

# **The Slovene Ethnographic Museum, intangible cultural heritage and film**

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## **The development of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum<sup>1</sup>**

The Slovene Ethnographic Museum (SEM) was established in 1923 in Ljubljana as the Royal Ethnographic Museum<sup>2</sup>: the first museum objects were ethnographic and folklore collections, as well as non-European collections excluded from the Carniolian Provincial Museum<sup>3</sup>. The new museum was located in the building of the predecessor of today's National Museum of Slovenia. Initially, the curators focused on researching and collecting objects of traditional peasant or folk culture. In 1941, the adjective "Royal" was abandoned in the museum name. After World War II,<sup>4</sup> the Ethnographic Museum obtained many objects and data on material, social and spiritual culture through field research teams<sup>5</sup>. In 1964, the museum received the more specified name, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. There was a shift from researching culture to studying the relation of the bearers towards their culture, often referred to as 'way of life' or 'lifestyle'. In the following decades, curators began to include non-peasant occupations (miners, forest workers), social groups (maids) and urban themes in research and exhibitions. There was an intense professional and academic discussion in the last decade of the 20th century, partly due to the introduction of anthropology at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. The rapid development of museology shifted the focus from 'museum of objects' to 'museum of ideas' (Smerdel 1996: 51).

At the turn of the century and millennium, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum realised the long-standing dream of its own museum premises, renovating two former barracks on Metelkova Street. The smaller one houses curatorial departments, documentation, conservation-restoration department, a library and administration,

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<sup>1</sup> See Smerdel 1996 and Rogelj Škafar 1992 for details (both available in English).

<sup>2</sup> At that time, Slovenia was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and from 1929 onwards it was part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

<sup>3</sup> The origins of some collections are much older; the Carniolian Provincial Museum dates back to 1821.

<sup>4</sup> Slovenia became part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

<sup>5</sup> The initiator of systematic collecting was director Boris Orel; there were 19 teams organised between 1948 and 1962, and 14 more under the leadership of his successor Boris Kuhar. In 1990, the museum team performed the last joint research in Goriška Brda; the director was Inja Smerdel.

while the bigger one hosts exhibitions, workshops and programmes. In the following years, we opened two very different and complementary permanent exhibitions: *Between Nature and Culture* (2006), and *I, We and Others: Images of my World* (2009). In the first permanent exhibition, we were finally able to present the richness of the museum collections – a tenth of the museum objects is displayed. The second one is an anthropological narration about an individual in a network of relations and places, images and identities, so it conceptually corresponds to ‘museum of ideas’. There are many other thematic, occasional, and visiting exhibitions, complemented by a rich programme of events, workshops, round tables and conferences. In the 21st century, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum has developed into:

“a museum ‘about people, for people’, a museum of cultural identities, the link between the past and the present, between our own and other cultures, between the natural world and civilisation. As the central museum of ethnology in Slovenia, it preserves, documents, researches and presents Slovenian and



Photo 1: The Slovene Ethnographic Museum: exhibition building left, administrative building right, Ljubljana, 2016 (J. Rus)



equally important non-European collections in the field of material, social and spiritual culture. Through an annual cycle of exhibitions and other events, rich educational programmes and publications, it presents and communicates knowledge on traditional culture in Slovenia and the cultures of some other peoples of the world; the material cultural heritage of everyday and festive life and the intangible heritage of knowledge, values, techniques, wisdom and creativity in the Slovene ethnic territory, in the diaspora and elsewhere.” (Mission of the SEM, Internet source 1)

## Intangible cultural heritage

In the museum’s mission statement, we find the expressions ‘material cultural heritage’ and ‘intangible heritage’, which were conceived by UNESCO, the global guardian for education, science and culture, and then passed through Slovene national laws into practice. UNESCO launched the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1972, and nine years later Slovenia adopted the Act on Natural and Cultural Heritage. The *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* from 2003 was ratified by Slovenia in 2008. The safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage was coordinated by the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts for two years, and in 2011, the Ministry of Culture entrusted the coordination to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

Among the first references to heritage in the publications of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, we can find “heritage and traditional knowledge of our past” in the trilingual publication devoted to the seventieth anniversary of the museum, *The Slovene Ethnographic Museum – A journey through time and only partly through space* (Rogelj Škafar 1993: 51). In a memorial article *Are we old or young? A few words on our eightieth anniversary* in the museum journal *Etnolog*, Inja Smerdel cited the museum mission from the founding act: “The basic mission of the museum is to foster the study and understanding of the material cultural heritage of everyday and festive ways of living, the intangible heritage ...” (Smerdel 2003: 30). She continues that the museum “carries out its mission based on collections in the following fields: the culture of economic activities and transport, crafts and trade, dwelling culture, textile and clothing culture, social and spiritual culture, the culture of the artistic horizon (folk art and art sources), the culture of Slovene emigrants and ethnic minorities, and non-European cultures” (Smerdel 2003: 30). We can see that the names of curatorial departments have preserved the term ‘culture’ widely used in ethology and anthropology, while the expression ‘(intangible) cultural heritage’ has spread from the global heritage protection policy into the description of museum functions.

The riddle of this apparent dichotomy was resolved by Ralf Čeplak Mencin (2004: 250) in the article *Intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO and ethnographic museums*: “ethnology and ethnographic museums have from the outset dealt with both aspects of heritage, but it was always referred to with one concept – culture”.

The International Council of Museums, ICOM, declared 2004 as the year of intangible cultural heritage; the museum dedicated to it a round table on International Museum Day, and four short contributions were published in *Etnolog*. At first, the Slovene translation of the adjective “intangible” ranged from “neoprijemljiva” to “neotipljiva” and “neopredmetena”. In 2008, Slovene legal acts enshrined the phrase “living cultural heritage” (živa kulturna dediščina). In May 2016, the legislation adopted the phrase “nesnovna kulturna dediščina”, due to the repeated proposals of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

The culture – heritage dichotomy was nicely bridged by Inja Smerdel in her article *Discovering the diversity of heritage phenomenon in the contemporary world and the role of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in this process*. She merged both concepts into “material cultural heritage, social cultural heritage and spiritual<sup>6</sup> tradition” (Smerdel 2008: 208-209). *Etnolog* 2010 contained the section “Living Heritage” with three contributions. In *Etnolog* 2011, Nena Židov set out the basic guidelines for the museum’s role as the new Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the article *From UNESCO Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage to the Register of living cultural heritage in Slovenia* (Židov 2011).

Among many tasks<sup>7</sup>, the Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage publishes professional and academic publications. Here I highlight the most important: *Manual of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2012), *Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: The 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention* (2014) and *Documenting and Presenting Intangible Cultural Heritage on Film* (2015)<sup>8</sup>.

Let’s descend from the level of terminology, theory, basic guidelines and literature to the practical level of exhibiting, which is a specific museum medium. The first exhibition in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum with the word heritage in its title was *Heritage – Challenges for Design* (2004), prepared by students of design under the mentorship of Janez Bogataj, professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of art, University of Ljubljana. The first exhibition of the intangible cultural heritage designed by museum curators was *The Shrovetide*

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<sup>6</sup> She broke the pattern by not formulating the last one as “spiritual cultural heritage”.

<sup>7</sup> The Cultural Heritage Protection Act (2008, Article 98) defines the tasks of the Coordinator, who shall: 1. identify, document, study, evaluate, and interpret intangible heritage, 2. coordinate and independently propose the entry of intangible heritage in the Register, 3. give advice to intangible heritage bearers regarding its integrated safeguarding, 4. prepare proposals for the proclamation of intangible heritage of special importance, 5. coordinate the work of museums and the institution in relation to the safeguarding of intangible heritage and related cultural spaces, 6. carry out other tasks associated with intangible heritage on behalf of the Ministry of Culture (Internet source 2).

<sup>8</sup> The first is available only in Slovene language, the others in both languages. See Coordinator website (Internet source 3).



*Heritage of Slovenia* (2011). It complemented the international travelling exhibition *Carnival King of Europe II*<sup>9</sup>. Since then, small occasional exhibitions of intangible heritage have been a constant, e.g. *The Easter Heritage of Slovenia in the SEM* (2013), *The Traditional Making of Paper Flowers* (2014), *Ribnica Woodenware: Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovenia* (2016)<sup>10</sup>. The in-depth exhibition of lace *InterLACEd* (2016-2017) questioned historical meanings and the emerging of modern lace heritage in Slovenia. Almost as a rule exhibitions include films<sup>11</sup> and occasional live presentations or workshops.

## Film at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum

The Slovene Ethnographic Museum has quite a long tradition of filmmaking. The first five silent film records (16 mm) were made by the then director Boris Kuhar<sup>12</sup> in 1963, as part of the 20th team research in the southern Pohorje. He documented the clothing culture of the rural population and domestic activities, such as flax breaking and spinning, weaving, cloth rolling and clog making; he was attracted also to magic weather spells. At the exhibition *South Pohorje* (1963), he showed these films to groups of visitors using a film projector, adding live commentary. These were the first field recordings and first film usage within an exhibition in Slovene museums. In 2011, we edited five short films into a joint film, giving it the title *Film Records from South Pohorje*.<sup>13</sup>

Films have contextualised the exhibits (presenting them in a life context): they have shown how and by whom the exhibited objects were made or used, also documenting the natural and cultural environment. The same film functions are still relevant today, but have been improved by the development of recording technology that enables synchronous sound recording. A combination of moving images and

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<sup>9</sup> The Slovene Ethnographic Museum was a partner in an international research project between 2010 and 2012 (Internet source 5).

<sup>10</sup> Panel exhibitions on intangible heritage frequently travel to other countries.

<sup>11</sup> Films about intangible cultural heritage can be seen on the Coordinator website (Internet source 4). None has the term heritage in the title.

<sup>12</sup> In 1957, Slovene ethnologists, following the example of the International Committee for Ethnographic Film (founded in Paris in 1952) established the Committee for Ethnographic Film inside the Slovene Ethnographic Society. They invited representatives of film production companies and ethnologist Boris Kuhar as a representative of the freshly established Ljubljana Television. In January 1958, a list was made of existing ethnological films and urgent ethnological themes that needed to be filmed before they disappeared. In the following years, five ethnographic films were made and then the Committee ceased to function. Boris Kuhar, a filmmaker himself, continued, but his filmmaking later passed into oblivion. His film reels were discovered again when the museum moved to its new location (Valentinčič Furlan 2015).

<sup>13</sup> The film in its full length is available in Filmography on the SEM website (Internet source 6), together with nine other films of the collection *Documents of Time*. Boris Kuhar recorded the footage between 1963 and 1978; films were edited in 2010 and 2011.



Photo 2: Presentation of clothing culture at the exhibition South Pohorje, Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 1963 (SEM Archives)

authentic sound (talking, sounds of activities, environmental sounds) can humanise the exhibits even more successfully. Film superbly supports a transfer of focus from objects to humans in people-oriented museology.

In the museum's first permanent exhibition *Between Nature and Culture*, a typical example is the film *Čupa, the Vessel of Slovene Fishermen*<sup>14</sup> (2006). This filmic cultural biography<sup>15</sup> presents *čupa* Marija with her two "careers", of marine dugout on the Trieste coast and of museum artefact in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. In a recent evaluation of the museum, several external evaluators highlighted the *čupa* as the most memorable object in the museum. Since the original *čupa* Marija was transferred to the depot to a stable climatic environment in 2015, and a model of the same proportions was placed in the fishing room, the "aura" (according to

<sup>14</sup> An excerpt is available in Filmography (Internet source 7).

<sup>15</sup> The concepts of "cultural biography of things" and their "careers" were introduced by Igor Kopytoff (1986).



Benjamin 1998: 151, 154) or uniqueness of the original object can no longer be felt. The film has thus gained a greater documentary value and helps visitors to connect to the exhibition theme. "Audiovisuals do not compete with museum objects; (...) they are crucial to the reconstruction of the context – objects acquire meaning in relation to everything surrounding them at the exhibition and in the media" (Vogrinc 2005: 141).

Films for exhibitions are mainly prepared by the Department of Ethnographic Film, which was established in 2000. Its work is based on ethnology, museology and visual anthropology, in particular on its practical aspect, visual ethnography. Ever since the museum was appointed the Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Slovenia, the curator of ethnographic film deals with audiovisual documentation in this context: we make films; we collect information on existing films on the elements in the Register; if they are suitable to be chosen for characteristic video representation, we reach agreements with their authors and



Photo 3: A dialogue of object and film in the exhibition Between Nature and Culture, SEM, 2017 (J. Rus)

producers; we advise on film production for nomination to the UNESCO lists; and we contribute to the discussion on visual ethnography of the intangible cultural heritage.

## **Visual ethnography of the intangible cultural heritage**

We have examined the UNESCO strategies and practices, considering how the methodology of visual ethnography can be used to produce films on intangible cultural heritage<sup>16</sup>. In the process of searching for suitable approaches, structures and lengths of films for the national Register and for nominations to the UNESCO lists, we take into account films produced by other heritage institutions and local communities. We believe that heritage bearers have the best insight into their heritage and access to basic technical knowhow of filmmaking.

In *A Handbook of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2012) we prepared guidelines to make films for the needs of the national Register (Valentinčič Furlan 2012). In the publication on the promotion of intangible cultural heritage (2014) we claim that film is the best medium for a vivid display of a heritage phenomenon, its bearers, event venue and its atmosphere, as it simultaneously addresses vision, hearing and sense of motion (Valentinčič Furlan 2014: 51).

The further strengths of film are that it can represent and promote the intangible cultural heritage and its bearers in local environments, at the national level and in the international arena; it also allows a comparison with a similar heritage of other environments (Valentinčič Furlan 2014: 53). Among sensitive points of video productions on the UNESCO website are outdated film approaches with third-person commentary, ethical dilemmas and copyright issues (Valentinčič Furlan 2014: 54).

These findings prompted us to organise the international conference *Documentation and Presentation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on Film* (2014). We wanted to open a discussion on possible theoretical and methodological approaches to the audiovisual documentation and presentation of intangible cultural heritage, to discuss dilemmas and possible solutions for its visualisation in the UNESCO context, and to consider how to integrate the findings of visual anthropology and visual ethnography. In 2015, a bilingual monograph was published in which nine authors from five countries treat film as a research method for collecting data; a means of constructing knowledge, identity and memory; support for heritage safeguarding, protection, preservation, revitalisation and raising awareness of its value; and as a medium for transmitting heritage to others, especially to the younger generations (Valentinčič Furlan 2015b: 20).

Photos 4-9: Dry stone walling, the Škocjan Caves Park, 2016 (from the film *Dry Stone Walling* by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan).

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<sup>16</sup> Also the first coordinator based its production on visual studies of culture





Photo 4: The village of Škocjan



Photo 5: Dry stone walling



Photo 6: The use of traditional and modern tools



Photo 7: Learning from elders





Photo 8: Cutting the stone to make it fit into the wall



Photo 9: Rudi Bak, one of the heritage bearers, comments the work. Photo 3: A dialogue of object and film in the exhibition *Between Nature and Culture*, SEM, 2017 (J. Rus)

The recent UNESCO recommendations (Internet source 8, points 118 -122) contain qualitative shifts towards methodology of visual ethnography: films should contextualise the shown heritage and not advertise it; they should offer an authentic image of the heritage element and not its staged representation; they should use subtitles and not voiceover (so that we can hear the native language); the heritage bearers should explain their heritage and omnipotent narration is avoided (Valentinčič Furlan 2015b: 19, 2015c: 102). Anthropologists called for the democratisation of film production, recommending the participation of heritage bearers in filmmaking (Erlewein 2015: 34). To this very end, we promote films produced by heritage bearers and local communities in Slovenia.

Due to the experience with incorporating film messages in exhibition structure together with objects, texts, photos, etc., we believe that various modes function better when designed in a complementary way, each medium developing its own specifics. In the intangible heritage arena, we prefer films that directly present the heritage phenomenon with a focus on its bearers in its authentic environment. We oppose the strategy of summarising the nomination text in the film commentary and adding moving pictures to it (Valentinčič Furlan 2015c: 105). UNESCO confirms that “the video should make use of image and sound to complement the written text with sensory experiences that cannot easily be captured in words” (Internet source 7, point 122). The forthcoming conference *Visualisation of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (SEM, October 2017) will open issues of intellectual property, copyright and its transfer, the relationship between text of nomination and film, and the status of film in the context of UNESCO safeguarding.

## Conclusion

Intangible cultural heritage is not a new academic concept that would bring about a theoretical and methodological shift in the work of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, since to a great extent it overlaps with the concept of culture which is still the basic research field of ethnology and anthropology.<sup>17</sup> In our research we have always tried to transcend the past division into material, social and spiritual culture and in exhibitions, we have often achieved this through a combination of objects, texts, photographs and film. Intangible cultural heritage, in addition to practices, skills and knowledge, includes also tangible products, tools and the spaces where activities

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<sup>17</sup> Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik (2014) analyses similarities and some differences between culture and cultural heritage. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is reminiscent of salvage anthropology that tried to rescue the cultures of indigenous peoples. Urgent filming was part of the strivings of Slovene ethnology after World War II to document the disappearing rural folk culture.



take place.<sup>18</sup> Again in the exhibition, the main message is constructed combining material<sup>19</sup>, textual, visual and audiovisual media.

Ever since the Slovene Ethnographic Museum became the Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Slovenia, this has become another applied field in which, to differing extents, half of the museum curators are engaged, and only one person has actually been employed specifically to deal with this coordination<sup>20</sup>. At the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, because of our involvement in the UNESCO vertical structure of safeguarding, the intangible cultural heritage is not researched as neutrally (innocently) as at other museums and research institutions. We are fully aware of the political implications and the professional dilemmas regarding our dual role as both researchers and catalysts of the heritage development (for more, see Židov 2014, cf. Nikočević 2012: 60).

UNESCO sees the heritage bearers as a key element of intangible heritage and its safeguarding, although their participation is not clearly defined neither in safeguarding (Erlewein 2015: 29) nor in the production of films about their heritage and identity (Erlewein 2015: 34). Researchers and UNESCO alike emphasise the constant changing and reshaping of intangible heritage, a process which makes heritage the subject of continuous negotiation (Erlewein 2015: 34). Modern views therefore denote it heritagisation (Slavec Gradišnik 2014: 17); this process is steered by heritage bearers, and also experts, scholars and policy, which deal with that heritage. Of course, intangible cultural heritage lives with people in the field, so at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum we do not strive to “musealise” it.

If we hypothetically consider possible forms of presenting intangible cultural heritage, then the most suitable is probably an ecomuseum located in the area where the heritage is practiced. In so doing, we have in mind Peter Davis’s observation that ecomuseums can be prompted by regional cultural identity, a sense of community, fear of losing heritage and the need to economically regenerate a region (Davis in Mensch 2005: 1). Huges de Varine sees an ecomuseum as a collection of objects and data about a community, a focus point for discussion and new initiatives, and as a space where the community and its area can present themselves to visitors (De Varine in Mensch 2005: 1). The heart of such a museum is, of course, the local community as the heritage bearer: local people take the initiative for establishing the ecomuseum, they prepare exhibitions and programmes, possibly inviting cooperation

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<sup>18</sup> UNESCO defines cultural heritage as “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (Internet source 9, Article 2/1).

<sup>19</sup> Museum objects are not used in panel exhibitions to facilitate transport and relocations.

<sup>20</sup> The Coordinator working group, which evaluates proposals, is made up of 6 SEM curators, 12 ethnologists from regional museums, institutes and academic departments, as well as two representatives of political bodies.

of experts, and finally, they manage the ecomuseum.<sup>21</sup> There are currently very few ecomuseums in Slovenia that correspond to upper definitions and demonstrate a decisive participation of the local community.

The Slovene Ethnographic Museum represents a kind of virtual exhibition of the intangible cultural heritage of Slovenia on the website of the Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Internet source 4), as does the UNESCO website on a world scale. Through the coordination of this domain, the museum has again strengthened its contacts with communities all over Slovenia which were weakened by the demise of the field research teams. Close cooperation with heritage bearers around the country fits in topographical turn<sup>22</sup>, as contemporary museology defines the opening of the museums in wider space and presenting heritage *in situ* (Mensch and Mayer-van Mensch 2011: 91). The same applies to exhibitions that present field research teams in the original environment, for example *On a visit in Drašiči: The fiftieth anniversary of field teams from the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Drašiči 1965-2015*.

What is new in the sphere of film production? Crafts, farming tasks and rituals, filmed by Boris Kuhar, could be classified as intangible cultural heritage today. In last decade, audiovisual research at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum has continued to focus on (intangible) cultural heritage<sup>23</sup>, and we have added exploring identities<sup>24</sup>; both issues can be connected of course<sup>25</sup>. Since 1963, with the development of recording technology heritage bearers were first given a voice, and with the development of methodology communities could participate in ethnographic filmmaking. The democratisation of video production in the 21<sup>st</sup> century allows anyone to make films on heritage or identity and publish them online. The specifics of films for registers

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<sup>21</sup> Very inspiring cases of integrating intangible cultural heritage and ecomuseum ethics in museums of native peoples in New Zealand, Melanesia and America are revealed in book on intangible cultural heritage and museums (Alivizatou 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Museums are following the spatial turn in the social sciences; with regard to anthropology, this is discussed by Muršič in the survey article *A New Paradigm in the Anthropology of Space: Spatialisation and human creativity* (Muršič 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Films on annual and life cycle customs, as well as on the making of doors (Internet source 10) were produced to be included in exhibition *Doors: Spatial and Symbolic Passageways of Life* (2013-2016).

<sup>24</sup> As programme inside the exhibition *I, We and Others: Images of my World* we film narrations of visitors for the Gallery of Narrators (Internet source 11) and we collect video portraits for Gallery of Portraits.

<sup>25</sup> "The intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity", *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, Article 2/1 (Internet source 9).



and lists of intangible cultural heritage is the length limit to ten minutes<sup>26</sup>, which poses the constant challenge of how to present the heritage phenomenon, its bearers, and the transfer of knowledge in a very condensed way.

Visual anthropologists began to think about film viewers in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the foundations of the academic discipline were being laid. Earlier, audience had been ascribed, in a patronising way, the passive reception of film, but then anthropologists realised that viewers actively cooperate in discerning meanings (MacDougall in Grimshaw and Papastergiadis 1995: 40), so they began to consider how to structure a film so that the public would understand its message. A similar process took place in British museums at the time of the financial restrictions imposed by Margaret Thatcher, when museums had to redefine their social role: if they wanted to survive, they had to abandon their authoritative elitist stance and move closer to visitors' needs. Contemporary museums incorporate visitor participation, inclusion of vulnerable social groups, multivocality and divided authority in shaping exhibitions and programmes. In other words, curators prepare museum contents not just for visitors, but together with them. There is a need for "constant dialogue with information providers and with museum visitors, dialogue between past and present, rural and urban, based on the verified values of heritage, preserved in memory" (Rogelj Škafar 2013: 225). The triangle of meaning constructing in film among film subject, filmmaker and film viewer (MacDougall 1978: 422) was transferred to the research into heritage: "we must search for the meaning of cultural heritage within the triangle heritage creator – researcher – user, which means that we are speaking about the fundamental integration of cultural heritage into the social fabric" (Križnar 2012: 183).

At the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, as coordinators for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, we are not just researchers into this heritage, at the same time we are mediators between heritage bearers and local and global politics. We often need to translate expert communication, academic discourse and political language to everyday speech and vice versa. When folk meanings, professional views, academic attitudes, and political aspirations are communicated to other groups, we switch between the spoken and written word, film, exhibitions and online communication, considering demands of each media and target publics. The essence of our work as coordinators is creating an inclusive environment for the exchange of knowledge, opinions, views, values and identities.

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<sup>26</sup> The downside is that in ten minutes the heritage element cannot be presented in full; the positive sides are that putting short films online facilitates better quality of playback; that online viewers like short films; and that films fit better into the virtual collection of 429 elements/films on the UNESCO portal.

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