European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards (2025)
914-Citizens' Engagement & Awareness-raising 4. Citizens' Engagement & Awareness-raising

WjbyQnLB

Hedgehog’s Home – Inventing a Better World

Entry details

General information

Main country of application	Serbia

Brief description of the project

> Based on a pivotal children's poem the exhibition Hedgehog's Home — Inventing a Better World creates a (playful) context for intergenerational exchange and discussion about the values of heritage and its potential to help us rethink our identities today. Created with children and an interdisciplinary creative team as a space for play, fun and imagination, but also for reflection, research and contemplation. This project represents an opportunity to rediscover and revalue this literary work with the youngest generation of visitors, and raise discussions about the importance of home, communities we belong to, diversity, Others, and different, migration, tolerance, xenophobia, mental helth.

Start date of the project	2021-11-09
Completion date of the project/initiative	September 9 2024
Website(s) of the project/nominee	https://muzej-jugoslavije.org/en/exhibition/jezeva-kucica-izmisljanje-boljeg-sveta/
Facebook page of the project, if any	https://www.facebook.com/MuzejJugoslavijeBeograd/
Twitter page of the project, if any	https://x.com/i/flow/login?redirect_after_login=%2Fmuzejyu
Instagram page of the project, if any	https://www.instagram.com/muzej_jugoslavije/
Does the site or heritage in question have national/regional/local cultural heritage designation or protection status in its country?	No

Is the site or heritage in question included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, either as a single World Heritage Site or as part of one larger site?	No
If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to the public?	Yes

If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to people with disabilities?

> The project is based on a children's poem written by Branko Ćopić. It exists as written text, and sound document. Within this project it is translated into Sign language.

Contact details

Name of the entrant	Mirjana Slavkovic
Entrant's position	curator and international cooperation coordinator
Organisation of the entrant	Museum of Yugoslavia
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Telephone of the entrant (mobile number)	+381637284346
Organisation of the owner	Museum of Yugoslavia
Name of the project leader	Sara Sopić and Mirjana Slavković
Project leader's position	curators, authors of the exhibition
Organisation of the project leader	Museum of Yugoslavia
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Other relevant participants	

core team:
Scenographer Siniša Ilić (independent visual artist),
technical realization Ana Dimitrijević and Aleksandar Popović (art collective Karkatag),
sound design Bojan Palikuća (sound designer),
visual identity Jana Vuković (graphic designer),
production Dušan Jevtić (project coordinator, Museum of Yugoslavia),
Zorica Vesić (architect)
Miloš Jazić (technician)

researchers and collaborators:
writer Dubravka Ugrešić,
writer Dinko Kreho,
children's writer Jasminka Petrović,
researcher and writer Dubravka Zima (University of Zagreb, Department for Croatology),
Marijana Hameršak (Institute for Ethnology, Zagreb),
Nenad Veličković (University of Sarajevo, Literary Department),
Tijana Tropin (Institute for Literature, Belgrade).
historian consultant Miroslav Jovanović (Archive of Serbian Academy of Art and Science),

workshops:
theatre educator and interpreter for Sign language Vera Jovanović (Deaf community Radivoj Popović),
curator educator Elma Hodžić (Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sarajevo
museum adviser educator Željka Jelavić (Ethnographical Museum Zagreb, Croatia)
Ljubica Vlahović and Milica Tomić - coordinators of student's club and workshops after the opening of the exhibition (Museum of Yugoslavia)

consultant for mental health issues dr Ana Božanić Djukanović (psychiatrist and psychotherapist)

Concise summary

Concise summary

Branko Ćopić's poem "Hedgehog's Home" has a special place in the childhood memories of numerous generations born in Yugoslavia. Today, seven decades after its publication, this literary work represents a shared place of memory and a strong trigger for nostalgia. Starting from its iconic status and the turbulent history of reception of this poem and its writer, an exhibition was created aiming to initiate dialogue about the common heritage and its potentials to rethink our identities today, the meaning of home, the relationship to the recent past, the communities we belong to, xenophobia, memory, nostalgia, mental health.

The exhibition consists of two parts: The first part dedicated to the poem "Hedgehog's Home", designed as a fiction, was realized in cooperation with children aged five to ten from Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo and students of scenography of the University of Belgrade. Based on their ideas and drawings, this part of the exhibition was further shaped through a dialogue with numerous collaborators. The result is an interactive space that is a ground for playing and activating the imagination, but also a framework for reflection and intergenerational meetings and exchanges. The second part of the exhibition deals with the life of Branko Ćopić and has mainly a documentary character.
In spite of the national boundaries and practices of censorship and negligence of Branko Ćopić and his work the communities in the whole region of ex Yugoslavia recognize Hedgehog's Home as a part of the heritage that defines their contemporary identities. The project succeed in connecting citizens and reestablishing dialogue, rooted in the universal values of the poem. Over 150,000 visitors, both regional and international, attended the exhibition. It was warmly embraced by teachers and educators, youth workers and peace activists, NGO's working with migrants, socially engaged artists. Digital outreach was far-reaching, with audiences actively creating new content documenting their experiences.

In European context this project showed how the "small stories" recognized as precious by communities can engage audiences and incite dialogue in spite of the official politics of memory.

Through a curatorial approach that combines multiple sensory experiences and awakens feelings, the exhibition was created providing an experience that is educational and entertaining but also transformative and perhaps even healing, proving museums have the potential to become active participants in establishing connections and dialogues based on common heritage and the importance it has in today's world.

The exhibition costs were 85.000 EUR.

Objectives and work undertaken

Aims and objectives of the project/initiative

- bring the focus to the literary heritage that is still shared in the region despite the national boundaries and politics of oblivion of the common recent history
- test the methods of participation and possibilities of co-creation of content together with youngest audiences (and experts in different fields)
- establish a unique space for intergenerational encounters
- transposing a literary piece into an exhibition aiming to use it as a memory trigger and a starting point for discussion about social issues that relevant for the communities of readers today (home, belonging, migrants, refugees, our relations to Others)
- test the affective approach in curating including the memories and reflections of visitors as a part of the of the display
- keep the memory of the writer Branko Ćopić, antifascist and active intellectual who did not restrain to openly critique bureaucracy of the new socialist society in his satirical stories
- create a space to connect adults belonging to different generations and social backgrounds with children in discussions about universal topics such as the meaning of home for one’s identity, is home a material space or something intangible made of our memories and
  heritage. In times of uncertainties and migration it is crucially important to tackle these issues. In the context of the region it has deeper meaning and there are deeper reasons for choosing this topic.
- to open discussion about mental health and suicide in a responsible way including experts
- to offer translation of the poem in Sign language entirely produced by local Deaf community

Any historical and technical research undertaken for the project/initiative

The preparation of the exhibition consisted several of interdisciplinary researches:

- writers Dubravka Ugrešić, Dinko Kreho and Nenad Veličkovič developed interpretations of the children poem Hedgehog's Home and the analysis of the systematic negligence of the work of Branko Ćopić as a Yugoslav author
- workshops with children to get the insight how new generations read the poem and to collect ideas and inputs for creating the exhibition that would be playful and kinestetic
- workshops with students of scenography from Faculty of Applied Arts on their ideas how to transpose children poem to and exhibition
- co-creating the exhibition scenography together with the creative team (visual artists, scengrapher, architect, technician, producer and curators) based on inputs from children and student of scenography that would be a place of intergenerational encounter
- archival research dedicated to biography of Branko Čopić and the turbulent relations towards him and his work both during his life and after the end of Yugoslavia
- numerous interviews that collected memories and interpretations of the poem
- psychotherapist research and interpretation of the points of trauma in the writer's biography
- series of workshops to translate the poem into Sign language and create a video with Hedgehog's Home in Sign language.

Activities carried out and stages of implementation of the project/initiative

- Research and development of the basic concept
- Writers Dubravka Ugrešić, Dinko Kreho and Nenad Veličkovič developed interpretations of the children poem Hedgehog's Home and the analysis of the systematic negligence of the work of B.Ćopić as a Yugoslav author
- Workshops with children to get the insight how the new generations read the poem and collect ideas and inputs for creating the exhibition that would be playful and kinesthetic. Workshops are organized in the Museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade (Serbia), in Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and in Ethnographical Museum in Zagreb (Croatia). The idea was to see if the literary piece is still important for the new generation of readers and how do they interpret it today.
- Workshops with students of scenography from Faculty of Applied Arts on their ideas how to transpose children poem to and exhibition
- co-creating the exhibition scenography together with the creative team (visual artists, scengrapher, architect, technician, producer and curators) based on inputs from children and student of scenography that would be a place of intergenerational encounter
- archival research dedicated to biography of Branko Čopić and the turbulent relations towards him and his work both during his life and after the end of Yugoslavia
- video archive of memories and interpretations of the poem Hedgehog's Home
- psychotherapist research and interpretation of the points of trauma in the writer's biography in the form of podcast
- series of workshops to translate the poem into Sign language and create a video with Hedgehog's Home in Sign language.
  Activities after the opening of the exhibition:
- Workshops with kids (preschool and pupils)
- Workshops with teens
- Internship for students
- Guided tours for adult audience

Challenges or problems encountered and solutions found to overcome them

- Finiding a way to display documents related to biography of the author and the poem that are open critique of the nationalistic politics in Serbia and Croatia.
- Giving the power to the representatives of Deaf community that are continuasly advocating for Sign language to become official in Serbia. Dispite the official inclusive politics that treats Deaf community with medical approach focusing on speaking teachnics in junior schools thus creating a huge gap between deaf pupils and their hearing peers considiring education level. After the great reception of their interpretation of poem in the exhibiton Local school for Deaf children made expepetion and introduced this video as a part of a offical curiculum.
- Responsibly adressing the issues of mental health and suicide since the most known and publicly abused fact about Branko Ćopić is the fact that he commited suicide.
- Changing traditional ways of creating museum exhibition.

Results and impact

Summary of the main results achieved and knowledge that has been gained. List the ways that the project/initiative contributes to the preservation and/or enhancement of the historical, cultural, environmental, educational and/or social values of the heritage in question. Mention the project's impact on conservation policy and practice, if any.

- Starting from the iconic status of the children poem Hedgehog's Home and the turbulent history of reception of this poem and its writer, this exhibition succeeded to initiate dialogue about the common heritage and its potentials to rethink our identities today, the meaning of home, relationship to the recent past, communities we belong to, xenophobia, memory, nostalgia, mental health.

- In the regional context due to turbulent recent past, this project is important as one way of reestablishing intercultural dialogue based on shared heritage and joint act of exploring multilayered values of one children's book.
- The methodology of co-creating the exhibition with children from the region, alongside a large team of experts and artists, demonstrated that both children and adults can share a meaningful museum experience when it is sensory, kinesthetic, and imaginative.
- One of the most important outcomes was contribution of Deaf community members who produced the first translation of Hedgehog's Home poem in Sign language. This video is now used by schools for deaf pupils in Serbia. Video is available online.
- The exhibition brought attention to the work of author Branko Ćopić who was neglected and forgotten as a Yugoslav and partisan writer and reduced only to children's author. New generations were introduced and inspired by this engaged intellectual who actively defended his position as a writer engaged and critical towards the society he fought for during the Second World War.
- Bearing in mind the biography of the writer, the issues of mental health, depression and suicide were raised in a responsible way, involving a conversation with psychotherapist offering a nuanced commentary on key sensitive places in Ćopić's biography, with the idea of talking about mental health openly and without stigmatization emphasizing how complex mental health is.
- Exhibition received national ICOM award for the project of the year.

Aspects of the project that can be considered innovative within its area or field.

The exhibition Hedgehog's Home – Inventing a Better World established a unique space for intergenerational encounters. Believing that children and adults could share a unique experience this exhibition was based on sensory experience and on an atmosphere that evokes a strong emotional experience. To achieve this the space was curated in collaboration with children whose opinions were essential in creating an experience intended for all visitors. By cross-referencing the results of the children's workshop and research results, the basic concept of the exhibition was set and further developed by an interdisciplinary creative team using the methodology of co-designing. The result was an exhibition that offers kinestetic experience, engages imagination and personal memories offering everyone a opportunity to create their own intimate interpretation.
As a liminal space, that can simultaneously be personal and public, the exhibition offered the potential for individual and collective (transformative) experiences.

Measures to ensure the sustainability/future viability of the project (in terms of future plans and funding).

The process of preparation of the exhibition involved a large number of associates from the region and the UK (the book is translated into English and a children's opera is produced). So the network of collaborators is helping to find the venues to host the exhibition. Most probably it will tour to Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Zagreb.
The funding for these is included into application to Ministry of Culture that is financing the Museum's programme. Museum of Yugoslavia also relies on a variety of self-generated revenue streams such as ticket and souvenir sales, cafe and venue hire. The museum also receives support from sponsors and actively pursues grant funding at national and EU levels.

Environmental sustainability of the project and contribution to climate action (in terms of results, techniques, materials employed, methodologies etc.), if relevant.

The story plot of the Hedgehog's Home is set in the forest. Recognizing the museum's responsibility to raise the environmental issue in times of a burning climate crisis one of the first decision was not to build idealized artificial green space but to use discarded ready made objects, elements of previous exhibitions, and materials that can be recycled. Furthermore, in the part of the exhibition dedicated to the poem every animal from the story got their own house. In this interpretation the wild boar lived in depony that was field with dirt, garbage and plastic bottles that could

be placed on ear to hear different sources of sound pollution turning upside down moment of hearing the inside of seashells. This interaction had even greater effect since it interfered with pleasant sound of the forest that dominated the exhibition space.

Dissemination of the project's results and knowledge gained and any outreach or educational activities.

- Museum of Yugoslavia have huge public impact and constant media coverage, but this project overcame all previous results. All national and local media covered the exhibition but also magazines and few media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. TV shows were exclusively dedicated to Hedgehog's Home and Branko Ćopić inspired by this project.
- Social networks were widely used for promotion. What set this project apart was the wealth of content created by the community (teachers, educators, parents guide profiles, teenagers shared videos and self-made guided tours or impressions from the exhibition).
- Publication with academic text from prominent authors and line of souvenirs based on exhibition design and children drawings were immensely popular.
- Exhibition was extended two times.
- Interest for the workshops reached unknown potentials since hundreds of different educational institutions all over the country organized their visit, Museum had to be open even on Mondays when it is usually closed.

Participation in the initiative (number of participants/audience/users per year and/or, in the case of websites and digital platforms, information regarding visitor numbers and online interaction).

- The exhibition attracted immense attention drawing over 150,000 visitors over nine months.
- Museum's network of teachers and educators has largely expanded.
- More than 100 workshops with preschool children, 70 workshops with school children (7 to 14 years) and 40 with high school pupils were realized.
- 40 students completed internship on this exhibition and for the first time Student club of the Museum received many new application including for the first time students of , sociology, applied arts, pedagogy and teachers college.
- More than 100 authors guided tours reached more then 900 visitors from the whole region.
- Museum ticket office reported that more than 50% of the visitors had never been to Museum before. Structure of the visit also showed increase of audience from suburban, economically poor areas with lower educational level.
- Social media activities reached many followers, but more importantly engaged a new audience to generate content inspired by the exhibition.

Involvement of youth, community, non-traditional audiences and/or people with disabilities.

Youth, community and non traditional audiences were included in this project from the very beginning when the concept of co-creation was established.

- The exhibition is made starting from ideas and drawings of kids aged 5 to 10 from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Workshops with similar methodology were organized with the students of scenography. These ideas created basic inputs for transposing the poem in the format of exhibition.
- In cooperation with deaf community and Sign language interpreter Vera Jovanović , Hedgehog's Home was translated into Sign language for the first time in the form of theatrical performance that was recorded and exhibited at the exhibition. After the ending of the project this video became a part of the curriculum in school for deaf pupils.
- The exhibition reached traditional non audience of the museum. School and preschool visits were numerous and included towns and suburbs that haven't visited the Museum before.

Contribution to intercultural dialogue and to the protection of cultural diversity.

The Hedgehog's Home is used as a memory trigger, provoking reflection on the importance of home, relationship to the recent past, others, memory, etc. The relationship to home and homeland, and to those who have or do not have a

home, appeared as unavoidable topics not only because the story itself thematises them but due to the current social circumstances, which ultimately determined and changed the relationship to the poem and writer in states formed in the post-Yugoslav context.

Believing these questions are still relevant the exhibition offered a specifically designed space, in between a documentary and an "imaginary/fictional", where the visitor could feel safe to (alone, with someone close, or with someone completely unknown) reconsider and open up some questions.

Intercultural dialogue is nurtured simply by reminding about the universal values found it the children's poem that is without doubt shared heritage in the region despite conflicts and misunderstandings.

Transferability of the initiative to other contexts and its scalability potential.

The methodology of co-creation and working with children and students from the very beginning of a creative process can be easily transfered to another context.
Effort to detect the pivotal children books and organize similar kind of collaborative research and re-interpretation including kids and young people but also a wast network of associates from different sectors, arts and disciplines can be rewarding proccess for various communities. Discovering favorite children books and trying to open topics they raise inciting intergenarational dialogue could be healing and inspiring.

Any related work that still needs to be completed, if applicable.

Many teachers asked to have access to exhibition content in a way that can be used in the classroom.

- Guided tour was documented and editing of this video is in process.
- Toolkit based on the methodology and results of this exhibition can be developed to be used by European professionals from education field focusing on usage of intangible heritage for addressing inclusion, environmental issues, mental health, suppression of xenophobia, fostering social cohesion and civic engagement. This task needs to reflect co-design methodology of this project which means including of wide network of teachers and community representatives in the series of workshops all over the region.
- Accredited seminar can be developed as a tool for a life long learning.
- The international touring of exhibition is also to be planed, and realized. So far a few institution expressed interest to host the exhibition.

European and international dimension

European significance of the project/initiative/nominee.

- Using the heritage recognized as valuable by communities to engage different groups of citizens in dialogues about issues defining our identities today, challenging and opposing the dominant nationalistic narrative.
- Raising awareness about the relationship toward home, sense of security and belonging that is crucial for each individual, relationship toward the Others, diversity, mental health, etc.
- Posing the issues of mental health, depression and suicide on responsible way on example of famous and loved writer.
- Raising awareness about climate crises through exhibition design, content and responsible production.
- Posing the dualism of a need for sense of security, wellbeing, fantasy, game and an unsafe world full of uncertainty, censorship, oppression, ecocide etc. as a main exhibition thesis
- Raising awareness of importance for adults and children sharing the same public space and contemplate on issues that fosters understanding, inclusion, and social cohesion.

Costs of the project/initiative

Costs of the project (in euro), financial and management arrangements, funding partners and/or the type of funding.

> Total project costs were 85.000 EUR. It was entirely funded by the Museum of Yugoslavia.
> The funding for this 4 year long project is received from the Ministry of Culture that is financing the Museum's programme. The Museum of Yugoslavia partly relies on a variety of self-generated revenue streams such as ticket and souvenir sales, cafe and venue hire.

Funding provided by the European Union or the EEA/Norway Grants (including programme, year and amount of the Grant), if any.

> /

Additional information

How would winning the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award benefit you, your project and/or your organisation?

> Winning the Award would be a great honor and an opportunity to share experiences and dillemas with a larger professional community. Hedgohog's Home is the most beloved book in the region and the local and regional recognition is mostly recognition to Branko Copic. EUropa Nostra Award would be a recognition to effort we made to read this clasic once again showing respect and admiration, but opening it criticaly from todays perspective.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, what will the monetary award be used for?

> The monetary award would be used for the production of material for teachers to use in the classrooms or for the seminar for teachers on how to use museums as resources for teaching focusing on the example of Hedgehog's Home and Branko Ćopić.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, who will be the recipient of the monetary award?

> Museum of Yugoslavia

How did you find out about the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Word of mouth
Is this the first time that this entry has been submitted to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Yes
On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with this online submission form?	✓ 9

Do you have any comments on the application form or suggestions that you would like to share with us?

> Some entries were lost several times probably due to bad Internet connection. Maybe the advice for applicants would be to fill in the form at the very end after preparing all the answers.

By submitting your data, photographs and other material to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards you agree to the processing and sharing of your data in accordance with Europa Nostra's	Privacy Policy	. Please check the box to indicate you agree with the Privacy Policy. ✓

Log in to european-heritage.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.



1. Hedgehog H... 2.8 MiB



2. Hedgehog's ... 7.0 MiB



3. Hedgehog H... 6.0 MiB



4. Hedgehog H... 6.1 MiB



5. Lunch at Fox'... 5.2 MiB



6. Lunch at Fox'... 5.8 MiB



7. Hedgehog H... 6.3 MiB



8. Inside of Hed... 6.8 MiB



9. Forest Mailbo... 7.1 MiB



10. Children wri... 7.8 MiB



11. Hedgehog H... 2.0 MiB



12. Hedgehog H... 1.9 MiB



13. Hedgehog H... 2.0 MiB



14. Hedgehog H... 2.0 MiB



15. Hedgehog H... 4.2 MiB



16. Hedgehog H... 2.0 MiB



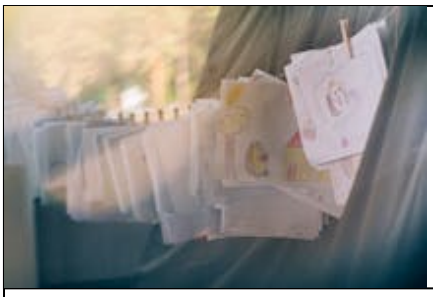
17. Hedgehog H... 2.0 MiB



18. Hedgehog H... 2.0 MiB



19. Hedgehog H... 1.9 MiB



20. Hedgehog H... 5.3 MiB



21. Hedgehog H... 6.1 MiB



22. Hedgehog H... 5.4 MiB



23. Hedgehog H... 5.8 MiB



24. Hedgehog H... 6.2 MiB



25. Hedgehog H... 6.1 MiB



26. Hedgehog H... 6.1 MiB



27. Hedgehog H... 250 KiB



28. Hedgehog H... 223 KiB



29. Hedgehog H... 210 KiB

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Photo Captions ... 16 KiB

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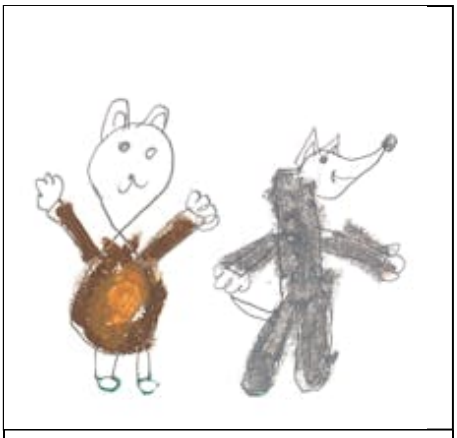
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Branko Ćopić's ... 101 KiB



autorisation for... 2.9 MiB

Attachment name
About Home

https://www.youtube.co...

Attachment name
Memories about the po...

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Attachment name
On ilustrations and ilust...

https://www.youtube.co...

Attachment name
Hedgehog's Home in Si...

https://www.youtube.co...