

Introducing Sharing Conservation Decisions Concepts into Training Programmes in Serbia

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ABSTRACT

Thanks to taking part in the Sharing Conservation Decisions 2008 course as a course assistant, the author had the opportunity to introduce SCD 2008 ideas, concepts and tools into some of the conservation training programmes carried out by the Central Institute for Conservation in Belgrade, Serbia. Some of these programmes are local workshops on preventive conservation for Serbian museums, while the others are courses held within the university programme on preventive conservation at the University of Belgrade, in collaboration with Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne.

This paper covers the results of this change in the training programmes in terms of reception of the concepts and tools introduced and their further dissemination. Special attention is given to the level of responsiveness of the participants in the preventive conservation workshops and the modifications that had to be made in order to fully adapt various conservation decisions concepts to the Serbian conservation context.

Introduction

The decision to introduce a new institution into the country's heritage preservation system raised a number of questions and dilemmas bearing in mind the economic crisis and ongoing polemics on heritage legislation issues. Simply by focusing on conservation education programmes, the Central Institute for Conservation in Belgrade (CIC) showed that there are still many gaps to be filled. Following the footsteps of the former Department for Preventive Conservation 'Diana' of the National Museum in Belgrade, the Institute further developed several conservation training programmes. The most important ones were the Master's programme at the University of Belgrade and the workshops on preventive conservation for museums in Serbia.

The establishing of a Master's programme in preventive conservation was a joint project between the University of Belgrade and the University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne in 2008. It was conceived as a multidisciplinary programme in order to facilitate implementation of a preventive conservation approach in museums, archives and libraries in the region. The curriculum is divided into modules covering six areas of interest for preventive conservation: theory of conservation, communication, collection environment, conservation management, and an optional module consisting of courses on preventive conservation of various types of collections. There is also a project, which includes a two-month internship in a museum and a final essay. The programme is aimed at museum professionals, but is also of interest to graduates of art history, archaeology, ethnology, arts and design.

The training workshops in preventive conservation started as an initiative of the Ministry of Culture as part of its decentralization strategy for the preservation of museum collections in Serbia. The workshops are organized in the local museums of five cities which are seen as regional centres. Seven thematic cycles are planned for the period from 2009 to 2012: Introduction to preventive conservation; Conservation management; Museum building; Organization of storage; Preventive conservation for exhibitions; Transport and packaging; and Emergency. There are between 10 and 20 participating museums per region,