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Maintaining a Local Collection without a Museum

Brod Moravice is a small municipality in the rural area of Gorski Kotar (Mountainous District) in Croatia, located approximately 70 km from the city of Rijeka. Like much of the Gorski Kotar region, it faces severe depopulation, with the remaining population consisting primarily of elderly residents. In this context, the Turanj Association, a small group of local enthusiasts, has been actively collecting objects related to local history, culture, and traditions. However, these collections remain undocumented and un-inventoried.

As part of their Museum Studies course, art history students from the University of Rijeka assist in the documentation and organisation of these materials, providing much-needed support. Despite these efforts, the future of the collection remains uncertain due to the absence of a heritage institution in the area and the lack of resources within the local municipality to ensure its proper care. This paper will explore the challenges of sustaining heritage initiatives in depopulated rural communities, where local collections rely on ageing volunteers and lack institutional support.

Danko Dujmović is an assistant professor at the Department of Art History of FHSS Rijeka. He is experienced in museum education (before coming to FHSS Rijeka, he was working as a museum educator in the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb). He teaches the museological courses within the study programs of Art History at FHSS Rijeka. As an active member of the Section of Museum Education and Cultural Action within the Croatian Museum Association, he was included in the organisation of Croatian Museum Educators' Conferences from 2012 to 2022. He edited several publications related to the field of museum education. Dujmović was the author of the concept and a member of the board of editors of Museum Portal, an online catalogue of educational activities in Croatian heritage institutions, which was developed as a project of the Croatian Museum Association. In 2011, Dujmović began the Museum Education course within the Art History study program at FHSS Rijeka. To this day, it remains the only course in Croatia that focuses on topics related to museum education. Besides, Dujmović was member of several project teams (Croatian Ministry of Science and Education's project 'Romanesque Between the Rivers of Sava i Drava and European Culture,' EU Culture Program project 'Cradles of European Culture – Franca Media' (CEC), University of Rijeka projects 'Medieval Heritage Monuments of the Kvarner Region' (SREBAK) and 'Migrations, Identities and Contexts of Medieval Art in the Kvarner Region' (MIK).

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