

VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN MUSEUMS

THE CASE OF THE SLOVENE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter first presents a review of the relation between visual anthropology and museums, and then gives an overview of how visual anthropology is practiced in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Ethnographic, ethnological and anthropological museums can be active in the field of visual anthropology in similar ways as those of research institutes or university departments, but usually with a strong emphasis on representation and communication. The most specific museum communication channel is definitely exhibitions; therefore, the focus of this chapter is on audiovisual media integrated into exhibitions and related projects, especially because there are so few articles dealing with films in exhibitions from the point of view of visual anthropology.

VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND MUSEUMS

Visual anthropology has been associated with museums from the very beginning; even its predecessors had ideas of connecting both fields. Felix-Louis Regnault, the first scholar to produce chrono-photographic anthropological research of human movement (in 1895 in France) and later ethnographic footage, “proposed in 1900 that all museums collect ‘moving artefacts’ of human behaviour for study and exhibit” (Ruby 1996: 1347) and form their own film archives (Regnault 1923 in De Brigard 1985: 15–16; Balikci 1985: 20). Indeed, museums were among important institutions in the early development of visual anthropology: the Faye Foundation and Museum sponsored research of anthropologist and filmmaker Frederick Webb Hodge among the Zuni in 1923, and the American Museum of Natural History¹ supported visual research by their curator Margaret Mead in Bali, Samoa and New Guinea from 1926 onward (Balikci 1985: 17).

¹ The role of film presentations in AMNH in late 19th and early 20th century is treated in Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture by Alison Griffiths.

In Europe, Jean Rouch and André Leroi-Gourhan founded the Committee of Ethnographic Film (*Le Comité du Film Ethnographique* - CFE) in the Museum of the Man (*Musée de l'homme*) in Paris in 1952, one year before the international committee (CIFE) was established. In 1985, Asen Balikci, having been cooperating with two museums himself, concluded:

Museums are the only institutions capable of combining ethnographic film production, the archiving and preservation of the original footage for scholarly research and the diffusion of audiovisuals on the premises of the institution and to wide audiences in outreach programmes. (Balikci 1985: 24)

However, he observed that that potential had not yet been fully developed by 1985. With the shift of anthropological discussion from descriptive to analytical paradigms, university departments took on a leading role (Balikci 1986: 128; Križnar 1996: 27–28); in contrast, in Italy, Eastern Europe and in the Third World, visual anthropology was introduced several decades later, and again, museums were very often among the constitutive bodies (Balikci 1986: 127–128).

In Slovenia, the early initiator of visual anthropology was ethnologist Niko Kuret from the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, in 1956. When Boris Kuhar² became director of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in 1963, he made first five film records with the intention of showing them in the exhibition. He was followed by the Dular family in *Belokranjski muzej* (The Belokranjsko Museum) in 1964. Between 1972 and 1983, Naško Križnar³ was employed in *Goriški muzej* (the Goriško Museum), where he made 34 films. He included many of them to the exhibitions by using the projector on special occasions, similarly as Kuhar did.⁴ In the manifesto on museum work of ethnologists, Križnar wrote:

From museum ethnologists must come the initiative for the visualization of expression, for the whole range of visual ethnology.

Visual documentation is the closest to the museum medium, which is from the very beginning based on display. (Križnar 1980: 24)

In the 1990s, in the same museum, Darja Skrt became active in documentary filmmaking and in reflecting on films in museums (Skrt 1996, 1997, 2001, 2004). Her first book (Skrt 1996) brings the evaluation of Križnar's artistic films of his early OHO period and ethnological films produced by the Goriško Museum. Skrt's articles and the book on moving pictures in the exhibition (Skrt 2004) are among the rare

² He had gained practical knowledge of film production at the Television Ljubljana (1957–1963).

³ See chapters by Vesna Mia Ipavec and Sarah Lunaček, in this book.

⁴ At that time, the technology did not allow continuous film playback; the operator would very often add live commentary to the silent films. The first Slovene sound films, produced for the museum, date to 1976 (see Križnar's Filmography and videography in this book).

publications on film and video in museum exhibitions; her discourse is mainly based on concepts of film theory and partly on museology,⁵ not including references from visual anthropology.

Having cooperated with the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, the author of this chapter wrote a programme for the Department of Ethnographic Film, the first professional museum department of this kind in Slovenia, established in 2000. She published her first article on the audiovisual medium as a constitutive part of the exhibition in 2002, specifically dealing with ethnographic film on the craft of blueprints (Valentinčič Furlan 2002).

There is a certain ambiguity regarding how to denote films and other kinds of media products⁶ included in exhibitions. In the era of film as a medium there was no dilemma, but later, with video technologies, some authors would refer to the content or genre (film, ethnographic film) and other would describe the characteristics of the medium (audiovisual, as opposed to merely visual or merely audio), but almost none to the medium itself (video). Darja Skrt often uses the nominal adjective “the audiovisual” (Sln. *avdiovizualno*). When preparing the first permanent exhibition, with awareness that audiovisual records function better if their structure and length are subjected to the exhibition structure and layout, I used “audiovisuals” (Sln. *avdiovizualije*) as an umbrella term (Valentinčič Furlan 2006b, 2009). When designing the second permanent exhibition with strong communicative value, I decided to use “audiovisual contents” (Sln. *avdiovizualne vsebine*) in its fixed part (Valentinčič Furlan 2010), and “audiovisual messages” (Sln. *avdiovizualna sporočila*) in its open part (Valentinčič Furlan 2013), oriented to visitors’ feed-back communication. Ever since, I’ve been in favour of the latter term.

THE SLOVENE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

The Slovene Ethnographic Museum (SEM) was established in Ljubljana in 1923, and in 1997 it moved to new premises to begin a new era of its existence with the possibility of presenting rich collections in permanent exhibitions, for the first

⁵ In museology, media came into focus with digitisation. Authors mostly treat media in general, using broad expressions: “multimedia” (Davis and Trant 1996; Piacente 2002; Antoš 2002); “media” (Henning 2006a); “new media” (Henning 2006b); “digital media” (Golding and Modest, eds. 2013); “new technologies” (Mensch 2005); “information technologies” (Roženberger Šega 2010); “information-communication technologies” (Perko 2014). Asen Balikci (1985), Vito Lattanzi (1993) and Edmund Ballhaus (2001) are among the visual anthropologists who have contributed reflection on films integrated in museum exhibitions.

⁶ Such as excerpts from films or footage and a variety of purposely filmed short audiovisual records.

time, as well as of developing programmes for different groups of visitors and in collaboration with them. As the central Slovene ethnological museum, SEM keeps more than 32,000 objects of Slovene cultural heritage and about 10,000 objects from other continents that bear witness to contacts of Slovene missionaries, researchers, political representatives, innovators and travellers with non-European peoples, as well as of their cultures. The documentation department stores over 70,000 pictorial documents and the Department of Ethnographic Films about 1000 audiovisual records. The mission statement describes the museum's character:

The Slovene Ethnographic Museum is a museum⁷ "about people, for people", a museum of cultural identities, a link between the past and the present, between traditional and modern culture, between our own and other cultures, between the natural environment and civilisation. It is a museum of dialogue, open, active and hospitable, dedicated to serving the public. It presents and reports on traditional culture as well as mass and pop culture in Slovenia and the diaspora, on non-European cultures, and on the material and intangible cultural heritage of both every day and festive life. (Internet source 1)

The first permanent exhibition, "Between Nature and Culture" (*Med naravo in kulturo*, 2006), is based on selected Slovene and non-European collections that are systematically presented in display cases (more in Židov ed. 2009). Visitors can see more than 3000 objects that bear witness to the way of life of Slovene people, while the section A Reflection of Distant Worlds offers a selection of non-European collections. The second permanent exhibition "I, We and Others: Images of my World" (*Jaz, mi in drugi. Podobe mojega sveta*, 2009) is a conceptually designed story of an individual, his/her identities and his/her positioning in the world. It also addresses the relations between personal, communal and universal heritage, as well as the question of how heritage comes about and how identities are formed (Žagar 2010, Žagar, ed. 2013). Various aspects of the individual's sense of social and local belonging are reflected in seven sections: I – the individual, My family – my home, My community – my birthplace, My departure – beyond my birthplace, My nation – my country, My otherness and foreign otherness – the wider world, Me – my personal world. This exhibition is thus an opposition and a complement to the first one (Žagar 2010), as it is oriented towards people and identities. The two permanent exhibitions of SEM are examples of the old and the new approaches, following the observation of philosopher Hilde Hain that museums have moved from focusing on objects to an emphasis on the subjects (Hain 2000: 6).

⁷ I like to add "of people, about people, for people", emphasizing that we are all on the same boat of humanity.

VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE SLOVENE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

The curators of SEM have kept, researched, and presented visual data and sources from the very start: the museum acquired its first visual records (photographs, drawings) when it separated from the National Museum of Slovenia in 1923. The curators have systematically used photographic cameras⁸ in field research since 1946, and the first film footage dates back to 1963, when the museum director Boris Kuhar filmed five short films on traditional crafts and witchcraft in the south Pohorje hills. He projected them at various occasions at the exhibition "Southern Pohorje" (*Južno Pohorje*, 1963). By 1975, he had made another 19 film records,⁹ mostly filmed in Slovenia and a few in Africa (Valentinčič Furlan 2003, 2011; Internet source 2). This was the era of the so-called urgent filming – documenting the vanishing traditions. At that time, the film technology did not allow films to be easily integrated into museum exhibitions and, unfortunately, there was not much understanding of the significance of the film medium among museum staff. After a rather inactive decade, filming was reintroduced in the late 1980s, first in analogue video format (VHS, Hi8), and from 2001 onward in digital format (DV, DVCAM, HDV, AVCHD). In the year 2000, the Department of Ethnographic Film was established, which enabled systematic activities in the field of visual ethnography: visual research, film production, documentation and dissemination.¹⁰

Naško Križnar (1980: 19) compared the data gathering with inhaling and the communication of them back to public with exhaling; I will deal with film production and dissemination in SEM in a similar fashion. In field research, the audiovisual medium is most often used for documenting customs, working processes, social gatherings and interviews. Recently, three of our curators¹¹ have practiced filming themselves and others cooperating with a curator of ethnographic film. Research footage can be made with the scope of producing ethnographic film; while sometimes it is simply shortened to so-called edited footage¹² or left unedited. We document museum events: exhibition openings, workshops, lectures and conferences, and we also produce visual

⁸ Photographs are kept in the museum's documentation department and are not dealt with here.

⁹ Unedited; we have edited them in 2011, when Boris Kuhar received the Niko Kuret Award at the festival Days of Ethnographic Film. Ten ethnographic films can be seen on the SEM web page (Internet source 2).

¹⁰ In museology, dissemination is often referred to as enabling public access to films and data on them.

¹¹ See chapter by Nena Židov, in this book.

¹² Naško Križnar launched this form: in the editing process, real time is condensed, but the visual narrative preserves the structure of the event (Križnar 2001: 94). In SEM, we often practice editing two versions, an optimal one from the point of view of the content and a very compact one for exhibition (3–5 minutes).

documentation of exhibition settings together with a commentary by their creators. We acquire audiovisual records for exhibition purposes from other research and media institutions, archives, museums, as well as from private filmmakers and amateurs. The museum has gained quite a number of new films through the organization of film evenings, film reviews and film festivals (see below). Occasionally, individuals, families or institutions donate audiovisual records to the museum.

The dissemination of films is accomplished in various ways:

- We usually present our films to the community where the footage was filmed.
- We incorporate films and other kinds of audiovisual messages into exhibitions.
- The museum programme consists of various events including film screenings, preferably with filmmakers available for questions and discussion.
- SEM organized a review of Slovene ethnographic film production, Ethnvideo Marathon (2001–2006), which was transformed into an international festival Days of Ethnographic Film in 2007 (Internet source 3), a joint venture of the Slovene Ethnological Society, SEM and the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- Occasionally, our films or excerpts from them are presented on public television.
- Films or clips are shown at film festivals, symposia, conferences and meetings.
- Curators give lectures, including audiovisual products, to students of ethnology and cultural anthropology, media studies, as well as in other museums and cultural centres in Slovenia and abroad.
- We make copies of our films for a number of university teachers at faculties for humanities and social sciences, so that they can include them in their lectures and seminars.
- On request, films or footage can be screened individually for researchers, curators, students and filmmakers in the museum studio.

Three films made for the permanent exhibition are also available on DVD, but later we realized¹³ that publishing films on the museum website offers more democratic access¹³ to users and is very cost effective for the museum. Thus, the Internet is an important channel for distributing films and data on audiovisuals. On the museum web page, the category *Audiovisuals* includes the *Filmography of SEM*

¹³ Films are available for free, anytime and to anyone interested, regardless of geographic location.

(Internet source 2) with whole films or excerpts and data on films, short audiovisual information about exhibitions in *SEM in Movement* (Internet source 4), examples of audiovisual contents at the second permanent exhibition in *Narrations* (Internet source 5) and selected captions from narrations by museum visitors in the *Gallery of Narrators* (Internet source 6). Information on audiovisuals integrated into exhibitions (metadata, short description of the contents, type and function) is available in the sections on permanent exhibitions (Internet sources 7, 8).

“Exhaling of data” is supported by a permanently present process of research, reflexion, evaluation, interpretation and publishing:

- We do visual research.
- We edit audiovisual collections and museum filmography.
- We study history of visual anthropology in museums.
- We search for the best approaches regarding how to document and represent cultural heritage and way of life in films and exhibitions.
- We research the possibilities of visitors’ participation in audiovisual communication and their responsiveness.
- We discover motivating means of cooperation with mediators and young collaborators within museum visual projects and with outside authors and producers in the project on intangible cultural heritage (ICH).
- We give papers and publish articles.
- We participate in projects in which visual ethnography constitutes an important method for documenting and presenting the results.¹⁴
- We organize discussions and conferences.¹⁵
- We develop programme cooperation with museums, research institutions and media houses in Slovenia and abroad.
- We promote ethnographic film and visual research through festivals and publications.
- We cooperate with international professional bodies, such as VANEASA, and academic journals such as *AnthroVision*,¹⁶ thus fostering the circulation of knowledge.

¹⁴ SEM was partner in the European project *Carnival King of Europe II* in 2010–2012 (Internet source 10), and in *Theme Path ‘On Our Own Land’* in 2011–2012 (more in the last part of this chapter). In 2011, SEM became a coordinator of preservation of ICH in Slovenia (Internet source 11).

¹⁵ Consideration of how visual anthropology can contribute to visualisation of the ICH phenomena has led to organisation of the international conference *Documenting and presenting ICH with film* in September 2014 in Ljubljana.

¹⁶ VANEASA (Network of Visual Anthropologists within European Association of Social Anthropologists, Internet source 12); *AnthroVision*, VANEASA online journal (Internet source 13).

FILMS AND AUDIOVISUAL MESSAGES INCLUDED IN EXHIBITIONS

Films and other kinds of audiovisual messages represent an important part of the communication in the museum's permanent exhibitions. We create them to bring into the exhibition information that the audiovisual medium can transmit more effectively than any other medium, be that material evidence (objects), models, texts, drawings, photographs, audio messages, computer games or occasional live presentations. Of course, the content and the nature of the exhibition have a substantial impact on the type of films and audiovisual messages, and on the way of incorporating them into the exhibition.¹⁷ I will concentrate on how we use the medium to communicate knowledge to visitors in the first permanent exhibition, and how we introduced communication with them in the second one; I will also reflect on the visual analysis of a feature film, interpreted in a theme path outside the museum.

CONTEXTUALIZATION AND HUMANISATION OF EXHIBITED OBJECTS

One of the fundamental functions of film in the museum exhibitions is to provide the context of the exhibited objects (cf. Balikci 1985: 21; Lattanzi 1993: 121–124). The first film records by Boris Kuhar had this dimension by showing how clogs were made, how canvas was weaved, and how a witch doctor made good weather. They were in accordance with the observation by Edgar Morin, in 1959 in the CIFE seminar in Perugia, that the great majority of ethnographic films of that time could be categorized into films on rituals or technological processes (Križnar 1996: 69). Since the centre of the first permanent exhibition "Between Nature and Culture" (video impression in Internet source 5; data in Internet source 9) are collections, we have created several forms of films and short audiovisual records.

Audiovisual Collages (2004/5; Valentinčič Furlan 2006, 2009a; Internet source 7) enhance the knowledge connected to the exhibited cultural heritage, depicting exhibited objects in their authentic context, most often their production or use. Some offer a comparison of how different tasks were done in the past and today, e.g. hand mowing and machine mowing. Complementary information covers the making and the function of the object, the cultural setting and, above all, the object's makers

¹⁷ Many of the films and visual messages incorporated into exhibitions could be described as applied visual ethnography/anthropology. They are subjected to the exhibition medium, as we aim to complement the modes of communication, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication of data. The result is that they often fully communicate their content only inside the exhibition, and when shown elsewhere, the context needs to be explained.



The collages are shown on relatively small LCD screens close to the exhibited collections. SEM, 2006 (photo: Nada Žgank).

or users. No other medium¹⁸ can be as effective in humanising exhibited objects as moving pictures, especially when accompanied by authentic sound.

Audiovisual Collages are compilations of short clips (cf. Lattanzi 1993: 123; Pink 2001: 150), with a compact and economical visual narrative that follows the structure of an event and refrains from additional interpretation. The titles of the clips briefly and precisely define their content, also serving as punctuations between neighbouring clips. Altogether, there are nineteen collages with 72 short clips (163 minutes), screened in a loop at the exhibition.¹⁹

“Čupa, the vessel of the Slovene fishermen” (*Čupa, plovilo slovenskih ribičev*, 2006; Sketelj 2007; Internet source 14) is a filmed cultural biography²⁰ of the *čupa Marija*, the last completely preserved seagoing vessel made from a single hollowed trunk of Slovene fishermen in the Trieste littoral. A very old form was used until the end of World War II, due to the configuration of the coast in that area. Of course, we could not film its making or use anymore, but we have used all pieces of knowledge bound to the *čupa Marija*:

- Zdravko Caharija, a member of the family that made, owned and used the *čupa Marija*, was glad to cooperate in revealing its story;
- his father, August Caharija, wrote short passages in his diary on carving the čupa in 1898;

¹⁸ Workshops with the craftsman presenting in the museum can be stronger in the sense of human presence and interactivity, but the original cultural setting is lost and they are not permanently available.

¹⁹ We hope to substitute the technology to enable interactive access in the coming years, as the present technology is worn-out after eight years of use.

²⁰ The concept “cultural biography of things” was introduced by Kopytoff (1986); cf. Mlekuž 2007.

- Milko Matičetov, a curator of SEM, made two photographs of how August and Zdravko rowed their čupa for the last time before it was transferred to the museum in 1947;
- knowledge has also been preserved by other retired fishermen in this area, and Ladi Gruden was fit enough to row a replica;
- the museum has kept detailed written and pictorial evidence about the čupa since it was obtained;
- the researcher into seagoing vessels Bruno Volpi Lisjak published a book on the čupa, and he also initiated making a replica of the original čupa, which enabled us to film a reconstruction of rowing;
- the nostalgia of retired fishermen is embodied in carving miniature models of the čupa;
- the museum curator Polona Sketelj added information on the čupa as a museum object;²¹
- we filmed how the seven-metre long vessel was brought to the third floor of the exhibition hall and placed in the fishery room.

The representations of the making and the use of the čupa are not as vivid in this film as in some of the collages, since the making is covered by a fragment from a diary and explanation by the researcher, while the use is represented by photographs and footage of rowing a replica. However, the film does convey the life story of *čupa Marija* with both its careers, as a fishermen vessel and as a museum object; together with fishermen's attitude towards it, revealing "social relevance and symbolic functions" (cf. Balikci 1985: 21).

A film is projected on a screen above *čupa Marija*, explaining the exhibit, while the authentic čupa supports the film with its presence, volume, appearance, material, structure, aesthetics, colour and smell; therefore, the museum object and the film are *de*

facto complementary modes (cf. Skrt 2001: 78–79). In 2015, the authentic čupa will be replaced by replica and transferred to a warehouse with a stable climatic environment; consequently, the film will become an even stronger document.



The dialog of the object and the film. SEM, 2006 (photo: Nada Žgank).

²¹ We discovered that the museum visitors were rather curious about this point.

PRESENTATIONS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SPACE AND TIME

SEM decided to produce a didactic multimedia presentation and the introductory film to the two permanent exhibitions so that visitors will encounter a panorama of the Slovene ethnic space and its heritage. The multimedia presentation *Who am I, Who are We* (2005; Valentinčič Furlan 2006b; Internet source 7) was designed by the curator Inja Smerdel to present Slovenia through natural and cultural characteristics of four ethnological regions (Alpine, Mediterranean, Central-Slovene and Pannonian). The visitor can become familiar with the Slovene cultural space through heritage elements not kept by the museum, e.g. types of landscape (natural and cultural heritage), types of houses and settlements (immovable heritage), dances, music and dialects (intangible heritage). While landscape, settlements and characteristic houses are well presented by sequences of photographs, film is definitely the best medium for presenting dances, music and dialects.



The multimedia presentation is placed in the introductory part of the exhibition “Between Nature and Culture”. SEM, 2006 (photo: Nada Žgank).

The introductory film “Images of Daily Life in Slovenia’s Past” (*Podobe preteklega vsakdana*, 2004–2007) (Valentinčič Furlan 2007; Internet source 15) is, in fact, the introduction to both exhibitions,²² as it gives an insight in the formation and early development of the heritage elements that are later seen at the exhibitions. At the same time, it is a condensed presentation of our ancestors’ lifestyle from their settlement in the sixth century to early modern times, together with the formation

²² Initially Gorazd Makarovič wrote one of three concepts for the permanent exhibition (in the 1990s); since there was very little material evidence available, the team of curators decided that the form of film is more appropriate for the presentation of cultural developments in early historical periods.

of the Slovene language.²³ The film incorporates video records of authentic objects, written and pictorial evidence, as well as animated clips and reconstructions of chosen handicraft and farm chores as practiced in the Middle Ages. The crucial guideline of screenwriter and scientific adviser Gorazd Makarovič was that the film should not depict anything that is not supported by written, pictorial or material evidence: he had compiled four folders of archaeological, historical and ethnological sources for the film director and the illustrator. The reconstructions were shot in close-up, and illustrations for animated scenes were checked, until all the elements in the picture were in accordance with existing data.

Production of this film was quite demanding,²⁴ and the result was not appreciated by all curators, mostly due to its aesthetic characteristics: specifically, we have decided to use classic drawings and film animation techniques and not smoother computer-based animation. Originally, the film was screened in a projection room, but in 2015 it will be placed at the beginning of the first permanent exhibition together with the multimedia presentation, both on demand; individuals or small groups can also see it on a touch screen.

AUDIOVISUAL GENRES IN THE EXHIBITION **“I, WE AND OTHERS: IMAGES OF MY WORLD”**

The second permanent exhibition “I, We and Others: Images of My World” (*Jaz, mi in drugi. Podobe mojega sveta*) (Žagar 2010, Žagar, ed. 2013; Internet source 16) deals with a subtle theme of human identities and positioning in the world. The meanings are conveyed through texts, photographs, objects and symbolic constructions, excerpts from a novel,²⁵ soundscapes and several types of audiovisual messages. In addition to edited footage and documentary films, we used new genres such as home video,²⁶ narrations and a mosaic portrait. The last two were purposely filmed for the exhibition (Valentinčič Furlan 2010; Internet source 8). Non-linear contents (home video, narrations, video portrait) are offered in interactive units with touch screens that permit individual access; we made the interfaces user-friendly with the aid of feedback from youngsters

²³ More than 250 Slovene schools bought the film on a DVD to complement the subjects of history and Slovene language, and many have asked why we had not also produced the second part of the film covering recent times; however, we apply another medium, exhibitions, to present the 19th and 20th century.

²⁴ This production made me even more aware that ethnological/anthropological museums are very privileged since we can make films about live subjects and with them.

²⁵ Jože Dular, *Krka pa teče naprej* (“And the Krka Flows Onwards”), 1983.

²⁶ Using home video of everyday family life and festive occasions is a tribute to the genre and its creators.

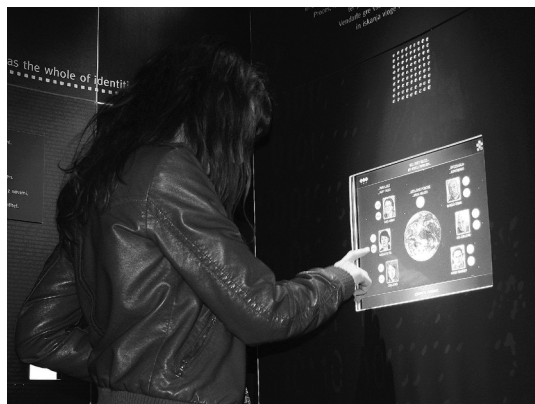
and adults on how to best organize the access to the contents. Finally, we have also developed a two-way audiovisual communication with the visitors.

NARRATIONS

Narrating is an ancient traditional manner of transmitting knowledge and experience, values, feelings and identities; at the same time, it also creates and strengthens human bonds. Visual anthropologists recognize the interview to be “one of the most important forms of visual documentation” (Križnar 1996: 105–106), availing people in front of the camera to express their point of view. The introduction of sound film allowed emancipation of the subjects filmed and methodological shifts in visual anthropology. Film is the best medium to capture narrating to be than transmitted to posterity or broad audience in other places and contexts. Curator Daša Koprivec decided to film life stories of three “Alexandrinians” – two Slovene women and a man who used to live and work in Egypt. Short (3- to 5-minute long) narrations are available on a touchscreen (see an example – life story of Alberta Gregorič, Internet source 17).

In the closing section of the exhibition *Me – My Personal World*, we use narrations to illustrate how we conceptualize the world. The curator Janja Žagar decided on two subgenres, fairy tales as universal memory, transferred from generation to generation in a rather fixed manner, and life experience as personal wisdom, generated by an individual in the course of his/her life and thus deeply connected to his/her identity. We filmed three narrators of each subgenre: a folk storyteller (Internet source 18), a researcher of folklore and a professional interpreter for the first sub-genre; a Slovene person living in Slovenia (Internet source 19), a Slovene person living outside the

borders of the Republic of Slovenia (in Austrian Carinthia), and a non-Slovene person (a Dine Indian) for the second sub-genre. The narrators are filmed in close up, so that the visitor gets a feeling of intimacy. On the interactive unit *My World through Fairy Tales and Experience*, the visitor selects the narrator and the language; English is offered through subtitles, as recommended in visual ethnography.



The use of the interactive unit *My World through Fairy Tales and Experience*. SEM, 2010 (photo: Miha Špiček).

MOSAIC PORTRAIT VESNA

This video portrait is an audiovisual thread running through the seven sections interpreting this rather complex exhibition on an individual subjective level, similarly as excerpts from the novel "And the Krka Flows Onwards" reflect the individual's sense of place and social belonging. As the novel is written by an elderly person and oriented to the past, we decided to choose a young person for the portrait; we also wanted to capture the reflexive value of the exhibition. The visitors are addressed with a set of questions in the first person singular: Who am I? What does my family mean to me? What does my home mean to me? Where do I come from? Which people are close to me? What do I feel about my country? Which nation do I feel to be mine? What makes me travel to foreign countries and live among strangers? Who, then, am I? They make visitors reflect upon themselves, their identities and social roles. At the end of the exhibition, in the meeting room, the visitors are invited to share their thoughts, memories and associations that have crossed their minds.

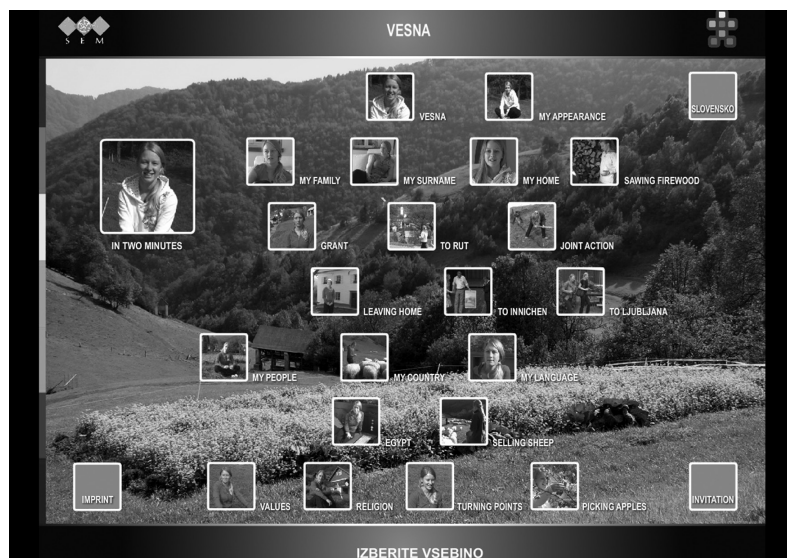
I decided to document the identities of a chosen person by researching which groups and spaces they are bound to. The intellectual framework (after Metje Postma 2003) was the structure of the exhibition, which was, of course, adapted to the chosen subject. I used the same questions the visitors are asked at the exhibition, reversed into the second person informal.²⁷ I filmed²⁸ 25-year-old Vesna from a rural area, a mixture of the traditional and the modern. The challenge was how to grasp the non-verbal manifestations of identities with a camera: I decided for short presentations of situations and activities, which expose her social roles. I filmed Vesna's narrations and manifestations of her identities with an open structure in mind, so that each issue would be accessed independently via a touch screen. Interactive access of the mosaic portrait *Vesna* (2009, Valentinčič Furlan 2010) is in accordance with the mosaic structure of the exhibition. The two-minute clip *Vesna* (Internet source 20) is a visual summary and an invitation to viewers to make portraits and send them to the museum; on the museum web page, it can be found next to the video on the exhibition (Internet source 21), a visual tour of the exhibition.

The interactive portrait *Vesna* is placed into the meeting room, where we located the open part of the exhibition with several triggers for feedback communication: visitors can write their impressions in a book, or they can type them in a computer application on the nearby unit Visitor Responses, they can cooperate in filming,

²⁷ The Slovene language has two forms of "you", informal (*ti*) and formal (*vi*).

²⁸ My first choice was a young woman with family from Ljubljana, as I preferred to introduce urban space to the exhibition; however she, due to family reasons, discontinued her participation in the middle of filming.

and they can prepare personal exhibitions.²⁹ Live programmes, such as guided talks, presentations and workshops on handicrafts take place there.



The introductory page of the mosaic portrait *Vesna* with 21 short clips, data on its creators and a language switch (idea: Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, realization: Peter Gruden, 2009).

TWO-WAY AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION WITH VISITORS

Similarly as Sol Worth and John Adair did in the Navajo project in the 1960s, followed by Asen Balikci and a number of visual anthropologists that have applied the participatory approach in recent decades, we invited visitors to step out of the passive role of spectators into the more active role of film subjects or researchers with a camera. We conceived a long-term project of two-way audiovisual communication also with the intention that video portraits enrich the exhibition with authentic Slovene voices and images. We soon realized that we also needed to offer a less-demanding and time-consuming option, so we trained a pair of mediators³⁰ to film the interviews. To date, we have

²⁹ There is enough space for two personal exhibitions at the same time; they change every two to three months; the authors are assisted by the curators; they also prepare catalogues and publish data on the exhibitions on the Internet; 19 exhibitions have been staged in five years (Internet source 22).

³⁰ In 2009–2010, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum was a partner in the project “The Elderly as Bearers and Mediators of Intangible Cultural Heritage”. Voluntary cultural mediators (retired people) are hosts at the exhibitions, they work in library or documentation department, cooperate in preparing programmes for visitors, etc. After the project ended, five of them decided to continue their cooperation with SEM.

filmed 34 narrations, and we do our best to combine them with personal exhibitions, so that the modes complement one another and personal stories are revealed in a more in-depth manner (Valentinčič Furlan 2013). Portraits and shortened narrations³¹ are accessible on the interactive station Visitor Responses; the narrations can also be seen in the Gallery of Narrators on the museum web page (Internet source 6).



Janez Doler and Brigita Rupnik film the narration of Olga Pivk - Vidmar in the exhibition "living room". SEM, April 2011 (photo: Andreja Kofol).

In five years, we have established that visitors prefer to collaborate in filming their narrating, while the media aspect is left to the museum's film crew. An active approach to the medium requires much greater involvement from both the cameraman and the person portrayed. We realized that an invitation alone is not a sufficiently strong incentive for potential authors, since none of the visitors has yet opted to film a portrait. We have started looking for independent production, which may enrich the exhibition contents. We added a portrait of two handicapped persons and three homeless people, thus supporting the museum's efforts to offer visibility and giving voice to social groups and minorities of all kinds, which are often treated in a stereotyped manner in Slovene media. In 2014, we engaged a quadriplegic student³² to do the editing of narrations.

Our experiences prove that museum visitors generously participate in video projects and personal exhibitions if invited personally and offered media and professional support of curators and mediators.

³¹ Integral narrations are long between 4 and 70 minutes, edited ones between 3 and 7 minutes; footage and the agreements are kept at the Department of Ethnographic Film.

³² This is part of the project "Accessibility to Cultural Heritage by Vulnerable Groups", coordinated by SEM (2013–2016).

NEW MUSEOLOGY: A CONCEPT TRANSFERRED INTO PRACTICE

I dealt with activities and communication strategies of the second permanent exhibition to present how the Slovene Ethnographic Museum practices “the endeavours of new museology for social inclusion with three basic aspects: access, representation and participation” (Mensch 2011: 49–51). New museology perceives museums as

facilitators that integrate data, media, social groups and institutions in order to enhance knowledge, understanding and tolerance among people of various social, religious and national backgrounds. The most important aspect is social inclusion – visitors get the possibility to actively cooperate and co-shape the museum programme. Museums are open to new content, new approaches, and to a wider space – in the sense that exhibitions and events are no longer necessarily restricted to museum buildings. (Peter van Mensch)³³

I am interested in investigating inspiring concepts in practice, and in the workshop on new museology I discovered methodological grounds for the theme path, devoted to the first Slovene sound feature film *Na svoji zemlji* (“On our Own Land”) in the place of a genuine experience. The filming took place in Baška grapa (The Bača Valley) in 1947–1948, and it provoked strong identification of the villagers with the film and life-lasting memories. Creating the theme path we relied on principles of a (virtual) ecomuseum and social inclusion of local people (Mensch 2005: 1). “Key to the concept of ecomuseum are local identity, territory and landscape, history and continuity. All of this has a decisive influence on the formation of a sense of affiliation and belongs to the cultural heritage similarly as roots to tree” (Perko 2009: 86). We intertwined memories, films and photographs, texts and knowledge, kept by national, regional and local institutions that all became partners of the project. The local community was the bearer of the project and now runs the programmes. The local common memories were recognized film heritage and were supported by articles of France Štiglic (1964a, b), Veno Pilon (1965) and Rapa Šuklje³⁴ (1983), and the photographic documentation by still photographer Erminio del Fabbro. Thus, “the local and the national aspects of the feature film heritage have merged into memorial pillars” (Valentinčič Furlan 2014; Internet source 23).³⁵

³³ Peter van Mensch, lecture. Peter van Mensch and Leontine Meijer van Mensch (Reinwardt Academy Amsterdam) held a workshop *Current Trends – Future Realities* in Zreče, Slovenia, in October 2007.

³⁴ She was Štiglic’s secretary on the film stage; later, she became a film critic and publicist.

³⁵ The web page is a virtual almanac with written, pictorial and audiovisual documents on the film and its creators; nevertheless, the “genuine experience” can be best felt in Baška grapa, in contact with people.

VISUAL ANALYSIS OF FEATURE FILM "ON OUR OWN LAND" AND THE FILM SETTING IN BAŠKA GRAPA

In 1975, John H. Weakland³⁶ analysed the anthropological studies of feature films: they may relate to the content (subject matter), to reality (sources, functions, influences of the film) (Weakland 1975: 236) or to groups (filmmakers, audience) (Weakland 1975: 245). In the process of designing *The Theme Path On our Own Land*, I have researched film content and its context. The film "On our Own Land" depicts the struggle of Slovene Partisans and people from Baška Grapa for freedom and reunion with the rest of the Slovene territory, as the Primorsko region was annexed to Italy after World War I. The film story corresponds to the historical situation in Baška Grapa between 1943 and 1945 very accurately,³⁷ although film characters are fictitious.

The script was written by Ciril Kosmač, who knew the area and its recent history very well, having experienced the war personally. He won the competition for the first Slovene sound feature film, initiated by the socialist authorities in 1946. The national film project³⁸ was well financed and received significant media attention. For most of the filmmakers, the filming was a hands-on learning experience. Director France Štiglic engaged best Slovene creative minds as well as the local community of Baška grapa for crowd scenes. Local people supplied the crew of about 80 members with warm meals and transport facilities; they made available their homes and their worn-out everyday clothes for filming.



Štefka Drolc in a stylized theatre costume on the audition in Ljubljana (photo: Erminio del Fabbro, Slovene Film Archive with the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, Film Collection SI AS 1086).

³⁶ American anthropologists set to analyse films during World War II to understand German and Japanese culture and mentality; the exploitative beginnings later caused a backlash (Weakland 1975: 249).

³⁷ We have detected some deviations: 1. In the film, religious symbols can be seen only in the collaborator's house, while in fact they were found in majority of houses; in Baška grapa, the Partisan movement and religion were not self-exclusive; for instance, priests also supported the fight for liberation. 2. In the film, Partisans mine a very scenic railway bridge near the village of Grahovo ob Bači; in fact, two less cinematic ones were demolished several times by Partisans to hinder Fascists and Nazis (Valentinčič Furlan 2014).

³⁸ Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia, and several Yugoslav republics competed to be the first to make a film.



Štefka Drolc as Tildica (3rd from the left) in everyday clothes borrowed from a young village woman, in the film (photogram from the film, Slovene Film Archive with the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, Film Collection SI AS 1086).

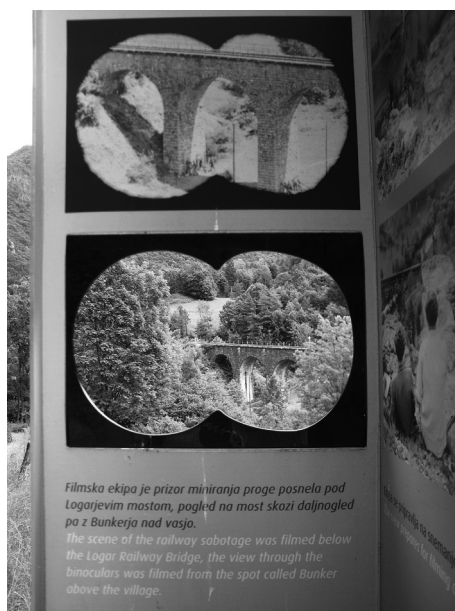
The film was very well received by the authorities, the viewers and film critics. It had a great promotion, being sent to film festival in Cannes, and effective distribution, as it was shown in cinemas, schools, factories and villages all over the country. Many of the creators won prizes, and Kosmač won the national Prešeren Prize. In 1975, the Society of the Slovene Film Creators raised a monument in the village of Grahovo ob Bači, dedicated to the filming and to the beginnings of the professional film production in Slovenia. Since then, film professionals and publicists, as well as part of the general public have slowly distanced themselves from the film, especially after Slovenia became independent in 1991 (more in Valentinčič Furlan 2014).

Film shots and stills were analysed from different points of view; one of them is the comparison between the film space, the actual space of Baška grapa after World War II and of today. The film crew has shot the acted scenes with the background of the physical and social space of Baška grapa. Due to the Štiglic's documentary approach and the aspirations to achieve authentic image of clothing, housing and social behaviour (Štiglic 1964a: 1694, Štiglic 1964b: 2000; Pilon 1965: 144, 236), the film's meta-reality and the reality of Baška grapa overlap significantly. These connections are exposed with thematic panels at the locations in the landscape where the film crew set their camera in 1947–48 and filmed the most famous scenes.



The actress Štefka Drolc and actor Aleksander Valič unveil thematic panel at the opening of the theme path. Grahovo ob Bači, 2012 (photo: Ivan Merljak).

The film “On our Own Land” thus reflected the culture and life of that time and space, and also shaped it largely in the following decades (cf. Weakland 1975: 248). Making such a film after World War II had a strong integrative value for the Slovene people, especially for inhabitants of Primorsko and Baška grapa. Local people have identified with the film not merely because of its contents but also because Štiglic engaged them in filmmaking, as today they identify with the theme path because they had been included in its construction. That makes this theme path unique even in comparison to famous film tours on internationally known films as *The Third Man*, *La vita è bella* (“Life is Beautiful”) or *The Da Vinci Code*.³⁹



Directing the gaze in the panel, devoted to the scene of mining the railway bridge. Grahovo ob Bači, 2014 (photo: Alenka Pirman).

³⁹ *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1948), film tour in Vienna and its underground sewer system (Pirman 2014; Internet source 24); *La vita è bella* (Roberto Benigni, 1997), theme path in Arezzo, Tuscany, Italy (Internet source 25); *Da Vinci Code* (fiction by Dan Brown in 2003, film by Ron Howard in 2006), film tour around Louvre in 2007 (Bouquet 2012: 55–56).

CONCLUSION: PARALLELS BETWEEN VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND MUSEUMS

The essence of visual anthropology in the museum is producing and disseminating knowledge (in its broadest sense) bound to cultural heritage, lifestyles and identities in a collaborative or participative manner. As exhibitions are a specific communication channel, in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, we test different styles and genres and search for new communication strategies, often connecting concepts and methodologies from visual anthropology and museology.

In the first collection-based permanent exhibition, "Between Nature and Culture", audiovisuals provide contextualization for the exhibited objects, humanising them and "helping visitors to make a real connection with exhibits and to overall concept" (Piacente 2002: 222). In this case, the audiovisuals were intended to communicate knowledge to visitors; with the second permanent exhibition "I, We and Others: Images of My World", due to its reflexive and participative nature, we included audiovisual communication *with* visitors, by inviting them to actively participate and co-create the open part of the exhibition. In this way, we can include groups that are usually not presented in the exhibitions, such as minorities of all kinds, and sensory, physically or socially deprived persons. The galleries of narrators and portraits, as well as personal exhibitions, avail many voices to be heard, providing "multiple viewpoints" (Griffiths 2003: 375; Henning 2006: 302). Through this exhibition, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum indeed functions as museum "of people, about people, for people" (see footnote 4).

With *The Theme Path On our Own Land* in Baška grapa, we dared to go out of the museum to participate with the local community in the place of genuine experience, which was, at the same time, nationally relevant, too. "An eco-museum is a process and not an institution" (Perko 2009: 89). In addition to contributing the knowledge of visual anthropology, museology and interpretation, our role in the project was close to that of the facilitator, that creates a participatory environment and assists the community in reflecting its experience (Mensch 2011: 60–61).

Thus, we have come full circle: museums were among those institutions that provided fruitful environments for the development of visual anthropology in the early 20th century (and in some parts of the world decades later); visual anthropology offered basic methodology and technology for the inclusion of the medium into the exhibitions long before digitization took place and gave new impetus to museum work and displays; recently, visual anthropology and new museology have been companions in enabling social inclusion, participation and giving visibility and voice to individuals, groups and peoples.

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- Vesna*. Research Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, filming Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, Peter Paul Crepaz, Jaka Kleč, editing Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, interactive application Peter Gruden, produced by SEM, 2009, 33 minutes.
- Galerija pripovedovalcev ("Gallery of narrators")*. Concept and editorial Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, interviews by Brigita Rupnik, narrating Bernarda Potočnik, Janez Doler, Brigita Rupnik, Darja Butina, Irena Uhan, A. P., Jarmila Trček-Breznikar, Laura Ličer, Stanislav, Nataša Stergar, Martin Marchesich, Olga Pivk-Vidmar, Žiga Valentinčič Furlan, Saša Kampič, Meri Bozovičar, Edo Bučar, Martin Koprivec, Marko Ogris, Ernest Pirnat, Marko Račič, Vincenc Aleksander Valič, Dana Valič Klanjšček, Anja Koren, Matjaž Šporar, Viktorija Rozman Bitenc, Zdravko Škerjanec, Franc Zajtl, Tanja Oblak, Nevenka Brajdič, Grušovnik, Stanka Golob, Nino Batagelj, filming by Janez Doler, editing by Nadja Valentinčič Furlan, Boštjan Abram, Janez Doler, Nino Batagelj, produced by SEM 2010/15, 190 minutes.

EXHIBITIONS

Med naravo in kulturo ("Between Culture and Nature"). SEM, Ljubljana, 2006, permanent exhibition.

Jaz, mi in drugi. Podobe mojega sveta, ("We and Others: Images of My World"). SEM, Ljubljana, 2009, permanent exhibition.

Tematska pot Na svoji zemlji ("Theme Path 'On Our Own Land'"). Municipality of Tolmin, The Bača Heritage Society, Grahovo ob Bači and Koritnica, 2012.

Nadja Valentinčič Furlan

VIZUALNA ANTROPOLOGIJA V MUZEJIH

PRIMER SLOVENSKEGA ETNOGRAFSKEGA MUZEJA

Razvoj vizualne antropologije je bil tesno povezan z muzeji, kar zasledimo že v pisanju njenega zgodnjega znanilca Felixa-Louisa Regnaulta leta 1900, v praksi pa z delom Fredericka Webba Hodgea in Margaret Mead, kustosinje Ameriškega naravoslovnega muzeja, ki velja za pravo začetnico vizualne antropologije. V Sloveniji smo muzejsko filmsko produkcijo najprej razvijali v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju (1963), Belokranjskem (1964) in Goriškem muzeju, ker je bil med letoma 1972 in 1983 zaposlen Naško Križnar, ki je objavil manifest o nujnosti vizualne dokumentacije v muzeju (Križnar 1980). V istem muzeju se je pozneje zaposlila kustosinja in filmska avtorica Darja Skrt, ki je o filmu in avdiovizualnem v muzeju objavila knjigi in nekaj člankov. Prvo poklicno mesto, povezano z vizualno antropologijo, tj. Kustodiat za etnografski film, je bilo odprto leta 2000 v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju. Njegovo programsko delovanje obsega vizualno produkcijo, dokumentiranje in arhiviranje, raziskovanje, prikazovanje filmov in druge načine omogočanja dostopnosti ter promocijo vizualne antropologije v obliki razprav, posvetov, festivalov, udeležbe v mednarodnih projektih in strokovnih telesih.

Razstave so specifični komunikacijski kanal muzejev in so tudi same medij, kar vpliva na izbor filmskih vsebin in žanrov ter tudi na način, kako so vključeni v razstave. V SEM z avdiovizualnimi sporočili na razstave vnesemo podatke, ki jih film lahko poda bolje kakor drugi mediji – predmeti, modeli, besedila, fotografije, risbe in slike, zvočna sporočila, računalniške igrice ali občasni živi prikazi. Na prvi stalni razstavi *Med naravo in kulturo* (2006), ki temelji na predmetih, *Avdiovizualni kolaži* (2004/5) predmete kontekstualizirajo in humanizirajo. Film o čupi Mariji prikaže njeno kulturno biografijo s »poklicema« morskega plovila in muzejskega predmeta. Čupa Marija in film *Čupa, plovilo slovenskih ribičev* (2006), ki ga prikazujemo nad njo, sta resnično komplementarna modusa, ki podpirata sporočilnost drug drugega. Film je

odličen medij za didaktično predstavitev dediščine v prostoru, kakor npr. v uvodni multiviziji *Kdo sem, kdo smo* (2005), ali skozi čas. Uvodni film *Podobe preteklega vsakdana* (2004/7) prikaže razvojni vidik dediščine na našem ozemlju, lahko pa ga gledamo kot prikaz načina življenja naših prednikov v srednjem veku.

Druga stalna razstava *Jaz, mi in drugi. Podobe mojega sveta* (2009) se kot antipod prvi osredinja na nematerialne razsežnosti človekovega bivanja, kot so identitete in njegovo umeščanje v svet. Njena posebnost je spodbujanje obiskovalcev k samorefleksiji in dejavnemu sodelovanju v obliki osebnih razstav, pripovedi in videoportretov. Na razstavi uporabljamo vrsto filmskih zvrsti, od urejenega gradiva in dokumentarcev do domačih posnetkov, namensko posnetih pripovedi in mozaičnega videoportreta *Vesna* (2009). Ta razstavne vsebine raziše na osebni ravni in obiskovalce vabi, da tudi sami posnamejo portret bližnjega človeka ali avtoportret. Poskrbeli smo tudi za preprostejši način sodelovanja, ki obiskovalcem vzame manj časa: svojo pripoved lahko zaupajo muzejski snemalni ekipi. Doslej smo tako posneli 32 pripovedi in pridobili pet portretov, nastalo je 19 osebnih razstav. Dvosmerna avdiovizualna komunikacija in osebne razstave obiskovalcev so del koncepta nove muzeologije, ki poudarja družbeno vključevanje. Ta koncept predvideva tudi mreženje znanja, medijev, ljudi in ustanov ter korenitejša rešitve, na primer delo z ljudmi na terenu pri pripravi ekomuzejev. Na sorodnih načelih temelji *Tematska pot Na svoji zemlji* (2012) v Baški grapi, kjer smo dediščino prvega slovenskega zvočnega celovečerca interpretirali z različnih vidikov, tudi z vizualno analizo.

Sklenemo z vzporednicami med vizualno antropologijo in muzeologijo: skupni so jima poudarki na vključevanju ljudi in njihovi udeležbi; film in muzeji jim lahko damo vidnost in glas.