates museums, institutions that represent a vital part of the country's culture and identity. The largest museum event in Bosnia and Herzegovina, International Museum Day and the European Night of Museums, began in 2006. This year marks the 20th anniversary of its celebration in the country. The initiative started modestly but with great enthusiasm, following the official establishment of ICOM Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first celebration took place simultaneously in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, with three participating institutions: the Museum of Contemporary Art of Republika Srpska, the Museum of Republika Srpska, and the Museum of Sarajevo. The museums in Banja Luka jointly organised the event on 20 May under the title Night of Museums 2006. Their programmes included exhibitions, concerts, performances, and a children's theatre play. Entry was free from 8.00 p.m. until midnight.

This innovative approach to bringing art, culture, and museum stories closer to the public quickly spread across the country. In 2008, the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the initiative, followed gradually by other museum institutions. Today, the event is marked by museums throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under the title Day and Night of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country's oldest museum institution joined the celebration on 20 June 2008, as part of its 120th anniversary. The programme included workshops and exhibitions and concluded with a concert in the museum's botanical garden. Admission was free.

### SIGNIFICANCE TODAY

Traditionally, these two events are celebrated together in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Saturday closest to 18 May. They bring museums, the museum profession, and cultural heritage closer to the public, especially young people, while highlighting their importance in enriching social and cultural life.

At the same time, the event draws attention to the challenges museums face. Notably, museums in Sarajevo continued to mark the occasion even during the period from 2012 to 2015, when many state institutions based in Sarajevo were closed due to a lack of institutional support.

Through diverse programmes and activities, the event promotes museums as dynamic institutions that connect people with knowledge, foster cultural diversity, and provide spaces for learning, creativity, and meaningful leisure. One of its key goals is to open museum doors at unusual hours, late into the evening, making them more accessible, particularly to younger audiences.

Each year, a new socially relevant theme, proposed by ICOM, unites museums worldwide, strengthening the collective voice of the museum community. This is further supported by ICOM's recommendations, which encourage free admission, extended opening hours, exhibitions, concerts, promotional campaigns, and tailored programmes for diverse audiences.

The initiator and coordinator of this event in Bosnia and Herzegovina is ICOM Bosnia and Herzegovina. Admission to all permanent exhibitions, temporary exhibitions, and programmes organised on this occasion is free until late at night.



Participants in the panel "Solutions in Combating Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina", held at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo.

### ALMA LEKA

## ANCHISE WORKSHOP ON ILLICIT TRAFFICKING OF CULTURAL GOODS, AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, 10–12 SEPTEMBER 2025

From 10 to 12 September 2025, ANCHISE, in collaboration with ICOM as one of the project partners, held three major events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, dedicated to one main goal: strengthening the protection of cultural heritage:

- a demonstration of technological tools for cultural heritage professionals at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo
- a workshop and panel on systemic challenges and operational solutions for cultural heritage protection at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo
- a demonstration of tools for law enforcement agencies at the Agency for Education and Professional Training in Mostar

On the first day of the event, demonstrations of technological tools for cultural heritage professionals in Bosnia and Herzegovina were organised at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. About 80 cultural heritage professionals from different parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina gathered at the museum to test and learn about digital tools designed to monitor, document, and protect museum objects. Participants were divided into groups and attended several workshops presenting different tools from the ANCHISE technological toolbox.

The workshop entitled Cultural Heritage Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina: From Systemic Challenges to Operational Solutions, and the panel entitled Solutions in Combating Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were organised on the second day of the ANCHISE event, on 11 September 2025, at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo.

Sophie Delepierre, Head of ICOM's Heritage Protection Department, also took part in the panel. This event brought together colleagues from various Bosnian-Herzegovinian museums and once again highlighted all the problems that Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced over the

past 30 years regarding the illegal trade in cultural goods, as well as possible solutions. Most importantly, it underscored the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently the only country in this part of Europe that does not have a register, or registers, of stolen and missing cultural items, nor is it actually known how many exhibits have been stolen from museum institutions in the country since the 1990s, for which no one has ever been held accountable. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, that is, in the territory of South-East Europe (SEE), it has been proven that there is a clear interaction between the transfer of cultural goods and criminal groups involved in drug and arms trafficking. The third event was a demonstration of technological tools dedicated to law enforcement agencies. The event took place on 12 September 2025 at the Agency for Education and Professional Training in Mostar.

These three events, which gathered more than 80 professionals from cultural institutions and law enforcement agencies, demonstrated the transformative potential of combining technological innovation with local expertise in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural heritage. They were also the culmination of long-term work involving the host institutions, representatives from various units facing the challenges of cultural heritage protection, and members of the ANCHISE consortium.

The foundations laid during these demonstrations and the workshop will serve as a catalyst for strengthening the capacity to protect cultural goods while contributing valuable insights to the broader European effort against heritage crime. In this way, ANCHISE successfully showcased practical tools while addressing the systemic challenges—institutional fragmentation and documentation gaps—that continue to threaten the region's heritage. The achievements of these events should also pave the way for future activities.

## MATIJA DRONJIĆ

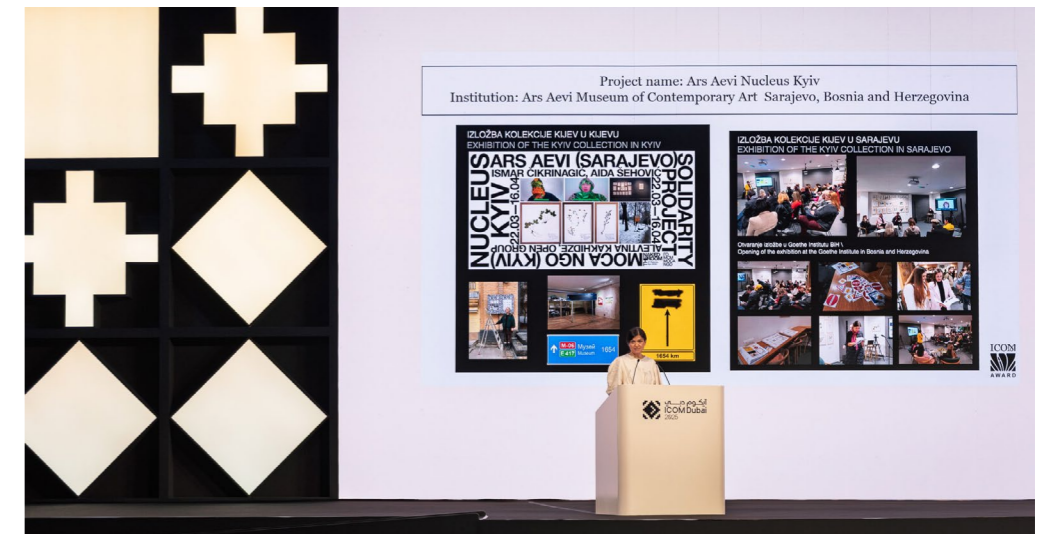
### ARS AEVI MUSEUM'S UKRAINE SOLIDARITY PROJECT AMONGST THE FINALIST OF THE ICOM AWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE IN MUSEUMS

At the 27th ICOM General Conference held in Dubai in November 2025, Senka Ibrišimbegović, Director of the Ars Aevi Museum of Contemporary Art in Sarajevo, presented her museum's solidarity project "Ars Aevi Nucleus Kyiv" as one of five finalists for the inaugural ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in Museums. The prestigious global recognition, granted by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), evaluated projects according to the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals—People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership—with all five finalists declared winners. The jury of seven international museum and sustainable development experts selected the best initiatives from 130 applications submitted from 60 countries worldwide.

The award-winning project, "Ars Aevi Nucleus Kyiv – Solidarity Exhibition of Contemporary Art," was created as an expression of solidarity with the people of Ukraine and recognized in the Peace category. Realized with financial support from the Goethe-Institut in Bosnia and Herzegovina between September 2022 and May 2023, the exhibition featured new artworks created and donated by artists Aida Šehović and Ismar Ćirkinagić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Open Group collective from Lviv, and artist Alevtina Kakhidze from Ukraine, all of which became part of the museum's permanent collection. The exhibition was presented simultaneously in Sarajevo at the Goethe-Institut premises and the site of the future Ars Aevi Museum, and in Kyiv at the Naked Room gallery on February 24, 2023, symbolically marking one year since the start of the Russian invasion.

Director Ibrišimbegović emphasized the significance of the ICOM conference and stated that it was a great honor to be invited to participate and present the Ars Aevi institution on this global platform. The project strengthened cultural solidarity between Sarajevo and Kyiv, reinforcing

Senka Ibrišimbegović presenting the project "Ars Aevi Nucleus Kyiv" at the ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in Museums ceremony.



mutual understanding and support between two countries that share the experience of conflict, and demonstrated how museums can serve as platforms for peace-building and international solidarity through contemporary art. The main ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in Museums was won by the Barbados Museum & Historical Society for their project connecting Scotland and the Caribbean region

## ICOM BULGARIA

### SVETLA DIMITROVA

#### FOR THE FIRST TIME, ICOM BULGARIA AWARDS PRIZES TO ITS MEMBERS

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to attend the Annual Awards Ceremony on behalf of ICOM Slovenia, which was held at the museum in the town of Brežice. I was deeply impressed by the excitement with which each of the winners received his or her certificate, a material expression of recognition for his or her work. At that moment, I thought how wonderful it would be if our National Committee also recognised the work of its members.

After a discussion within the Administrative Board, the proposal of Deputy Chairperson Elka Penkova was initially accepted to award honorary diplomas to several people thanks to whom ICOM Bulgaria had resumed its activities. The Bulgarian organisation was established in 1967, but in the late 1980s its activity declined and it ceased to operate. In 1994, on the initiative of the National Centre for Museums, Galleries and Fine Arts, steps were taken to restore membership in ICOM, and this became a reality in 1995. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the new stage in the life of ICOM Bulgaria, during the General Assembly in 2025, honorary diplomas for services to the organisation were presented to Albert Benbasat, Vesselina Inkova, Alexander Vulchev, Mihail Maleev, Elena Nikolova, and Zdravka Mihailova.

Meanwhile, Dr Aksiniya Buteva, a member of the Administrative Board, developed a statute for annual awards. It was adopted at the General Assembly in 2025, but it still needs to be supplemented in order to broaden the possibilities for participation.

The awards are announced on 18 May, International Museum Day. They recognise achievements during the previous year in three categories: 1. Museum practice, cultural heritage management, and museum communication; 2. Scientific, educational, and social contribution to museology; 3. Overall contribution and leadership in museum activities.

Individual and institutional members of the organisation are eligible to participate in the competition, although institutional members may submit only one representative from their team. A form has been developed within the statute and must be completed and sent to a person in charge designated by the Administrative Board. The evaluation is carried out by a jury of three members, who are elected annually. The statute outlines the evaluation steps and criteria. The winners receive an honorary diploma and a graphic print donated by a member of the Bulgarian National Committee.

The first ICOM Bulgaria awards were presented during the General Assembly in February 2026. The jury's award in the category "Contribution to Museum Activity" was presented to Lyubomir Merdzhanov, curator responsible for the Antiquity Collection at the Regional Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv. Tihomir Tsarov, Chief Expert for Public Relations at REOM "Etar", was awarded for active work with a broad social audience in the field of communication and the promotion of museum activity. The award for professional authority, significant institutional contribution, and participation in exhibition and project activities was given to Valentina Taneva, Deputy Director of the Regional Historical Museum in Pazardzhik.

Laureates of the first ICOM Bulgaria awards.



Laureates of the third ICOM Croatia Awards

Museums for the project "Shared Island Stories Between Scotland and the Caribbean: Transnational Youth Exchange". Through their presentation, the speakers offered inspiring insights into how museums can integrate sustainability, youth participation, and international cooperation into long-term institutional strategies and everyday practice.

During the ICOM Croatia 2025 Awards ceremony, thirteen museum projects from Croatia were presented, illustrating the diversity and vitality of the national museum scene. The expert jury particularly underlined achievements in three key categories: International Cooperation, Cross-sectoral Cooperation, and Innovative and Sustainable Museum Practices.

In the International Cooperation category, the award was presented to the joint project of Trakošćan Castle and Mosteiro de Arouca, a partnership between Trakošćan Castle, Mosteiro de Arouca, Património Cultural I. P., Município de Arouca, and Real Irmandade da Rainha Santa Mafalda de Arouca, which exemplifies long-term, content-based collaboration between Croatian and Portuguese heritage institutions. In the Cross-sectoral Cooperation category, two awards were presented: to the project "Academy of Maritime Crafts and Skills", implemented by the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka in cooperation with the Coordination of Associations for the Revitalisation and Preservation of Maritime, Shipbuilding and Fishing Heritage of Kvarner and Istria – Traditional Sails of Kvarner and Istria – and the Technical School Rijeka, for its strong links between the museum sector, education and civil initiatives; and to the project "Museums for Everyone, Absolutely Everyone – Building an Inclusive Community Together!", developed by the Natural History Museum Rijeka and the association Culture for Everyone Everywhere, recognised for its systematic, community-based approach to inclusion. In the Innovative and Sustainable Museum Practices category, the annual award was presented to the project "New Croatian Natural History Museum", implemented by the Croatian Natural History Museum in partnership with the City of Zagreb and the Zagreb Tourist Board, which, through its new building and exhibition concept, sets high standards in sustainability, accessibility and the interpretation of natural heritage.



## ICOM CROATIA

### MATIJA DRONJIĆ

#### CROATIAN MUSEUM DAYS 2025 AND THE 3<sup>RD</sup> ICOM CROATIA AWARDS CEREMONY

The 2025 edition of Croatian Museum Days and the third ICOM Croatia Awards ceremony took place on 3 December 2025 at the newly opened premises of the Croatian Natural History Museum in Zagreb, which also hosted the annual assembly of the Croatian National Committee of ICOM. The event brought together museum professionals from across the country, representatives of partner institutions, and students, creating a lively forum for discussion on current challenges, professional standards, and the social role of museums today.

A special highlight of that year's programme was the guest lecture by representatives of the team awarded the first global ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in



In 2025, an exceptional Special Recognition for Contributions to the Work and Development of ICOM Croatia was also awarded to Goranka Horjan, a long-standing member of ICOM Croatia who has been actively engaged in the committee's activities both nationally and internationally. In addition to her continuous involvement in the Croatian committee, she has also served as Chair of ICOM SEE and of INTERCOM, while her most recent appointment is to the position of Treasurer of ICOM.

By presenting the ICOM Croatia 2025 Awards within the framework of Croatian Museum Days 2025, ICOM Croatia once again emphasised the importance of supporting innovative, collaborative, and internationally relevant museum projects. The event reaffirmed its role as a key meeting point for the museum community in Croatia, encouraging the exchange of experiences and ideas in line with ICOM and UNESCO standards and contributing to the visibility of museums as active, responsible, and forward-looking actors in society.

Left: Presentation of the project "Shared Island Stories Between Scotland and the Caribbean: Transnational Youth Exchange", which received the first global ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice. Desno: Presentations by the nominees for the ICOM Croatia Award at the newly renovated Croatian Natural History Museum.

## ICOM ROMANIA

### ANDREA BERNATH

#### ROMANIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE ICOM PRISM INITIATIVE

PRISM (Prevention, Research, Investigation and Security in Museums), a three-year project funded by the European Commission (DG EAC) and led by the International Council of Museums through its Heritage Protection Department in Paris, addresses the growing challenge of illicit trafficking of cultural goods in Europe, aiming to strengthen the capacity of museums to prevent, identify, and respond to such risks.

The initiative brings together key institutional partners from seven countries—Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine—reflecting a strong regional approach to a transnational issue. It also offers support in developing operational tools to better understand and prevent trafficking at both regional and European levels by promoting international cooperation, knowledge exchange, and collaboration between museum professionals, authorities, and the public, with a new digital platform planned for launch in 2027.

From 24 to 27 March 2026, the Regional Symposium "Heritage Under Threat: Regional Responses to Illicit Trafficking" took place in Sibiu under the local organisation of the National History Museum of Romania (MNIR). It brought together its partners to focus on their main objectives: enhancing access to expertise through the upgrade of the

International Observatory on Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Goods, and developing preventive and awareness-raising measures to better protect museum collections.

On behalf of the newly reinvigorated National Committee of ICOM Romania, the Board of Directors, through its Vice-Chair Andrea Bernath, was honoured to deliver a welcome message to the contributors to this event, expressing appreciation for being invited to this international gathering dedicated to the future of museums and the shared responsibility carried by all those who act as stewards of cultural heritage. The presence of the participants reflected a collective commitment to advancing ethical, professional, and socially responsive practices worldwide. ICOM Romania reaffirmed its aim to support Romanian museums across different contexts in navigating practical and often complex decisions, while also contributing to the International Council of Museums, which plays an important role in bringing professionals together and providing a common framework for their activity.

Through its standards, networks, and especially the Code of Ethics, ICOM helps guide the museum profession, but as the field changes, these tools also need to be revisited. In recent years, much of the discussion has focused on redefining what a museum is. The new definition highlights something many museum professionals already experience in practice: museums are about collections, but also about people, access, participation, and responsibility towards society. This shift has made it clear that the 2004 Code of Ethics, while still valuable, no longer fully reflects the realities faced today. This is why the ongoing revision of the Code, now in its fourth draft and built on consultations and contributions from across the ICOM community, has been structured around five core principles: Society, Professionalism, Education, Collections, and Governance. These are not abstract ideas; they relate directly to everyday work in museums, from engagement with communities to the management of collections and institutional decision-making.

The emphasis on preventive and awareness-raising measures for protecting and securing collections in Europe is crucial within the new ethical framework promoted by the International Council of Museums, particularly under the principle of professionalism. Article 9 highlights that ethical responsibility is not limited to reacting to illicit trafficking, but requires proactive engagement to prevent it and to foster a culture of vigilance across the museum sector.

Preventive measures are essential because illicit trafficking, theft, and the destruction of heritage often occur in contexts where documentation is weak, security systems are insufficient, or provenance research has not been rigorously conducted. This is also evident in Romania with regard to the use of metal detectors, where legal frameworks remain ambiguous, creating grey areas that can be exploited to the detriment of archaeological heritage. By strengthening regulations and inventories, improving collection management systems, and ensuring thorough provenance checks, museums reduce the risk of objects being stolen, illegally traded, or unknowingly acquired.

Combating illicit trafficking is not only a matter of compliance—it is a matter of safeguarding the very essence of cultural heritage. It also demands collaboration between museums,

PRISM, Regional Symposium "Heritage Under Threat: Regional Responses to Illicit Trafficking", 24 March, Casa Artelor, Sibiu, 2026. Sophie Delepierre (Head of ICOM Heritage Protection Department): "Heritage Protection: the Role of ICOM, PRISM Action and Operational Tools".

PRISM, Regional Symposium "Heritage Under Threat: Regional Responses to Illicit Trafficking", 24 March, Casa Artelor, Sibiu, 2026. Book presentation: expert Augustin Lazăr featuring author Claudiu Purdea.





law enforcement agencies, heritage institutions, and international partners, all grounded in shared awareness and common ethical standards.

ICOM itself has developed practical tools to support this effort, notably the Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk, which serve as essential references for authorities, law enforcement, and the art market in identifying categories of objects most vulnerable to illicit trafficking. This collaborative approach is reinforced by ICOM's longstanding partnerships with UNESCO and INTERPOL, which provide the institutional and operational framework necessary to translate ethical commitments into coordinated action across borders.

In South-Eastern Europe, where collections are vast, historically layered, and often interconnected across borders, such prevention is especially important for safeguarding cultural heritage that holds both regional and global significance. This reflects the scale of these challenges and the collective determination to address them, extending ethical responsibility beyond museum professionals to the wider public, policymakers, and the art market. Awareness-raising also plays a complementary role through the education of stakeholders about the consequences of illicit trafficking, such as the loss of cultural identity, the financing of criminal networks, and the irreversible damage to heritage, and helps create an environment in which unethical practices are less tolerated. It also encourages transparency and accountability, making it harder for illicit activities to remain hidden.

Overall, PRISM highlights the importance of a proactive and collaborative approach to combating illicit trafficking, and the Regional Symposium held in Sibiu, Romania, provided a valuable opportunity for partners and professionals to exchange knowledge, strengthen networks, and address shared challenges, including those involving public authorities, in a regional context. By developing tailored national projects, fostering prevention, raising awareness, and encouraging cross-sector cooperation, the project not only enhances the protection of cultural heritage but also reaffirms the role of museums as responsible and engaged actors within society.

PRISM, Regional Symposium "Heritage Under Threat: Regional Responses to Illicit Trafficking", 24 March, Casa Artelor, Sibiu, 2026.

## ICOM SLOVENIA

### URŠKA PURG

#### RE-ORG SLOVENIA: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE FOR COLLECTION STORAGE

Last year, ICOM Slovenia organised what has now become an almost traditional RE-ORG workshop, an initiative that has truly taken root in Slovenia. Each edition brings together a new group of participants and takes place in a different museum, which has proven to be a major strength of the programme. This diversity allows for the accumulation of valuable experience across a wide range of storage environments, collection types, and institutional contexts. The RE-ORG methodology has gained such momentum in Slovenia that the leadership of the workshops is gradually being taken over by a new generation of facilitators.



From the workshop "RE-ORG Slovenia: Building a Sustainable Practice for Collection Storage".

Previously led by Jana Šubic Prislan and Veljko Đikić, the programme is now being continued by Petra Stipančič (Dolenjski Museum Novo Mesto) and Gregor Kos (Slovenian Ethnographic Museum), with M.A. Jana Šubic Prislan still actively involved in this year's edition. In recent years, Slovenian museum professionals have also participated in similar projects abroad, while RE-ORG has already been implemented locally in several institutions, including the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia, the Museum of National Liberation Maribor, and the Technical Museum of Slovenia. In collaboration with the Gorenjska Museum, ICOM Slovenia organised a five-day intensive training workshop on storage reorganisation in 2025. The workshop took place from 17 to 22 November 2025 at the Gorenjska Museum in Kranj. Last year's edition brought together 23 participants and continued to strengthen a growing professional network, reinforcing RE-ORG as a sustainable and evolving practice in Slovenia.

## URŠKA PURG & ALENKA ČERNELIČ KROŠELJ

### BORDERLESS MUSEUMS: REDEFINING NARRATIVES AND INCLUSIVITY IN NOVA GORICA AND GORIZIA

This report, compiled by ICOM SEE and ICOM Slovenia, highlights the key outcomes of the international conference titled "Borderless Museums: Redefining Museum Narratives and Inclusivity". The event took place from 15 to 17 May 2025 in the cross-border region of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy).

The conference was the result of extensive inter-institutional preparation involving ICOM Slovenia, ICOM Italia, ICOM Europe, ICOM South East Europe, EGTC GO and GO! 2025. Within this collaborative framework, the second day of the programme was specifically organised by ICOM Slovenia and ICOM SEE, contributing to the European Capital of Culture 2025.

#### A PRESTIGIOUS OPENING

The conference commenced on 15 May 2025 at the Municipality of Nova Gorica. The opening ceremony featured distinguished speakers, including Dr Emma Nardi, President of ICOM, and Dr Sharon Macdonald, Director of CARMAH. They were joined by Dr Kaja Širok, Expert Lead of the EPIC project, who introduced the "GO! 2025 Borderless" initiative, designed to embrace the past while shaping a borderless future for museum spaces.

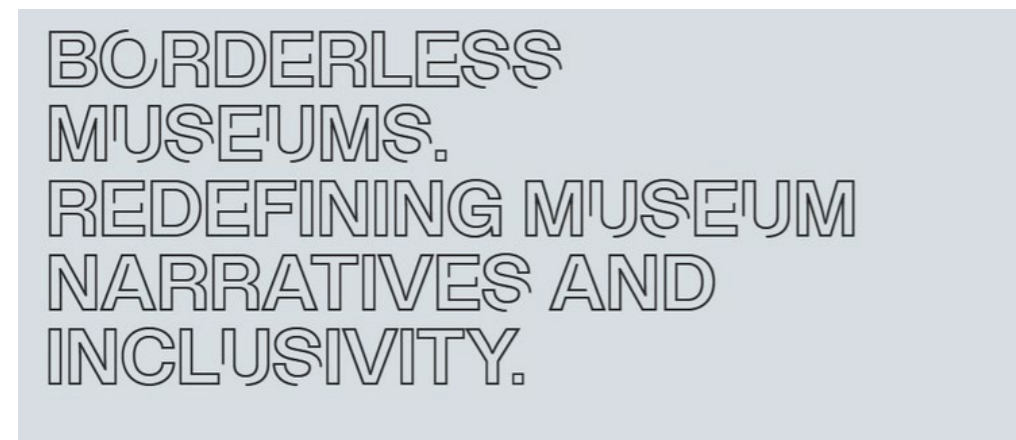
#### KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHTS AND THEMATIC DEPTH

On 16 May 2025, the programme continued at the Perla Congress Centre. Organised through the joint efforts of ICOM Slovenia and ICOM SEE, the sessions featured two esteemed keynote speakers:

- Steph Scholten, Director of the Hunterian Museum, who delivered a talk on "Discomfort, Decolonisation, Repatriation: Museums, History and Identity in Times of Nationalism".
- Tamara Nikolić Đerić, a leading expert in intangible cultural heritage, who explored "Three Possible Aspects of Borderlessness in Museums".

#### FOSTERING INCLUSION AND CONNECTION

The conference concluded on 17 May 2025 with a series of panel discussions and guided exhibition tours. Through this broad inter-institutional synergy, the organisers successfully created a platform for professional networking and the development of inclusive museum narratives, marking a significant contribution to International Museum Day 2025.



The visual identity of the conference "Borderless Museums: Redefining Museum Narratives and Inclusivity".

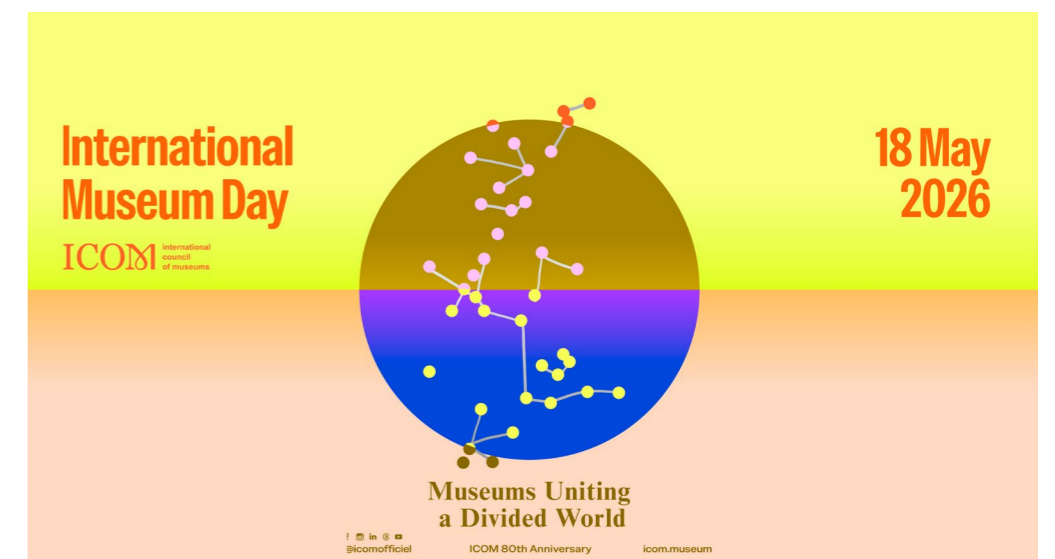
## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### IMD 2026

On 18 May 2026, museums around the world will celebrate International Museum Day under the theme "Museums Uniting a Divided World". This global initiative highlights the powerful role museums play as bridges across cultural, social and geopolitical divides, creating spaces where dialogue, understanding and mutual respect can grow even in times of polarisation and fragmentation. As trusted public institutions, museums bring together objects, stories and people, offering room for reflection, encounter and shared learning.

This year's theme also marks the 80th anniversary of ICOM, placing a special emphasis on the social responsibility of museums and their contribution to more peaceful and inclusive societies. By safeguarding heritage and memory, amplifying diverse voices and remaining open and accessible to all, museums can help communities engage constructively with complex histories and contemporary challenges. International Museum Day 2026 is therefore an invitation to reaffirm museums as spaces where differences are acknowledged, explored and handled with respect, rather than erased.

Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, IMD 2026 focuses in particular on SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). ICOM calls on museums worldwide to translate the theme into meaningful local action – from participatory programmes and new partnerships to inclusive, accessible experiences that strengthen belonging and trust within communities. Together, on 18 May 2026, museums will demonstrate their shared commitment to unity, dialogue and peace.



The visual identity of the IMD 2026 event.

## HERITAGE ON STAGE

ICOM SEE, with the support of the ICOM Special Project Grant of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Paris, the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia, the Archaeological Museum of Istria in Pula, and project partners ICOM Croatia, INTERCOM, ICOM Hungary, ICOM Bosnia and Herzegovina, ICOM Slovenia, and ICOM Latvia, is pleased to announce the first workshop of the project “Heritage on Stage – Events in Museum Venues.”

The project “Heritage on Stage” addresses the question of how museums, as heritage sites, reconcile their needs when they also become venues for events from other cultural domains as well as for commercial activities. Museums and heritage sites are primarily cultural institutions with a mission to preserve, research, and communicate history, art, science, and heritage to the public. Their social role is grounded in education, accessibility, and the stewardship of cultural assets for current and future generations. At the same time, many museums face financial pressures and seek to expand their audiences and revenue streams. In this context, the use of museums and heritage sites they manage as venues for events, performances, and commercial activities has become an increasingly relevant practice that has opened space for extensive discussion. How our institutions cope with this, and what challenges they meet – find out in the workshops organised by the project partners.

The visual identity of the workshops in Pula and Szentendre held as part of the “Heritage on Stage” project.



This first workshop in Pula will combine presentations, an interactive workshop, debates, and onsite visits, bringing together museum professionals and experts to discuss the possibilities and challenges of using museum and heritage sites as event venues. Join us on 21–22 May 2026 to discuss how our institutions can balance their cultural mission with the demands and opportunities of hosting events in heritage spaces. The second workshop will be held at the Szentendre Skanzen Village Museum in Szentendre from 16 to 17 September 2026. Further information about the programme, speakers, and practical details will be made available soon.

Opposite page: The visual identity of ICOM's 80th anniversary.



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