

DEDIŠČINA SLOVENSКИH ROČNIH DEL V AVSTRALIJI

Prvi arhiv ročnih del slovenskih izseljencev na spletu

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Na zamisel o razstavi ročnih del Slovenk sem prišla ob ogledu tovrstne razstave na Slovenskem festivalu v Slovenskem društvu Melbourne leta 2004.¹ Razstavljena je bila vrsta čudovito izdelanih klekljanih čipk, vezenin, pletenin in izbor drugih izdelkov ročnih del, ki so jih ustvarile Slovenke iz Melbourne in Viktorije. Zdelo se mi je, da si ta ustvarjalnost, ta kontinuiteta dediščine ročnih del zasluži večji poudarek, večjo pozornost od zgolj, sicer redne, prisotnosti na slovenskih festivalih, a le kot del skupnih predstavitev.

O možnosti razstave slovenskih ročnih del sem se potem pogovarjala s predsednico Slovenskega društva Melbourne, ki se je takoj navdušila za zamisel. Spomnili sva se vrste ustvarjalok in navdušenok v skupnosti, med drugim Anice Kodila, Vide Vojvoda, Lucije Srnc in Lidije Čušin, za katere sva menili, da bodo pobudo gotovo podprle. Okvirni akcijski načrt sem nato morala za nekaj časa odložiti, ker sem dva tedna pozneje odpotovala v Slovenijo, vendar sem bila odločena, da ga bom po povratku znova aktivirala.

Bili so še drugi načrti, ki bi jih rada videla uresničene. Leta 2003 smo praznovali 25 let poučevanja slovenskega jezika v Melbourne. Med dogodki ob tej priložnosti je bila razstava slovenskega arhiva Viktorijskega inštituta za slovenistiko. Zdelo se mi je primerno, da bi tako razstavo predstavili tudi v Sloveniji, in upala sem, da bom zanj lahko pritegnila Slovenski šolski muzej. Načrt se je sicer izjalovil, vendar sem ob tem spoznala Dašo Koprivec, muzejsko svetovalko v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju. Prvič sva se srečali na Konferenci o slovenskih izseljenkah na SAZU novembra 2004 in strinjali sva se, da imajo ženske ključno vlogo pri ohranjanju slovenske dediščine v tujini, zlasti na področju tradicionalnih ročnih del. Februarja 2005 sva se ponovno srečali

¹ Mag. Aleksandra (Saša) Ceferin se je z družino preselila v Avstralijo leta 1950. Na univerzi je diplomirala iz nemške literature in več let je predavala na Oddelku za nemški jezik in Oddelku za splošno in primerjalno književnost. Kot profesorica nemščine in angleščine je bila koordinatorka fakultete, jezikovna svetovalka, vodja šolskih centrov in pomočnica ravnatelja Viktorijske šole za jezike. V državni šolski sistem Avstralije je uvedla pouk slovenskega jezika, vključno z maturo, in razvila učni načrt za srednjo stopnjo. Objavila je *Slovenian Literary Reader* (1984) in *Slovenian Language in Australia* (2003). Funkcije: ustanoviteljica in predsednica STAV (Združenje slovenskih učiteljev Viktorije) in ISSV Inc. (Viktorijski inštitut za slovenistiko), direktorica spletišča Thezaurus.com, ki je bilo prvič objavljeno 1998.



Srečanje avtoric razstave z izdelovalkami in izdelovalci v Geelongu maja 2006.



Leseno mizico in stolček, na katerem sedi mladi obiskovalec, je z pravljničnimi motivi poslikala Matilda Martinčič. Foto: Aleksandra Ceferin, Geelong, maj 2006.



Kotiček v domu Metke Lenarčič; mizica je pogrnjena s ti. *poštirkanim prtom*, kakršne plete za svoj dom. Foto: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, maj 2006.

in nadaljevali razgovore. Najprej sva se spomnili na arhiv Viktorijskega inštituta za slovenistiko. Ta je bil očitno nekaj, kar spada v okvir Slovenskega šolskega muzeja, in nisem povsem opustila upanja, da bi muzej pritegnila k sodelovanju. Ob tem pa sta Daša Koprivec in Slovenski etnografski muzej pokazala zanimanje za ročna dela izseljenk.

To je bilo izhodišče na nadaljnje aktivnosti. Obe sva želeli delati na projektu, ki bi bil realno uresničljiv. V funkciji predsednice Viktorijskega inštituta za slovenistiko sem mag. Daši Koprivec poslala vabilo za obisk Melbourne in raziskavo ročnih del v slovenski skupnosti v deželi Viktoriji.

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Vse je potem potekalo hitro in gladko. Urad za Slovence v zamejstvu in po svetu je bil pripravljen sofinancirati pobudo, uredili smo nastanitev za Dašo in njen obisk je bil načrtovan za maj 2006.

Prepričana, da je pobuda pomembna za vso slovensko skupnost, sem le-to pozivala k sodelovanju tako, da sem obvestila vse slovenske organizacije v Viktoriji ter prosila za imena in telefonske številke ustvarjalk ročnih del. S pomočjo Metke Lenarčič, aktivne članice skupnosti in koordinatorice slovenskega radijskega programa 3ZZZ, smo srečanje z Dašo Koprivec organizirali v Centru slovenske skupnosti v mestu Kew.

Srečanje, ki je bilo 2. maja, je bilo zelo dobro obiskano. Poleg žensk so bili prisotni tudi moški ustvarjalci. Andrej Potočnik, v Avstraliji rojeni sin slovenskih staršev, se je mednarodno uveljavil s struženimi lesenimi izdelki, Jože Ramuta je začel delati z lesom, ko je preizkušal lesnoobdelovalni stroj, in Lojze Jerič je postal znan zaradi svojih mozaičnih kompozicij.

Srečanje je lepo uspelo. Vsi prisotni so bili navdušeni nad tem, da bi bilo njihovo delo formalno priznano in cenjeno. Odločili smo se, da bosta Daša in Aleksandra raziskavo začeli v Slovenskem društvu Ivana Cankarja v Geelongu, dobrih 70 km oddaljenem od Melbourne, in da se bodo ustvarjalci naslednji dan zbrali v klubu ter tam pokazali svoje izdelke in se o njih pogovarjali. Dogovorili smo se tudi, da bo Aleksandra Ceferin fotografirala eksponate in razstavljalce in tako dokumentirala raziskavo. Druge ustvarjalce, raztresene po širšem območju Melbourne, naj bi obiskali na njihovih domovih v naslednjih treh tednih.

Srečanje v Geelongu je bilo izredno zanimivo. Razstavljen je bil pester izbor ročnih del: čudovite idrijske klekljane čipke, vezeni prti, pleteni šali in copate, poslikan porcelan, poslikani leseni krožniki in otroška miza, šahovnica s figurami, aranžmaji

suhih rož, lesene stenske ure itd. Na sestanku, ki je trajal več ur, smo se dogovorili, da bo vsak ustvarjalec za razstavo v Ljubljani bodisi posodil bodisi podaril tri manjše predmete in predložil kratek življenjepis. Predmete naj bi zbrala Aleksandra Ceferin, ki bi tudi poskrbela za prevoz.

Naslednje tri tedne sva z Dašo preživeli na poti do vseh koncev ogromnega območja Melbourn, ki je s skupno površino 8.806 km² eno najbolj razpotegnjenih in zelenih glavnih mest na svetu. Prevozili sva velike razdalje, ker so Slovenci od vseh etničnih skupin v Avstraliji najbrž najbolj raztreseni. Začeli sva v poslovnem središču (CBD) Melbourn, kjer je Daša stanovala, in večino dni sva prevozili po več kot 100 km na poti k domovom, posejanim po vsem Velikem Melbournu.

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V teku raziskave sva izvedeli več o vrstah ročnih del, ki jih ustvarjajo posamezniki, in, kar je bilo enako pomembno, o ustvarjalcih samih.

Moški in ženske so začeli tako, da so preizkušali in razvijali spretnosti, ki so jih prinesli iz domovine. Prvi izdelki so bili bolj za lastno uporabo, pozneje so jih tudi podarjali prijateljem. Pogosto so delali ponoči po napornem delovnem dnevu ali na vlaku na poti domov. Sčasoma so svoje izdelke začeli razstavljati na formalnih družabnih srečanjih slovenskih društev in na multikulturnih festivalih. Zanimanje zanje se je vse bolj večalo in ustvarjalke so organizirale delavnice o tradicionalnih ročnih delih, predvsem o klekljanju idrijskih čipk.

Domovi izdelovalk odražajo njihov ustvarjalni duh in željo ustvarjati estetsko okusne ali simbolično pomenljive izdelke – dediščino ročnih del, ki se ohranja živa v tuji državi.

Tradicionalno oblikovani šopki tulipanov Anice Kodila ustvarjajo elegantno okolje doma, ki je bogato okrašeno s cvetličnimi aranžmaji, stenskimi tapiserijami in blazinami. V sodobno opremljeni hiši Metke Lenarčič izstopajo elegantni prti iz idrijskih čipk, pristna slovenska skrinja in tapiserije s slovenskimi motivi. Hiša Mimice Bole je kot živobarvna izložba, polna velikih šopkov nageljnov, polna kvačkanih predmetov, narejenih v stilu, ki ga je sama izumila, predmetov, ki jih rada podarja prijateljem. Šahovska miza in stenske ure Jožeta Ramute krasijo prostore Slovenskega društva Ivana Cankarja v Geelongu in prispevajo k pristnemu slovenskemu ambientu in svojstvenemu videzu. Marija Uršič je svoje spretnosti redno prikazovala na multikulturnih dogodkih in vodila tečaje tradicionalnega klekljanja idrijskih čipk. Ustvarjalnost Anice Kodila presega tradicionalne spretnosti, ker jo navdihujeta nadarjenost in pripravljenost eksperimentirati. Vesti se je naučila na rojstnem Notranjskem, kjer je začela z vezenjem poročnih rjuh in prevlek za vzglavnike. V Avstraliji je razvila vrsto drugih spretnosti in se lotila izdelovanja številnih okrasnih predmetov, med drugim predmetov za poroko in krst, umetnih rož, miniaturnega pohištva, velikonočnih in božičnih okraskov ter čudovito okrašenega Božičkovega škornja, ki ji ga je uspelo tržiti vse do ZDA.

Projekt ročnih del smo na široko promovirali v slovenski skupnosti, s članki v slovenščini v mesečniku *Misli* in v angleščini na internetu – na Thezaurus.com ter Omrežju avstralskih Slovencev. Objavili smo tudi obvestila in pogovore na etničnem radijskem programu 3ZZZ v Melbournu in na Radiu Slovenija in tako zbudili zanimanje v Avstraliji in v Sloveniji.

Raziskava o slovenskih ročnih delih v Viktoriji se je v naslednjih letih razvila v spletno koprodukcijo Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja in Viktorijskega inštituta za slovenistiko. Vzporedno z raziskavo ročnih del v Viktoriji je nastala znatna fotografska zbirka z okrog 400 posnetki, ki jih je nekaj posnela Daša Koprivec, večino pa Aleksandra Ceferin. Razgovori v Ljubljani med članom ISSV in spletnim razvijalcem Bojanom Ažmanom (<http://www.thezaurus.com>) ter direktorico SEM Bojano Rogelj Škafar so se zaključili z ugotovitvijo, da je spletna razstava ročnih del – za SEM bi bila to prva tovrstna razstava – odlična zamisel. Delovna skupina za spletno razstavo “rocnadela”, ki so jo sestavili Bojan Ažman, Daša Koprivec in Aleksandra Ceferin, je projekt zaključila oktobra 2007 in ga uradno predstavila direktorici in kustosom Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja v Ljubljani, ki so ga tople sprejeli.

Spletno razstavo in spletišče <http://www.rocnadela.org> smo kot Spletni arhiv ročnih del slovenskih izseljencev prvič v živo predstavili javnosti na 11. bienalnem Slovenskem festivalu v klubu Jadran v Melbournu 1. marca 2008. Naša spletna razstava je bila zelo odmevna; obiskalo jo je dosti več ljudi, kot bi jih lahko obiskalo razstavo v živo. Zato lahko rečemo, da spletna razstava izpolnjuje svoj namen.

Razstava slovenskih ročnih del je postavila temelj za nadaljnje raziskave, zbiranje in arhiviranje slovenskih ročnih del v Avstraliji in drugje. Spletišče [rocnadela.org](http://www.rocnadela.org), za katero je koncept razvil in ga oblikoval Bojan Ažman, je prva spletna razstava slovenskih ročnih del v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju in pionirska v svetovnem merilu. Na ogled je zbirka sodobnih ročnih del. Izbor zajema široko paleto izdelkov: umetne rože, idrijske klekljane čipke, kvačkane predmete, okrasne predmete, vezene prte in prtičke, voščilnice, mozaike, krpanke, lončevino, tapiserije in stružene lesene predmete.

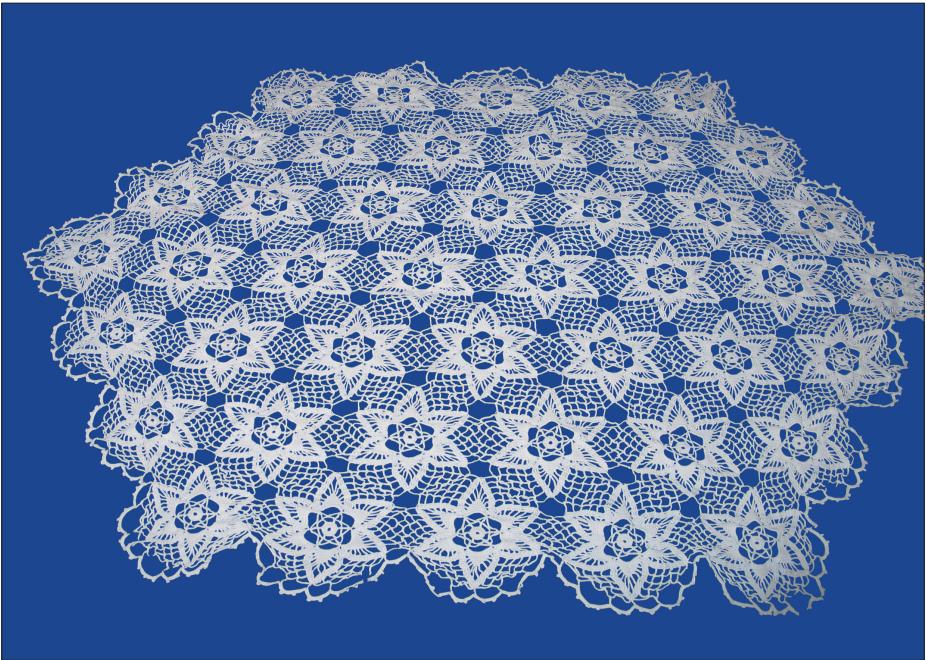
Vsi predmeti nam odkrivajo individualne pristope in zanimanja. Nekateri izhajajo iz tradicionalnih slovenskih motivov, druge odlikujejo novi izrazi ročnih del.

Našo pozornost pritegne osebnost ustvarjalca/ustvarjalke in njegov/njen odnos do okolja, v katerem živi. Nekateri izdelki navdušujejo zaradi čudovitih in z velikim občutkom narejenih podrobnosti, ki pritegujejo pogled. Ročna dela nastajajo na podlagi ustvarjalnosti posameznikov in pod navdihom drugačnega avstralskega okolja. Tako smo priča kontinuiteti in spremembam znotraj živega kulturnega izročila preteklih rodov in izražanju bogate slovenske kulturne dediščine.

Razstava je tako povezana tudi z vprašanjem zgodovinske razsežnosti ročnih del in oblikovanja; vezi s preteklostjo se ohranjajo v tradicionalnih stilih in tehnikah. Raznolikost ročnih spretnosti je doživetje, ki nas obogati in nam poveča občutek za čas in prostor. Kot celota nas razstava napeljuje k refleksiji o naravi in posebnosti ročnih del v času novih tehnologij in serijske proizvodnje. Razstava te vrste prispeva k vizualnemu zapisu kulturne dediščine in implicitno odkriva vrednost različnih kultur in izražanja različnih kulturnih dejavnosti. Pomembno je, da to izročilo, ki so ga nadaljevale predvsem Slovenke, predstavimo širši javnosti. Ročna dela so v življenju slovenskih skupnosti povsod imela posebno mesto. Predstavljajo intimen odnos med ustvarjalci in ustvarjalkami in njihovo slovensko kulturno dediščino, preneseno iz roda v rod. V slovenskih skupnostih v tujini so ročna dela pomemben del njihovega občutka identitete, njihove “slovenskosti”.



Krasen šopek iz tekstila, kakršne izdeluje Anica Kodila.
Foto: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, maj 2006.



Kvačkan prtček je izdelala Marija Horvat. Foto: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, junij 2006.



Marija Brne ima na mizi v svojem domu prekrasen prt iz idrijske čipke, ki ga je sama klekljala.
Foto: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, maj 2006.

Projekt se bo nadaljeval z nadaljnjim raziskovanjem slovenskih ročnih del v Avstraliji za dopolnjevanje arhiva, ki smo ga začeli maja 2006. Upamo, da bomo uspeli pritegniti nove ustvarjalke in ustvarjalce in z njihovimi izdelki širiti obseg prvotne arhivske zbirke.

Pobudniki smo ponosni, da smo lahko sodelovali v projektu prve spletne razstave in arhiva v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju in prvega tovrstnega sodelovanja med Slovenijo in Avstralijo.

Pripeljati projekt do te točke je bilo za vse sodelujoče hvaležna in navdihujoča naloga. Upamo, da ga bomo še nadaljevali z arhiviranjem in ohranjanjem žive dediščine po svetu, ki še ni odkrita. Tehnologija ni namenjena temu, da bi zamenjala razstavo v živo v konkretnem okolju. Njen namen je približati zavest o dediščini ljudem, ki živijo v zelo oddaljenih krajih in morda nikoli ne bodo imeli priložnosti obiskati razstave v živo. V virtualnem prostoru imajo celo možnost, da sodelujejo in lastno videnje slovenske dediščine dodajajo splošnemu pomenu "slovenskosti" po svetu.

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Zahvaljujemo se naslednjim sodelujočim in ustvarjalcem za njihovo velikodušno sodelovanje:

Lidiji Bole, Emi Bole - Kosmina, Mimici Bole, Sonii Benčič, Ani Mariji Thomas (Brne), Mariji Brne, Slavi Burlovic, Mariji Horvat, Lojzetu Jeriču, Anici Kodila, Anici Kodrič, Jožetu Kodriču, Ivanki Kontelj, Lojzki Kuhar, Julki Kure, Meti Lenarčič, Matildi Martinčič, Andreju Potočniku, Jožetu Ramuti, Luciji Srnec, Mariji Uršič, Vidi Vojvoda.

SLOVENIAN HANDICRAFTS HERITAGE IN AUSTRALIA

The first Slovenian emigrant handicrafts archives on the web

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The thought of a Slovenian women's handicrafts exhibition first flashed into my mind, when I was viewing the handicrafts display at the Slovenian Festival at the Slovensko društvo Melbourne in 2004.¹ There was a range of beautifully executed bobbin-lace articles, embroidery, knitting and selections of other kinds of handicraft items, the work of Slovenian women in Melbourne and Victoria. It seemed to me, that this creativity and continuity of handicrafts heritage deserved a greater emphasis and celebration, not just as one part of the life of Slovenian Australian community, given its due at Slovenian festivals.

I spoke about the possibility of a Slovenian handicrafts exhibition to the then President of SDM Mrs. Milena Brgoč, and she was immediately enthusiastic. We spoke of several practitioners and enthusiasts within the community, such as Anica Kodila, Vida Vojvoda, Lucija Srnc and Lidija Čušin, who were sure to support such an initiative, and I put the tentative plan for action on the backburner. I was leaving for Slovenia within the next fortnight, but I was determined to raise the issue on my return.

There were other plans that I would have like to see realized. In 2003 we had celebrated 25 years of Slovenian language teaching in Victoria. One of the events was the Slovenian Archives Exhibition of the Institute for Slovenian Studies of Victoria. I thought that it would be timely to present such an exhibition in Slovenia, and hoped to interest Slovenian School Museum. This plan was not realized, but it led me directly to mag. Daša Koprivec, museum adviser at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. We met first at the Conference on Slovenian Emigrant Women at SAZU in November 2004, and agreed that women play a vital role in maintaining Slovenian heritage abroad,

¹ Aleksandra (Saša) Ceferin (B.A., M.A., Dip Ed.) came to Australia with her family in 1950. She gained the degree of Master of Arts in German literature and was for several years Teaching Fellow in the German Department and the Department of General and Comparative Literature. As teacher of German and English she was faculty coordinator, language consultant, manager of school centres and Assistant Principal of Victorian School of Languages. She introduced Slovenian language into the state school system of Australia, including the "matura", and developed curriculum for the secondary levels. She published the Slovenian Literary Reader (1984) and is the author of the book Slovenian Language in Australia (2003). She is the founding President of STAV (Združenje slovenskih učiteljev Viktorije) in ISSV Inc. (Viktorijski Inštitut za slovenistiko). She is the director of the website Thezaurus.com, first published in 1998.



Andrej Potočnik makes various artistic and practical wooden products that have brought him fame in and outside Australia. Photo: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, May 2006.

particularly in the area of traditional handicrafts. In February 2005 we met again, continuing our discussion. We spoke first about ISSV Archives. This was obviously something that belonged in the framework of Slovenian School Museum, and I had not entirely given up the hope of interesting them in the matter. However, Daša Koprivec and SEM expressed their interest in emigrant handicrafts.

We took it from there. We both wished to pursue a project which showed a definite promise. In my capacity as President of the Institute for Slovenian Studies of Victoria I issued an invitation to mag. Daša Koprivec to visit Melbourne and investigate the handicrafts within the Slovenian community in the state of Victoria.



The home of Mimica Bole is full of various beautiful handicraft products she makes herself. Her carnations made of fabric are particularly well-known. Photo: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, June 2006.



This marvellously decorated Father Christmas boot and other Christmas presents were made by Anica Kodila. Photo: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, May 2006.

The events followed quickly and smoothly after that. The Office for Slovenes Abroad was prepared to fund the initiative, we organized accommodation, and Daša's visit was set to take place in May 2006.

In my view the initiative concerned the whole Slovenian community and I invited its involvement in the undertaking by informing all the Slovenian organizations in Victoria, and requesting names and contact numbers of all handicrafts practitioners. A meeting with Daša Koprivec was set to take place in the Slovenian Community Centre in Kew, with the assistance of Metka Lenarčič, an active community member and coordinator of 3ZZZ Slovenian radio program.

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The meeting on 2 May was fully attended. Beside the women practitioners, men were also represented. Andrew Potočnik, born in Australia of Slovenian parents, has established himself internationally as wood turner craftsman. Jože Ramuta began to work with wood while testing his woodworking machine, Lojze Jerič has become known for his mosaic compositions.

The meeting was a success. All present were delighted that their work would be formally recognized and appreciated. It was decided that Daša and Aleksandra begin the research with the Slovenian Association Ivan Cankar in Geelong, a town some 70 km distant from Melbourne, and that the handicrafts practitioners gather at the club to show and discuss their products on the following day. It was also agreed that Aleksandra Ceferin photograph the exhibits and exhibitors to provide a record of the research. The rest of the practitioners, scattered over a large Melbourne area would be visited at their homes over the following three weeks.

The meeting in Geelong was an exciting event. On display were a great variety of handicrafts: beautiful Idria bobbin lace items, embroidered tablecloths, doilies, knitted shawls and slippers, painted china, painted wood platters and children's table, chess table with figures, dried flower arrangements, wooden wall clocks. During a session of several hours, it was agreed that each practitioner would either loan or gift three small items for an exhibition in Ljubljana and provide a short biography. The items were to be collected by Aleksandra Ceferin who would also organize the transport.

The following two weeks were spent in travelling far and wide over the sprawling, and picturesque metropolis Melbourne. Melbourne is one of the largest capital cities of the world, in terms of the total area of 8,806 sq km, and the reputation for lush parklands. We drove great distances, since Slovenes are possibly the most dispersed of all the ethnic groups in Australia. We started in the Melbourne city centre - the CBD, where Daša had accommodation, and on most days covered over 100 km, driving to homes all over the Greater Melbourne .

During the course of the research we found out more about the kind of handicrafts produced and as importantly, about the practitioners themselves.

Men and women began by crafting objects to test and develop their skills, which they brought with them. First for themselves, then as gifts for their circle of friends. They worked often at night after a day's hard work and on train on the way from work. These products began to be exhibited at formal social gatherings of Slovenian associations

and at multicultural festivals. The interest grew and the practitioners offered workshops on the traditional skills, particularly on the making of Idria lace.

The homes of the practitioners reflected the creative spirit of the owners and their wish to fashion aesthetically beautiful or symbolically meaningful products - a handicrafts heritage, kept alive in an alien land. The designed traditional tulips of Anica Kodila provide an elegant setting to a home richly decorated with flower arrangements, wall hangings and cushions. Metka Lenarčič's stylish home displays an elegant Idria lace tablecloth, traditional Slovenian chest and tapestry wall-hangings with Slovenian themes. Mimica Bole's home is a showcase of great bunches of carnations in vibrant colours, stitched in the style invented by herself, which she loves to gift to her friends. Jože Ramuta's chess table and wall clocks grace the spaces of the Slovenian Association Ivan Cankar in Geelong, adding to its traditional Slovenian atmosphere and distinctive character. Marija Uršič, has demonstrated her skill at multicultural events and taught classes of the traditional Idria bobbin-lace making. The creativity of Anica Kodila has blossomed beyond the traditional skills, guided by her talent and willingness to experiment. She was taught embroidery in her native Notranjska, and began by embroidering bridal sheets and pillowcases. In Australia she developed a wide range of skills, trying all kinds of decorative products, bridal and christening items, artificial flowers, toy furniture, Easter and Christmas decorations, and the magnificently decorated Father Christmas boot, which has been sold as far as USA.

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The handicrafts project was widely advertised in the Slovenian community, with articles in Slovenian in the monthly *Misli*, and in English on the Internet - on *Thezaurus.com* and the Network of Australian Slovenes. There were also announcements and interviews on 3ZZZ Community Radio in Melbourne and on Radio Slovenia, and stirred up interest in Australia and Slovenia.

The investigation into Slovenian handicrafts in Victoria evolved during the following year into a web co-production between Slovene Ethnographic Museum and The Institute for Slovenian Studies of Victoria (Viktorijski Inštitut za slovenistiko). The by-/product of the research into the handicrafts in Victoria resulted in a considerable photographic collection, numbering about 400 images, some by Daša Koprivec, the majority by Aleksandra Ceferin. The discussions in Ljubljana between the *www.thezaurus.com* web developer and ISSV member Bojan Ažman (aka Chiron Morpheus) and the SEM Director Bojana Rogelj Škafar led to the conclusion that an online handicrafts exhibition, a first of this kind for SEM, would be a great idea. Subsequently SEM received financial support by the Ministry for Culture RS. The "rocnadela" online exhibition team Bojan Ažman, Daša Koprivec and Aleksandra Ceferin completed the project in October 2007. It was officially presented to the Director and staff of Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana, where it was well received.

The online exhibition and the website *www.rocnadela.org*, was launched in Melbourne on 1st March 2008 at the biannual 11 Slovenian Festival at the club Jadran, as the Online Archive of Slovenian Emigrant Handicrafts. The response has been very pleasing. A considerably greater number of visitors has visited the website than they



The online exhibition www.rocnadela.org was launched in Melbourne on 1st March 2008 at the biannual 11 Slovenian Festival at the club Jadran, as the Online Archive of Slovenian Emigrant Handicrafts. Photo: Aleksandra Ceferin, Melbourne, March 2008.

would a physical exhibition so we can say that the aim of the online exhibition has been fulfilled.

The exhibition of Slovenian handicrafts lays the foundation for further research, collection activity and archiving of Slovenian handicrafts in Australia and elsewhere. The website of rocnadela.org, conceptualized and designed by Bojan Ažman (aka Chiron Morpheus), is the first online exhibition of Slovenian handicrafts by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, and ground-breaking by world standards. On display is a collection of contemporary handicrafts. The selection covers a diverse range of endeavour: artificial flowers, Idria bobbin lace, crocheted objects, decorative objects, embroidered tableware, greeting cards, mosaics, patchwork, pottery, tapestry, and wood-turning.

The objects reveal individualistic approaches, and interests. Some are based on traditional

Slovenian designs, others show new expressions of craft activity.

Our attention is drawn to the identity of the creator and his/her relationship to the present environment. Certain works are arresting in the beautiful detail, are sensitively rendered, and captivate the eye. The handicrafts emanate from the creativity of these individuals and are inspired by the different Australian environment. In this way one can witness the continuity, and changes within a living cultural tradition, from past generations, and the expression of the rich cultural heritage from Slovenia.

Thus, the exhibition relates to the question of historical dimension of handicrafts and design; the connection to the past is maintained in the traditional styles, and techniques. Diversity of crafts is an enriching experience that heightens the sense of time and place. As a body the display gives pause to reflection on: the character and distinction of handicrafts in this age of new technologies, and mass-production. An exhibition of this nature contributes to the visual record of cultural heritage and shows implicitly the value of different cultures and the expression of varied cultural activities wherever they may be found. It is important to bring to the broader public this tradition, which has been carried on particularly by Slovenian women. The handicrafts have been prominent in the life of Slovenian communities everywhere. They represent an intimate relationship between the handicraftsmen and - women and their Slovenian cultural heritage, handed down from generation to generation. In Slovenian communities abroad the handicrafts tradition is an important part of their sense of identity, their “sloveneness”.

As a follow-up we intend to continue investigating the Slovenian handicrafts in Australia to add to the archive of handicrafts, which we have started in May 2006. It is hoped that there will be further contributions to this project from other creative men and women, thus broadening the scope of the initial archival collection. The initiators have been proud to participate in this project of the first online exhibition and archive by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum and the first collaborative project of this kind between Slovenia and Australia.

Completing the project to this point has been an inspiring enterprise for all participants. We hope to take it further, continuing to archive and preserve the living heritage waiting to be discovered around the world. Technology is not intended to replace the real exhibition in real space. What it is intended to accomplish is to bring the awareness of the heritage closer to the people who live at great distances and may never be able to visit a live exhibition. They may be even be able to participate in virtual space and contribute their own sense of Slovenian heritage for a common sense of “sloveneness” in the world.

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