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Museum Lab No. 1: Interpretation through Words and Technology

17th International Summer School of Museology

25–27 May 2026, Koper / Slovenia

27 May excursion to Trieste, Italy – LETS Museum

Venue: Koper Regional Museum, Koper / Slovenia

Target public: for museum professionals, curators, students of museology, conservators, and all those interested in museum work and cultural heritage

Language: English

FORUM slovanskih kultur fsk.si

European Museum Academy

Pokrajinski muzej Koper
Museo regionale di Capodistria
Koper Regional Museum

Mestna občina Koper
Comune città di Capodistria

LETS Letteratura Trieste

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Museum Lab No. 1:
Interpretation through Words and Technology

This year's **17th International Summer School of Museology** focuses on the interpretation and communication of cultural heritage in exhibitions, with particular attention to the role of language and the growing impact of contemporary technologies. From the use of words in exhibition texts to digital and interactive tools, the programme explores how meaning is shaped and conveyed to diverse audiences through lectures, discussions, hands-on workshops, and an excursion to Trieste.

Programme and Objectives

The Summer School programme is developed in collaboration with institutions that represent different perspectives and areas of expertise within the fields of museology and heritage. It is grounded in the exchange of good practices and in dialogue with European specialists whose experience spans a wide range of professional, academic, and institutional contexts. These perspectives will be shared through lectures, workshops, and discussions.

The primary aim of the Summer School is to foster communication and open debate among museum professionals, educators, and students. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about past and ongoing museum projects, explore examples of good practice, and critically reflect on the purpose of museums, their current role, and their relationship with society. Through the exchange of experiences, knowledge, strategies, and perspectives, lecturers will offer participants a broader international and contemporary understanding of museums, museology, and heritage.

1st Panel: Museums in the Digital Age – Interpreting Heritage through Technology

This panel explores how contemporary technologies are reshaping the interpretation and communication of cultural heritage, with a focus on digital tools, media, and innovative technological approaches in museums. It considers how these methods expand exhibition practices and open new possibilities for engaging audiences and mediating the relationship between objects and their meanings.

2nd Panel: Exhibiting with Words – Interpreting Heritage through Language

This panel examines the role of language in exhibitions, exploring interpretation through text, storytelling, and the presentation of literary and cultural heritage. It focuses on how words shape narratives, translate meaning, and make complex ideas accessible to diverse audiences.

Theme and Conceptual Framework

The 17th International Summer School of Museology focuses on exhibition-making as the most visible and public-facing dimension of museum work. At its core lie two closely connected practices: **interpretation** and **communication**.

> **How do museums tell stories about objects? How do they translate these stories into forms that audiences can understand? And how do they make meaning accessible, relevant, and engaging?**

Heritage is not only something we preserve – it is something we continuously reinterpret and bring to life. It exists not only in objects, but also in practices, knowledge, rituals, and stories. In today's rapidly changing world, shaped by technological and social transformation, cultural institutions are increasingly faced with an important question: **how can heritage be interpreted in ways that remain authentic while also opening space for new perspectives, dialogue, and participation?**

Exhibiting is never a neutral act. It involves selecting, framing, and presenting objects in ways that shape how they are perceived. Through exhibitions, museums narrate, explain, and contextualise heritage, transforming objects into meaningful experiences. This process includes telling stories about objects, translating those stories into accessible language, placing them within broader contexts, and communicating their significance to diverse audiences.

A central focus of this year's programme is the **role of language** in exhibitions. Participants will explore how words function at different levels: in exhibition texts, object labels, titles, catalogues, and other written forms that guide interpretation. Special attention will be given to the challenges of exhibiting literary heritage, where text itself becomes both object and medium. The programme will consider how language shapes understanding and how it can either enable or limit access to meaning. This question is especially relevant in the context of Koper, a bilingual environment in Slovenia where both Slovenian and Italian are part of everyday cultural life. It is also reflected in the practice of the Regional Museum of Koper, where the Summer School is hosted, and where interpretation often takes place across three languages – Slovenian, Italian, and English – requiring careful consideration of different audiences and modes of communication.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that not all museum institutions or exhibition contexts use language in the same way. In many exhibitions, language functions as a trusted companion to the visitor – a seemingly objective and authoritative voice that explains, contextualises, and guides interpretation. However, in the field of contemporary art, where established norms are often questioned not only through the objects on display but also through the very modes of display, language itself can become unstable, ambiguous, or deliberately self-reflective. In such contexts, exhibition texts may no longer act as reliable narrators, but rather as interpretative devices that challenge certainty, invite multiple readings, or even expose the limits of interpretation itself.

Building on this, the Summer School will also address the growing **role of contemporary technologies** in interpretation. Digital tools, multimedia, and interactive approaches offer new ways of engaging audiences, raising questions about how they complement or differ from language-based interpretation. Rather than replacing words, these approaches expand the

possibilities of communication and invite new forms of interaction and participation. Digital transformation has significantly reshaped the cultural heritage field, encouraging institutions to experiment with new formats such as film, virtual reality, interactive installations, and digital storytelling. These approaches can make heritage more accessible and engaging, while also challenging museums and galleries to reflect critically on the relationship between technology, interpretation, and audience experience.

In this context, the question of audience becomes central. Museums communicate in multiple ways: exhibitions remain the primary space where visitors encounter objects directly, while a wide range of other formats – publications, catalogues, digital media, replicas, and public programmes – extend and support this experience. Each of these forms contributes differently to how meaning is created and shared.

As museums and galleries continue to evolve, new approaches to working with objects and new relationships with audiences are emerging. **This Summer School invites participants to reflect on these changes and to explore how interpretation and communication can respond to the expectations of contemporary society.** Through lectures, discussions, workshops, and an excursion, participants will engage with both theoretical questions and practical challenges of exhibition-making today.

Workshop – Words matter

Through an interactive game, participants will explore the art of storytelling and the ways narratives shape our understanding of exhibitions and objects. Taking on the role of exhibition curators, they will become storytellers themselves, working collaboratively to experiment with different narrative techniques and forms of ekphrasis.

Excursion

The excursion to Trieste will complement this year's thematic focus through an exploration of the city's rich literary heritage and its layered cultural history. The programme will follow Trieste's literary routes through **LETS Museum – Literature Trieste**, offering participants an opportunity to encounter the city as a living cultural text and to reflect on the ways in which heritage is communicated through place, memory, and narrative. In this way, the excursion situates questions of interpretation and communication within the broader intellectual and multilingual context that has long defined Trieste.

Schedule

MONDAY, MAY 25, 2026 Venue: Koper Regional Museum, Kidričeva 19, Koper	
09.00 – 10.00	***Registration***
10.00 – 10.15	***Inaugural addresses*** **Marko Bonin**, Director, Koper Regional Museum **Andreja Rihter**, Director, Forum of Slavic Cultures
1st panel: Museums in the Digital Age – Interpreting Heritage through Technology ***Moderator: Andreja Rihter,*** *Director, Forum of Slavic Cultures*	
10.15 – 10.45	*Lecture:* ***And what about visitors? Insights and experiments from the UE project Meta-Museum*** **René Capovin,** Director, Museum of Industry and Labor in Brescia, Creator of Museums in Short
10.45 – 11.30	*Lecture:* ***Museums, Technology and the Attention Economy*** **Massimo Negri,** Scientific Director, European Museum Academy
11.30 – 12.00	*Coffee break*
12.00 – 12.30	*Lecture (online):* ***Digital Heritage Twins and the Demand for Authenticity*** **Henrik Zipsane**, Director, European Museum Academy
12.30 – 12.45	*Discussion*
12.45 – 13.45	*Lunch break*
Moderator: Živa Hanc*, Project Manager, Forum of Slavic Cultures*	
13.45 – 14.15	*Lecture:* ***Digital and User Engagement: European insights from Heritage in Motion*** **Laura Diamanti,** Multimedia Editor for the Specialist Master's Program in Contemporary Museology, IULM University; Cooperator, European Museum Academy, *Heritage in Motion Award* project

14.15 – 14.45	*Lecture:* ***When Saba reads Saba: Sound, Voice, and Digital Editions in an Immaterial Literary Museum*** **Cristina Fenu**, LETS Museum – Literature Trieste
14.45 – 15.15	*Discussion*
15.30 – 16.15	*Visit of the new* ***Cruise Terminal in Koper*** (Belveder 8-1, Koper)
16.15 – 16.45	*Coffee break*
16.45 – 17.15	*Lecture (online):* ***From 3D to XR Cultural Heritage*** **Matevž Straus,** Head of the Heritage+ programme, Arctur
17.15 – 17.45	*Lecture:* ***Museums in Motion: Society, Stories, Sustainability*** **Andreja Rihter**, Director, Forum of Slavic Cultures
17.45 – 18.00	*Discussion*
18.00 – 19.00	*Break*
19.00 – 20.00	***Networking with light refreshments*** (venue: atrium of Koper Regional Museum)

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026 Venue: Koper Regional Museum, Kidričeva 19, Koper; on field, Koper	
2nd panel: Exhibiting with Words – Interpreting Heritage through Language ***Moderator: Massimo Negri,*** *Scientific Director, European Museum Academy*	
9.30 – 10.00	*Lecture:* ***LETS DO IT – The Birth of a Literature Museum*** **Riccardo Cepach,** Creator and Manager, LETS Museum – Literature Trieste
10.00 – 10.30	*Lecture:* ***Multilingual Practice at the Koper Regional Museum*** **Marko Bonin,** Director, Koper Regional Museum
10.30 – 11.00	*Lecture:* ***Look Who's Talking: The Language In/Of Museums*** **Pavel Douša**, Deputy Director General, National Museum of Agriculture, Prague; Director, Kačina Château
11.00 – 11.30	*Discussion*
11.30 – 12.00	*Coffee break*
Moderator: Živa Hanc*, Project Manager, Forum of Slavic Cultures*	
12.00 – 12.30	*Lecture:* ***Between the Word and the Object: Language as a Carrier of Identity and Emotion in Exhibition Narratives*** **Urška Purg,** Museum Advisor, MUZA, Museum of Banking and Art Gallery
12.30 – 13.00	*Lecture:* ***Thinking Language through Languages: Rethinking Interpretation of Art through Language-Based Art*** **Kristjan Sedej,** Curator, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana
13.00 – 13.30	*Discussion*
13.30 – 15.00	*Lunch break*
15.00 – 15.30	*Discussion and workshop:* ***From Terminal to Museum: How Language Shapes the Visitor Journey*** **Andreja Rihter**, Director, Forum of Slavic Cultures

15.30 – 17.30	*Workshop:* ***Words matter*** **Pavel Douša**, Deputy Director General, National Museum of Agriculture, Prague; Director, Kačina Château
17.30 – 19.00	*Break*
19.00 – 20.00	***Networking with light refreshments*** (venue: atrium of Koper Regional Museum)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2026 Excursion to Trieste	
09.00	Departure from Koper to Trieste
09.30 – 10.00	Arrival in Trieste
10.00 – 11.30	**Guided visit to LETS Museum – Literature Trieste**
11.30 – 13.00	**Literary walk through Trieste**
13.00 – 15.30	*Free time in Trieste (individual lunch / optional independent visits)**
16.00	Departure from Trieste to Koper
17.00	Return to Koper

* **Suggestions for independent visits during free time:**

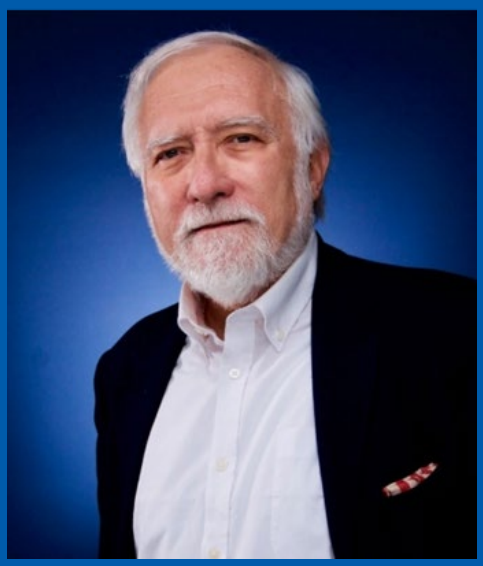
- ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion (currently showing *Exposure – The Power of Being Seen, from Harry Styles to Lady Gaga*)
- Magazzino delle Idee (currently showing *Japan. Corpi, memorie, visioni*)
- Revoltella Museum

*The programme may still be subject to changes in content and timing.

Speakers

Biographies and Lecture Abstracts

SPEAKER



Massimo Negri

Scientific Director, European Museum Academy Foundation

Museums, Technology and the Attention Economy

Attention is an economic resource and operates within a competitive market. Museums, too, are participants in this competition. The entire digital environment (both online and offline) is highly crowded and intensely competitive. The museum environment has always been subject to competition, capture, and monetization at a societal scale, whether directly or indirectly. Exhibition design is fundamentally an attentional practice. Digital devices have significantly enriched the museum environment with a range of more or less effective cognitive mechanisms, as well as intensified its competitive emotional dynamics.

Taken together, these remarks form a remarkably coherent argument: museum communication is not simply an educational or aesthetic enterprise, but an attentional one. This is true for cultural heritage in general—whether it is presented in open-air settings (such as monuments and historic sites) or housed in specific buildings (such as library archives), not to mention performative heritage (music, dance).

Consider, for a moment, attention in the context of an exhibition:

- **Orienting attention** — automatic and involuntary. The visitor's perceptual system is drawn toward stimuli that are novel, large, bright, moving, or emotionally salient. This occurs below the level of conscious control and corresponds to what cognitive psychologists describe as the orienting response.
- **Focused attention** — selective and sustained. The visitor actively directs cognitive resources toward a specific exhibit or label. This requires that the initial orienting response be reinforced by perceived relevance or interest. Without this transition, the visitor merely glances and moves on.
- **Conceptual attention** — deep processing. The visitor engages in active meaning-making: connecting new information to prior knowledge, asking questions, and forming interpretations. This is where genuine learning and attitude change occur. It is the rarest and most valuable form of visitor engagement — and the most difficult to design for.

The practical implication is that different design strategies are required at each level. What attracts orienting attention (a dramatic object, bold colour, movement) is not necessarily what sustains focused or conceptual attention. Many exhibition failures occur because designers conflate these levels — producing spectacle that captures but does not hold, or text-heavy labels that reward conceptual attention only if the visitor manages to get past the orienting stage.

Digital technology in museums can be deployed in two fundamentally different ways:

- On the one hand, it can follow the logic of the **attention merchant** — using the same techniques as commercial platforms (gamification, notifications, personalization algorithms, immersive spectacle) to maximize capture and dwell time. This may make the museum more competitive, but it risks subordinating interpretive depth to engagement metrics.
- On the other hand, technology can be designed **against** the attention economy — creating tools that slow the visitor down, reward close looking, support reflection, and protect the kind of sustained conceptual attention that is often identified as the rarest and most valuable form of visitor engagement.

Three Useful Books

- **Herbert Simon**
  Herbert Simon did not write a book titled "The Attention Economy", but he pioneered the concept in 1971, famously stating that "a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.
- **Stephen Bitgood**
  "Engaging the Visitor" (2013), focusing on the Attention-Value Model.
- **Tim Wu**
  "The Attention Merchants" (Hardcover – Deckle Edge, October 18, 2016)

A Checklist: Ask Yourself

- How many times did you look at your phone during your last museum visit?
- How much time did you spend with the "most important" artwork during that visit?
- Do you remember it?

Not to Be Forgotten

The phenomenon known as museum fatigue — first identified by Benjamin Gilman in 1916 — is not simply physical tiredness, but a progressive devaluation of exhibits as novelty wears off, cognitive capacity depletes, and the cost of further attention rises. This has direct implications for gallery sequencing, pacing, and the placement of the most important interpretive content, both in the physical space and online.
"This is the real challenge: not the lack of content, but the war for attention."

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Biography

Massimo Negri is the Scientific Director of the European Museum Academy Foundation and a member of the Scientific Committee of the Great Museum of the Duomo di Milano. Formerly Scientific Director of the Genus Bononiae Project – City Museum of Bologna. Founder and Scientific Director of the Executive Master in European Museology at the IULM University of Milan. He also teaches Museography at the State University of Padua. Consultant for museums and heritage to the Forum of Slavic Cultures Foundation (Ljubljana). European Museum Forum Director from 2000 to 2009 and member of the Jury of the European Museum of the Year Award and Council of Europe Museum Prize from 1983 to 2009. Negri has formulated the concept of several museums and temporary exhibitions. Twice a Fulbrighter at the Pennsylvania State University and at the Smithsonian Institution in the 70's. Independent museum consultant and active lecturer on industrial archaeology and museology, he has written several publications also translated into different foreign languages. In 1993 he was entitled Oficiàl de la Orden de Isabela la Catòlica. He is a founding member of the European Museum Academy Foundation (The Hague, NL) of which he was also Director until the end of 2018.

SPEAKER

Henrik Zipsane
Director, European Museum Academy

Digital Heritage Twins and the Demand for Authenticity *(online)*

Since a decade ago there are several major policy initiatives and projects running with the focus on digitisation of cultural heritage and art. Many of these are replacing the well-known physical wooden three-dimensional reconstructions which we have seen in museums during the 20th century, and which has made it possible for many to imagine how historical buildings, landscapes and machines once looked like.

There are many different stakeholders in the digitisation of heritage and art. The scientific, legal and commercial interests are making themselves seen and heard today. At the same time the original material, ruins, preserved parts of objects or texts are all material traces of the past. The visitor to a museum, an archive or a heritage site still expects that what we show can be trusted as authentic. The new technological possibilities do however challenge that in combination with the dynamics behind the interests from stakeholders.

Biography

Henrik Zipsane, director of the European Museum Academy since 2019. He was CEO 2002-2019 at Jamtli Foundation - a heritage organization in central Sweden which runs one large and three smaller museums. In 2005 he was also co-founder and then senior researcher at The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning & Creativity– a R&D organization for learning through heritage engagement. Before that Henrik Zipsane was founder and director of the immigrant's museum in Denmark.
Henrik Zipsane is adjunct professor in museum education at the University of Science and Technology in Meghalaya, and guest professor in heritage learning and regional development at Linköping University and associate expert of Pascal International Observatory as well as associate of European Expert Network on Culture and is contracted as expert on culture and adult education by the European Commission and the Swedish Government. He holds master's degree in history from The University of Copenhagen and a PhD degree in education and history from The Danish University of Education.

SPEAKER

Andreja Rihter

Director, Forum of Slavic Cultures

Museums in Motion: Society, Stories, Sustainability

My contribution is dedicated to examining the role that the historian-curator assumes when using new technologies; specifically, when it comes to the early days of VR, which gave rise to immersive visits where the visitor was no longer passive. With the use of 3D, reconstructions of objects began, or rather, digital copies emerged, which made it possible—and still do—to reconstruct historical environments and damaged artifacts.

Last but not least, we have AI, which can be a very uncomfortable tool to use in the professional work of museum curators. Finally, I'll conclude my remarks with the experience of the Heritage in Motion award.

Museum awards are more than just trophies – they are tools for strengthening our role. Most importantly, they remind us that museums are not just spaces for objects, but for people, stories, and living traditions.

Biography

Andreja Rihter, PhD, Director of FSK, author of permanent museum exhibitions, lecturer, manager, researcher, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia (4 years), museum manager for 24 years, President of the Slovenian Museum Association (4 years) and President of the European Museum Academy for 15 years. Initiator and leader of the International Summer Museum School in Celje and Piran (Slovenia, 16 years), international judge for the EMA Awards (16 years) and the initiator and leader of the ŽIVA Award for the Best Slavic Museum (12 years). As a politician (8 years) mainly involved in the work of the Assembly of the Council of Europe, Sub-Chair of the Sub-Committee on Cultural Heritage (2010–2011) and preparation of the Expert Historian, Council of Europe (5 years). Her work spans the field of audience development: young people up to 14 years of age, as she is the founder of the Children's Museum in Slovenia and was Vice President of the Hands On! Association (3 years). For the past 14 years she has been the general manager of the FSK International Foundation, where she is the author of several projects. Her work is mainly related to the international leadership, moderation and mentoring of educational colloquia for curators and, in the last three years, for colleagues from Ukraine. Her professional work is complemented by some 230 original articles and contributions.

SPEAKER

Laura Diamanti

Multimedia Editor for the Specialist Master's Programme in Contemporary Museology, IULM University;
Project Collaborator for the Heritage in Motion Award, European Museum Academy

Digital and user engagement: European insights from Heritage in Motion

This presentation examines user engagement in digital cultural heritage through the lens of Heritage in Motion (HIM), the international award for the best multimedia projects on cultural heritage, now in its 12th edition and co-managed by the Forum of Slavic Cultures (FSK) and the European Museum Academy (EMA). Drawing on the observation of hundreds of projects submitted from around the world, it proposes a reading of engagement not as a quantitative measure — clicks, views, downloads — but as a meaningful relationship between cultural institutions and their audiences. Four recurring forms of engagement are identified: active participation, where users act within the experience; emotional involvement, through digital storytelling; co-creation, with direct community contribution; and accessibility and inclusion, as a condition for the democratisation of heritage access. Each dimension is illustrated with examples drawn from recent HIM award winners.

Biography

Laura Diamanti is an expert in the design and management of cultural projects at both national and international levels, with a focus on the enhancement of historical heritage. She has coordinated the restoration and museum development of historical buildings, contributing to the creation of significant exhibition spaces. She has experience in research on museology and cultural heritage communication. She currently is the Coordinator for the Heritage in Motion Award and she is also a member of the international jury for the Children in Museums Award.

SPEAKER

Pavel Douša
Deputy Director General, National Museum of Agriculture, Prague;
Director, Kačina Château

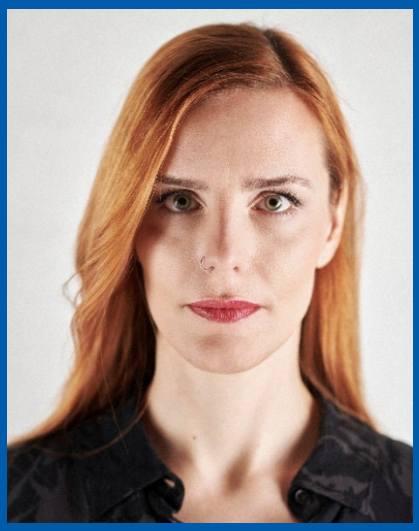
The Language In/Of Museums

This lecture explores the topics of the museum's language and language within the museums. It begins by defining literary and language museums, but focuses primarily on the politics of memory and the linguistic diversity of museums and their visitors. It asks whether the museum and the visitor speak a common language. It asks who speaks in the museum and how, and who listens and in what way. In which situations might a museum (or a visitor) fall silent? What are the limits and boundaries of language in the museum? What are the common characteristics of language and museums which each in their own way preserve social and cultural values? From a linguistic perspective, what does it mean when a museum communicates, and with whom does it engage in dialogue? The lecture also introduces ekphrasis as a literary description of a (visual) artwork that aims to convey to the reader not only a physical description of a painting or sculpture but also its effect on the viewer. The lecture further explores language as a form of intangible cultural heritage and reflects on the influence of modern technologies.

Biography

Pavel Douša, PhD, is a Deputy Director General of the National Agriculture Museum Prague and a director of Kačina Chateau. He is an experienced manager and scientist in the field of museology, cultural heritage and history. He worked as a Deputy for Business Development at the National Museum Prague, as a Director of the Historical Museum and a Deputy Director of Communications at Prague Zoo. He works as a museology lecturer of the Universities. In his professional activities he engages in museology, presentation of cultural heritage, collections management and management of digital content. He is a member of several scientific, expert or advisory boards and he participates in solution of developing museum projects.

SPEAKER



Urška Purg
Museum Advisor and Curator, MUZA Museum and Gallery;
Chair, ICOM Slovenia

Between the Word and the Object: Language as a Carrier of Identity and Emotion in Exhibition Narratives

The lecture explores the role of language within the museum space as a fundamental tool for establishing dialogue and transforming social narratives. Exhibition texts and titles transcend their purely informative function, becoming conduits for personal stories, emotions, and identity. Using the Money and Crime exhibition as a case study, it demonstrates how carefully considered rhetoric serves as a preventative tool which, rather than inciting fear, encourages empowerment and dismantles the stigmas often faced by victims of fraud. Here, language bridges historical experience with contemporary security challenges. Conversely, the Up YU Go! exhibition employed language as an intimate medium for recounting the life stories of immigrants. Through personal testimonies, language humanises the processes of integration and the search for belonging, whilst simultaneously prompting a reflection on identity by critiquing social labelling. In the hands of a curator, language is a strategic building block that transforms the visitor's experience from passive observation into a profound personal journey, where words breathe life into the exhibits.

Biography

Urška Purg is a museum advisor and curator at the MUZA Museum and Gallery. A social pedagogue, and ethnologist and cultural anthropologist by training, she has been active in the museum sector since 2013. Her professional work encompasses various international projects, with a particular focus on difficult heritage, experimental museology, participation, inclusion, and oral history.
Since 2017, she has held active roles within national and international museum organisations, including ICOM Slovenia, the Slovene Museum Association, and ICOM SEE. She currently serves as the Chair of ICOM Slovenia.

SPEAKER

René Capovin

Director, musil – Museum of Industry and Labour of Brescia

And What About Visitors? Insights and Experiments from the EU Project Meta-Museum

The experience of real visitors in museums is the permanent focus of a large number of studies, surveys, and museological articles. When and why did the impact of museums on their users become so relevant? And what really happens in the minds and bodies of visitors?
The history of museums and the work of Kenneth Hudson help us recognize the origins and reasons behind this current mantra. The EU project META-MUSEUM is trying to measure the emotional state of visitors through innovative methodologies and pilot studies: resilience, confidence, and well-being are the focus of reflection and experimentation.

Biography

Director of musil – Museum of Industry and Labour of Brescia (Italy). Founder of the contest *Museums in Short* (www.museumsinshort.eu), dedicated to videos realized by and for museums. Member of the Judges' Panel of the *European Museum Academy* (NL). Previously member of the Board of *Europeana Foundation – The European Digital Library* (Den Haag) and elected as councillor of *Europeana Association*.
PhD in Philosophy, Master in Museology, he has published articles on cultural and political issues. Some publications: Entry "Postmodernism", for *Encyclopedia - Research Methods Foundations*, P.A. Atkinson, S. Delamont, R. Williams, A. Cernat (ed), SAGE, 2019; "Questioni di spazio. Olivetti attraverso Sloterdijk", in *Ospite Ingrato. Umanesimo e tecnologia. Il laboratorio Olivetti*, Quodlibet, 2021, pp. 39-46; "Alle origini: dalle esposizioni internazionali ai musei d'impresa", in: M. Negri, *Esporre / Interpretare / Comunicare. Come realizzare un museo d'impresa*, Rubettino, 2024, pp. 11-15; R. Capovin, M. Latini (ed.), *Robert Musil. Geometries of the soul*, Cultura Tedesca, n. 69, 2025.

SPEAKER

Riccardo Cepach

Creator and Manager, LETS Museum – Literature Trieste

LETS DO IT – The Birth of a Literature Museum

Building on the experience gained over more than twenty years of the Svevo Museum's existence – founded in 1997 and joined in 2004 by the Joyce Museum – the LETS Museum – Letteratura Trieste takes on the challenge of presenting to the public the literary art – which a museum visitor cannot experience directly – of a region that, for many different reasons, produced great literature throughout the twentieth century and continues to do so today. Through a comparison with other similar initiatives in Italy and Europe, and by reconstructing its planning and implementation phases, this report aims to outline the narrative and exhibition concepts behind the new museum complex which, in addition to the refurbished Svevo and Joyce museums, also houses a space dedicated to the poet Umberto Saba and a large gallery dedicated to the other authors, movements and experiences that have made Trieste a legendary hub of European modernist literature.

Biography

A native of Trieste, **Riccardo Cepach** holds a PhD in Italian Studies and is the author of numerous books, essays and articles, conferences, exhibitions and audiovisual works on literary topics. He is the creator and manager of LETS – Letteratura Trieste Museum (https://lets.trieste.it), which houses the Svevo Museum, the Joyce Museum and the Saba Museum. He has collaborated on the creation of Trieste's cultural itineraries (www.triestemetro.eu), with a particular focus on the literary trail, works as the artistic director of the festivals "Bloomsday. Una festa per Joyce" and "Buon Compleanno Svevo" and has dealt on several occasions with the explorer and orientalist Richard Francis Burton, about whom he also wrote and directed a documentary (*Il leone e la leonessa. Vita di Sir Richard Burton e di sua moglie Isabel*, 2010). His publications include: *Quanto hai lavorato per me, caro Fortuna! Lettere e amicizia fra Umberto Saba e Aldo Fortuna* (2007), *Guarire dalla cura. Italo Svevo e la medicina* (2008), *Alla peggio andrò in biblioteca. I libri ritrovati di Italo Svevo* (2013). In 2023, the centenary year of *La Coscienza di Zeno, La Funzione S. e altri esperimenti di critica sveviana* and *Ultima Sigaretta. Italo Svevo e il buon proposito* was published.

SPEAKER

Cristina Fenu

Co-curator, LETS Museum – Literature Trieste

When Saba reads Saba: Sound, Voice, and Digital Editions in an Immaterial Literary Museum

LETS – Letteratura Trieste is a literary museum whose heritage is essentially intangible: words, voices, and texts. In this context, sound and digital technologies become the primary means of exhibition. This paper presents LETS as a case study in sound-based curatorial practice, adopting the concept of the "exhibition score" to analyse three levels of its soundscape: reconstructed historical environments; multilingual readings performed by actors in the languages of Trieste's literary heritage; and the recorded voice of Umberto Saba, which characterises the museum section dedicated to the poet and is currently being integrated into the digital edition of his *Canzoniere* (1900–1920). Each level raises distinct questions, from the status of reconstructed sound as historical evidence to the tension between documented voice and interpretation. Through audio excerpts, the paper reflects on how sound functions as a central mode of literary mediation.

Biography

Cristina Fenu is a Librarian and Head of Communication and Digitalisation for Trieste's municipal libraries and literary museums, and Coordinator of Digital Humanities projects. She is co-curator of LETS – Letteratura Trieste, the literary museum inaugurated in 2024 by the Municipality of Trieste, where she develops multimedia content, including historical soundscapes and multilingual audio installations. She holds two MAs in Digital Humanities (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 2016; University of Milan, 2026, with a focus on Natural Language Processing) and an MA in Textual Scholarship and Digital Editing (University of Siena, 2020). She coordinates LETSdigit, the digital scholarly edition of Umberto Saba's manuscript *Canzoniere* (1919–1920). Her previous work includes augmented reality exhibitions at the Svevo Museum in Trieste and the TriesteMetro cultural itineraries project. She has published on AR design for literary museums in the "International Journal of Human-Computer Studies" (Elsevier, 2018).

SPEAKER

Foto: Asiana Jurca Avci / (c) Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

Kristjan Sedej

Curator, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

Thinking Language through Languages: Rethinking Interpretation of Art through Language-Based Art

Since the 1960s, language has influenced the development of contemporary art, both as artistic material and as a tool for deconstructing language and content. Earlier art discourse and criticism used language to translate and stabilise artworks' visual meaning, often by reading them through pre-established narratives or texts. In contrast, contemporary art questions these models. By using and subverting language, artists create works with open-ended readings, sometimes explicitly rejecting fixed interpretations. In such cases, language can often no longer function as an exhaustive explanatory tool for examining complex artistic strategies. Instead, it can serve as a starting point for inclusive meaning-making and interpretation within museum contexts, enabling dialogue between art, viewers, and institutions.

In this contribution, I examine the differences between the interpretations of contemporary language-based artworks and historical models of interpretation. By examining the models and structures artists and writers use to construct an artwork's interpretation, I analyse the potential to reframe the function of interpretation when working with contemporary language-based works in museum settings. Rather than producing exhaustive, fixed readings, contemporary practices position interpretation as a negotiated process between the artwork, the audience, and the institution. To demonstrate this, I consider selected examples of contemporary language-based works by Maja Bajević, Andrea Knezović, Mladen Stilinović, and others that exemplify open and participatory models of interpretation. By engaging with such strategies, I claim that these practices shift interpretation from a model of explanation to one of participation, highlighting the viewer's active role while challenging historically conditioned frameworks of meaning-making in museums.

Biography

Kristjan Sedej is an art historian and curator of exhibitions and collections at the Moderna galerija in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He holds an MA in Art History from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. His research focuses on contemporary art practices, particularly the relationships between artistic practices and strategies, critical discourses such as decolonialism and ecocriticism, and the history of aesthetic theory.

SPEAKER

Marko Bonin
Director, Koper Regional Museum

Multilingual Practice at the Koper Regional Museum

Within the activities of the Koper Regional Museum, located in a bilingual environment, all exhibition texts and related materials are prepared at least in two languages (Slovenian and Italian), while additional world languages are used depending on the needs of specific exhibitions (English, German, French, etc.). The museum functions as a vibrant cultural hub, hosting events and concerts, and serving as an open space for a dynamic cultural life in Koper. Through its multilingual accessibility, it represents a model of good practice in a bilingual context. The museum also plays an important role in interpreting the broader regional history, particularly through its permanent exhibitions and cooperation with cultural stakeholders in the Municipality of Koper. It is a key point of contact for approximately 100,000 cruise ship visitors annually, contributing significantly to the presentation of the region's cultural heritage.

Biography

Marko Bonin has been employed at the Koper Regional Museum (Pokrajinski muzej Koper) since 2010. He worked as a curator of cultural history until 2022, when he became the Director of the museum. In his curatorial role, he was responsible for the collections of weapons, lighting, clocks, furniture, pharmacy, and music. During an interim period, he also headed the Department of Modern History and worked on various museum projects. During his studies, he worked at the Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum in Piran as a guide to the museum collections and participated in the international INTERREG III project. He completed an Erasmus exchange at the Maritime Museum in Barcelona. He is a member of the Presidency of the Association of Slovene Museums and serves on various professional committees.

SPEAKER

Matevž Straus

Head of the Heritage+ programme, Arctur

From 3D to XR Cultural Heritage *(online)*

Matevž Straus (Arctur) explores the intersection of cultural heritage and cutting-edge technologies. Drawing on his extensive experience in digital storytelling, he demonstrates how virtual reality, holograms, and 3D modelling can bring forgotten stories to life for contemporary audiences and travellers. Beyond the "wow factor," Matevž also addresses scepticism within the heritage sector, challenging common myths that technology is prohibitively expensive, overly complex, or that history itself is "boring."

Biography

Matevž Straus is the Head of the Heritage+ programme at Arctur in Nova Gorica, with more than a decade of experience at the intersection of cultural heritage, social innovation, and digital technologies. He holds an MA in Urban Studies from the universities of Brussels, Vienna, Madrid, and Copenhagen, as well as an MA in Marketing Communications from the University of Ljubljana. Matevž is also the co-founder and director of the private institute ID20 in Idrija, where he primarily focuses on the development of social innovations based on cultural heritage.

General Information

TARGET AUDIENCE

The 17th International School of Museology is intended for museum professionals, curators, conservators, students of museology, and all those interested in museum practice and cultural heritage.

The programme will be conducted in English.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Deadline for early bird registration *(for non-speakers)*: **10 April 2026**
- Deadline for registration *(for non-speakers)*: **15 May 2026**

REGISTRATION

Please fill out the online registration form available **HERE** if you would like to join the 17th International Summer School of Museology.

Please note that the number of participants is limited to 25 people.

PARTICIPATION FEE

The early bird registration closes on **10 April 2026**, and regular registration on **15 May 2026** (or earlier if the programme is fully booked).

The participation fee includes materials, coffee breaks with light refreshments, a light dinner, and an excursion to Trieste on 27 May 2026, but does not cover accommodation.

- Standard rate: **120 EUR**
- Student rate: **80 EUR**
- FSK Member rate (discount 50%): **60 EUR**

Are you eligible for the **Early Bird Discount** (20% off all applicable fees)?

The Early Bird Discount is applied to the selected rate above. This means 20% off the Standard Rate, or 20% off the already reduced rate for Students and FSK Members. You will receive a confirmation of the **final price** (with all discounts included) by email (ziva.hanc@fsk.si) before proceeding with payment.

Not a FSK member yet? *

Full price applies to participants from institutions that are not members of the Forum of Slavic Cultures (FSK). **FSK members are entitled to a 50% discount on the standard fee.**

Take advantage of the opportunities to cooperate with the FSK and more than 1300 partners from Slavic countries and beyond. Join educational and training programs, get involved in new projects, studies and research, increase your visibility in the national and international space, strengthen your professional skills, share knowledge and experience, encourage intercultural dialogue, promote yourself and your organization.

FSK Membership exclusive privileges:

- discount on Živa Award conference,
- discount on International Colloquium Piranova,
- free FSK publications.

Read more about FSK membership HERE!

Cancellation Policy

Notification of cancellation must be made in writing, and sent to the e-mail address: ziva.hanc@fsk.si.

- Cancellations received on or before **10 April 2026**: Full refund
- Cancellations received after **10 April 2026**: 50% refund

No refund will be granted after **1 May 2026**.

PAYMENT INFO

You will receive a confirmation of the final price (with all discounts included) by email after you have completed the registration. After that kindly transfer the participation fee to the bank account listed below, using the reference "**International Summer School of Museology 2026**", and email a copy of the payment confirmation to the Forum of Slavic Cultures at ziva.hanc@fsk.si.

- **Bank name:** UniCredit Banka Slovenija d.d., Šmartinska 140, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija
- **Account holder:** Mednarodna ustanova Forum slovanskih kultur
- **Account holder address:** Ulica 27. aprila 47, 1000 Ljubljana
- **IBAN:** SI56 2900 0005 0604 466
- **SWIFT / BIC:** BACXSI22

Organizers

Forum of Slavic Cultures brings together and celebrates the richness of Slavic cultures, sciences, and arts, highlighting their creative powers and heritage. Founded in 2004 as a non-profit, non-governmental organization, the Forum unites Slavic-speaking countries in a dynamic international network, fostering meaningful cultural dialogue on the global stage. Through collaboration and cultural initiatives, we strengthen connections in heritage, literature, education, and the arts, working to enhance the presence and influence of Slavic cultures in Europe and beyond. Committed to creating opportunities for Slavic artists, scholars, and professionals, we provide a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and creative partnerships. Our work is guided by a deep respect for diversity, the equality of all cultural and artistic expressions, and the promotion of active intercultural dialogue. By shaping progressive cultural policies, we contribute to the social, cultural, and sustainable development of Europe.

European Museum Academy is a volunteer society of museum experts from different national and cultural backgrounds, united for the advancement of knowledge in museology. The work of EMA is based on a curriculum of proved capacity in developing and managing innovative museum projects. Museums are a relevant tool to confront socioeconomic and cultural challenges in contemporary society. The Academy subscribes to the role of the modern museum as a meeting place and a forum for the development of scientific debate, creativity, social cohesion and cultural dialogue.

Koper Regional Museum is a public institution founded by the Municipality of Koper. It has public authorization to perform public museum duties. This is the largest museum in Slovenian Istria with rich collections, from the prehistorical period to the glamour of the Venetian era and more recent history, and with an ethnological collection located in the separate ethnological department on Gramsci Square in Koper.

LETS – Letteratura Trieste is a museum housed within the historic Biblioteca Hortis, the public library that preserves the book and documentary heritage of the city of Trieste, where museums dedicated to the writers Italo Svevo and James Joyce had already been established. Opened in September 2024, LETS also houses a space dedicated to the poet Umberto Saba, a space for historical exploration (the so-called 'History Newsstand'), a large gallery dedicated to the region's leading writers and poets, and the 'Cinematograph of Stories', a video room where visitors can watch clips from films adapted from the works of Trieste's authors. The museum promotes a wide range of activities, including the historic events "Bloomsday, una festa per Joyce", "Buon Compleanno Svevo" and the "Premio Saba Poesia", and hosts a large number of meetings with authors, book presentations, round-table discussions, conferences, theatrical and musical performances.

About Koper

The city of Koper, known as Capodistria in Italian, developed on a former island along the northwestern Istrian coast. Its elliptical shape and central hill provided a strategic location that shaped early settlement and urban growth. The beginnings of settlement on the island of Koper date back to the time of the Roman Empire. The existence of a Roman settlement on the site of present-day Koper is confirmed by archaeological finds that can be dated to Late Antiquity. In the 6th century, the area was occupied by the Byzantines, and Koper became an early Christian town with its own bishopric. Throughout the Middle Ages, Koper thrived as a dynamic and expansive city, attracting immigrants from all social classes and cultivating an influential elite comparable to those in Zadar and Dubrovnik. A recent comparison of urban areas in the Adriatic region between the 11th and 16th centuries confirmed that Koper ranked among the largest cities on the coast during that period.

Today, Koper is the fifth-largest city in Slovenia and the main urban centre of the Slovene coast. It is home to the country's only commercial and container port, a vital contributor to the national economy. After World War I, Koper was assigned to Italy, but in 1954, following the dissolution of the Free Territory of Trieste, it became part of Yugoslavia. This transition triggered a significant demographic shift, as most of the Italian population left the city. Since Slovenia's independence in 1991, Koper has remained the nation's sole commercial port.

The municipality is home to a predominantly Slovene population alongside an autochthonous Italian minority, both of whom, within a bilingual environment, continue to preserve their languages and cultural traditions on an equal footing.

About Trieste

Trieste, Trst in Slovenian, is a city of layered identities, where Mediterranean openness meets the historical imprint of the Habsburg world. As a former imperial free port and a major cultural crossroads linking Central Europe, the Balkans, and the Adriatic, it developed as a place of intense movement, multilingual exchange, and intellectual life. Jan Morris famously described it as the "natural capital" of the "nation of nowhere" – a phrase that captures Trieste's in-between character and enduring cultural complexity.

At the same time, Trieste cannot be understood without acknowledging the long and significant presence of the Slovene community, which has played a vital role in shaping the city's cultural and institutional landscape. This became particularly visible in the post-war period, when exhibitions and cultural initiatives often also functioned as acts of public visibility, cultural affirmation, and representation.

For this year's Summer School, Trieste offers an especially rich setting for reflecting on interpretation and communication across different historical, linguistic, and cultural contexts. Its literary history is singular in the European context: a multilingual and transnational tradition deeply inscribed in the city's urban fabric. As one of the cradles of modernism and a meeting point of Italian, Slovene, Central European, and Mediterranean cultural currents, Trieste gave rise to an extraordinary constellation of writers, including Italo Svevo, Umberto Saba, James Joyce, Scipio Slataper, Boris Pahor, Vladimir Bartol, and Claudio Magris. Their works – shaped by questions of identity, border, memory, and belonging – remain inseparable from the streets, squares, and everyday spaces of the city itself.

Participant guide

As we approach the start of the programme, we would like to share some important practical information regarding your travel, accommodation, and participation in the accompanying activities.

The participation fee includes all school materials as well as the excursion on the last day of the school. Participants are kindly asked to arrange and cover their own travel and accommodation expenses for the duration of the summer school. The main programme will take place in Koper, the main urban centre of the Slovene coast. The excursion on Wednesday, May 27, will take place in Trieste.

For more information on the programme of the school, please contact: ziva.hanc@fsk.si

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How to reach Koper?

1) **By Plane**

Koper doesn't have its own airport, but it is accessible from several nearby international airports:

- Ljubljana Airport (LJU), Slovenia (approx. 1,5 hours by car)
- Trieste Airport (TRS), Italy (1 hour by car)
- Venice Marco Polo Airport (VCE), Italy (2 hours by car)
- Pula Airport (PUY), Croatia (1,5 hours by car)

From any of these airports, you can take a shuttle service (e.g. GoOpti), rent a car, or use public transport to reach Koper.

2) **By Train**

Trains from Ljubljana to Koper operate several times a day, with a journey time of approximately 2.5 to 3 hours. Please note that the trip often includes a stop in Divača, where you will need to transfer from train to bus (this connection is included in the train ticket).

Please note that the most convenient way to travel from Trieste Centrale railway station to Koper (using public transport) is by bus or a shuttle service.

3) **By Bus**

Buses run frequently from Ljubljana, Trieste, and other regional cities. Operators include Nomago, Arriva, and FlixBus.

Journey time from Ljubljana: approx. 2 hours.

4) **By Car**

Koper is easily accessible by highway.

From Ljubljana: Follow the A1 motorway south-west toward the coast (approx. 1 hour by car)

From Italy (Trieste): Cross the border at Škofije.

Parking is available in and around the city centre and near hotels.

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Where to stay?

Koper offers a variety of accommodation options, below is a short list of recommended places to stay, all located within reasonable distance from the conference venue:

- Hostel Museum: https://hostel-museum.com/ (right next to the Regional Museum)
- Hotel Veneziana: https://www.casaveneziana.si/ (10-minute walk from the Regional Museum)
- Grand Koper Hotel: https://www.grandkoper.com/sl/ (5-minute walk from the Regional Museum)
- Hotel BIO Koper: https://www.hotel-bio.com/ (approximately 30 minutes on foot from the museum and city centre)

We also recommend checking Booking.com for additional accommodation options.

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Where to eat?

Please note that while the programme includes a lunch break, lunch itself is not provided.

Here are some recommended spots within a short walking distance from the venue, offering a range of local flavours and casual dining experiences:

- Capra Restaurant & Pizzeria Caprizza (5-minute walk)
- Folpo (5-minute walk, located on the seafront)
- Golden Loggia Koper (located on the main city square)
- Gostilna Pri Tinetu (5-minute walk, located on Gortanov trg)
- Tabot Ištrarija (5-minute walk, located on Čevljarska ulica)

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Contact

For any additional information and assistance, do not hesitate to contact us at ziva.hanc@fsk.si, +386 30 391 930.