

Cultural and Creative Industries and Heritage in Montenegro: Synergy and Challenges

This lecture explores the dynamic relationship between cultural and creative industries and heritage in Montenegro, with a focus on recent developments, ongoing initiatives, and emerging challenges. In recent years, Montenegro has witnessed a gradual but noticeable shift toward integrating heritage with contemporary cultural production, particularly through initiatives led by civil society organisations, independent cultural actors, and academic partners.

A central case study is the work of the Association for Cultural Development 'Bauo' from Petrovac na Moru, a non-governmental organisation that exemplifies this synergy. Since its founding, the Association 'Bauo' has implemented numerous interdisciplinary projects at the intersection of heritage preservation, education, creativity, promotion, and innovation. These include academic and public conferences on cultural heritage, publishing monographs and educational materials on local traditions, heritage, ethnology and archaeology, digitising sources and oral histories, and developing participatory programs for youth and marginalised groups. The lecture will contextualise 'Bauo's efforts within the broader Montenegrin framework, addressing how the country's rich but often underutilised heritage resources are gradually being mobilised through creative approaches. Key topics include heritage-inspired design and branding, community-based cultural tourism, as well as the role of festivals, digital tools, and educational programs in promoting intangible and tangible heritage. Special attention will be given to the challenges faced by Montenegrin cultural and creative industries, such as limited institutional support, fragmented cultural policies, and the need for more robust collaboration between state and independent sectors.

The author aims to encourage discussion on how small-scale, community-rooted initiatives can serve as models of sustainable cultural development. It will also reflect on the potential of cultural and creative industries to not only safeguard but also reinterpret and reimagine heritage in ways that resonate with contemporary audiences while fostering social cohesion and identity in Montenegro and the wider Western Balkan region.

Dušan Medin is an archaeologist and cultural heritage researcher from Montenegro with over a decade of experience in heritage management, cultural policy, and project coordination across the Balkans. He holds degrees in archaeology and cultural management from the University of Belgrade, the University of Arts in Belgrade, and Université Lumière Lyon 2, and is currently pursuing two PhDs – in archaeology (University of Primorska, Slovenia) and in art theory (University of Donja Gorica, Montenegro). He works as Executive Director of the Association for Cultural Development 'Bauo' and of the creative agency MM Digital, both based in Petrovac na Moru, Montenegro. Since 2020, he has been teaching courses in heritage and cultural tourism at the University of Donja Gorica. He has held various expert roles within museums, educational institutions, and public bodies. He actively contributes to advisory boards and editorial committees, including those of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts. His fields of expertise include heritage interpretation, creative industries, museology, and sustainable tourism. He is also a researcher and author, having published numerous books, papers, and articles, and edited over 60 academic and professional publications. He was an organiser, author and curator of numerous exhibitions. Frequently, he leads workshops and trainings, and has completed numerous summer schools, residencies, and courses in heritage, cultural leadership, fundraising, and public policy. He is a member of several national and international professional associations, including the European Association of Archaeologists, ICOM, and Interpret Europe.

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