

## PROVENANCE OF KNOWLEDGE: FROM DOCUMENTATION TO COMMUNICATION IN VARIOUS MEDIA: CASE STUDY OF THE ZAGREB CITY MUSEUM POSTER COLLECTION

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The objective of this project is to leverage various media platforms to present the breadth of the Zagreb City Museum Poster Collection through: printed catalogue, interactive multimedia interpolated in the permanent exhibition and online catalogue enriched with contextual information and multiple interpretative layers.

The collection management system provides mechanisms of documentation of provenance of knowledge and preservation of referred sources (e.g. references to bibliographical sources, museum objects and personal communications).

As a result of detailed primary research documented in collection management system, the printed catalogue includes information on ca 350 posters and is equipped with more than 200 bibliographical units.

The interactive multimedia platform interpolated in the museum's permanent exhibition provides not only visual representation and interpretative information about the posters but also a unique insight into Zagreb's societal, economic and political context from the period from 1910 to 1996. Various sources related to each poster include information about e.g. authors' lives, printing houses, event context, etc. Posters, which relate to various topics and events, are presented in a chronological order, which enables understanding of the city's broader societal evolution. Furthermore, the interactive timeline includes original photographs of posters placed in Zagreb streets and squares, providing additional insight to the changes of the urban landscape throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Keywords: Poster, Permanent Exhibition, Documentation, Interactive Multimedia, Provenance of Knowledge

### 1 Introduction

The Zagreb City Museum set up its permanent exhibition in 1998. The permanent exhibition items were set up in chronological order, yet grouping was based within the specific theme. There are 45 themes that demonstrate how Zagreb has expanded. Following the approach of so called "New Museology" the concept aimed at "visitor / ideas - oriented museum".

The last theme "Reflections of events in Zagreb in 20<sup>th</sup> century" was presented by exhibiting 100 posters (see Fig. 1) in a setting resembling real public spaces.



**Fig. 1.** The Zagreb City Museum permanent exhibition - theme "Reflections of events in Zagreb in 20<sup>th</sup> century"

The basic idea behind the exhibition set-up was to display as many posters as possible, using the diversity criteria. Diversity here meant distinctive messages conveyed through time, like some kind of a time machine that showed what life was like in Zagreb in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, viewed through this typically urban medium. As the approach resulted in a rich view of Zagreb's social events, this created the most realist and genuine insight into the prevalent lifestyle topics existing within 20<sup>th</sup> century context, transferred from a daily public environment into a museum environment.

Presentation of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a bit reduced, due to space and items limitations. However, the last theme still succeeded to summarize in one place numerous events that were advertised on the posters.

To maintain the genuine experience, the posters were the only exhibits in permanent display without object captions, having in mind that they convey the messages very clearly (see Fig. 2). In most cases the graphic design of posters served well enough as communication media for visual and textual narration. In this way posters - urban media phenomena of the 20<sup>th</sup> century act as material and art testimonies of everyday life in Zagreb in their secondary context at a city museum, a social history museum, in the sense of time and place.



Fig. 2. Presentation of posters on the Zagreb City Museum permanent exhibition

## 2 Documentation of the collection

The value of the Zagreb City Museum posters fund was estimated in 1994 when they were researched and documented, followed by restoration. The objective was to feature them within 20<sup>th</sup> century topic and to make them a part of the new permanent exhibit.

Numerous posters that had been stored in the museum now became a museum objects and their growing number gradually defined the collection. New research showed that some posters were a rarity, registered for the first time in Croatian poster art.

Furthermore, from their documentary value viewpoint, these posters have become a source of contextual interpretation of a cultural history segment presenting what life in Zagreb looked like. From the artistic value viewpoint, as a graphic design medium, they have substantially increased some authors' opuses, lead to the discovery of new authors and demonstrated technical proficiency of Zagreb printing houses at the time.

The Modulor++ collection management system provides mechanisms for the documentation of provenance of knowledge and preservation of referred sources (e.g. references to bibliographical sources, museum objects and personal communications) via Reference information group (see Fig. 3)). All interpretative information is documented to provide the foundation for and encourage other authors' future analysis and communication in various media.

The screenshot displays the Modulator++ interface for managing collections. On the left, a sidebar lists various data groups (SKUPINE PODATAKA) such as Vrsta/Naziv, Naslovi, Opis, Reference, Izrada, Mjere, Materijali i tehnike, Natpisi i oznake, Dijelovi i komponente, Stanje, Nabava, Uporaba i povijest, Izložbe, Procjena, Smještaj, Razdoblje / Stil / pravac, Identifikacijski brojevi, Inventarizacija, Nalazišta, and Multimedia, each with a count. The main area is divided into several sections: 'Vrsta/Naziv' with fields for 'Naziv' (plakat) and 'Vrsta naziva' (književni naziv); 'Naslovi' with 'Naslov' (Zakaj niš ne igra u kinima) and 'Vrsta naslova' (opisni n.); 'Opis' with a detailed description of the poster's history and design; 'Reference' with a list of references including a bibliography entry and a URL; and a 'Reference' section with a detailed note about the poster's history. On the right, there are additional fields for 'Inv. oznaka' (MGZ 8472), 'Zbirka' (Zbirka slikarstva, grafike i primijenjene), 'Mapa', and a 'Sadržajna obrada (teme)' section with tags like 'oglašavanje', '1973', and 'Zagreb'. At the bottom right, a 'Kataloška jedinica' section provides a summary of the object.

Fig. 3. Example of object record in Modulator++ collections management system

### 3 Reuse of information and digitised content and some specifics of communication in various media

In 2018, posters collection curator Željka Kolveshi finished a long-term project of interpretation and presentation of posters with the intent to transfer knowledge and to communicate to wider audience accommodating specific features of the three different types of media: printed catalogue, interactive multimedia integrated into the permanent exhibition and online catalogue.

Those types of communication media have some specific ways of presentation and interaction with users, but they share common content and common idea, regardless of whether they are physical or digital. Maja Šojat-Bikić has covered both ideas on the example of digital communication:

“Digital communication of heritage, like any cultural-historical phenomenon, is not formed out of vacuum. It is the product of past and current thinking about the organization, storage and communication of cultural heritage with the aim of creating and maintaining personal and collective memories and identities. The key features of new information and communication technology in comparison to the older mediums is the ability to integrate different media and content, processing large amounts of information at higher speeds and connections of users and heritage, regardless of the space-time constraints.” (Šojat-Bikić 2011)

In next chapters, authors would like to present some of the particularities of communication of object information, contextual information and multiple interpretative layers, in various media.

#### 3.1 Printed catalogue

Printed catalogue with more than 300 posters came out as a result of research work and applied methodology. Most of the primary research results are documented in the collection management system. The catalogue is equipped with more than 200 notes referring to a much bigger number of bibliographical units, sources (e.g. published and non-published archive material and newspapers), references and web sources.



The concept or the printed catalogue structure offers the interpretation of knowledge based on documentary evidence (see Fig. 4). Random<sup>1</sup> or parallel<sup>2</sup> history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Zagreb has been achieved as a final goal by juxtaposing the visual evidence, graphic design of the poster, and contextual interpretation of supporting historical evidence related to each item on the list. Using the principle of constructivist methodology brought to light the multifaceted background of the posters. So called parallel history approach that was applied to research of this poster collection gave a frame to Zagreb eligible history although it was made by chance. The provenance of knowledge was derived by leveraging related data from the museum documentation.



Fig. 4. Posters and contextual information in the printed catalogue

### 3.2 The interactive multimedia application interpolated in the museum's permanent exhibition

With the intent of modernizing the permanent exhibition and raising level and scope of content interpretation, related to the displayed posters in the theme 45 "Reflections of events in Zagreb in the 20<sup>th</sup> century" an interactive application is interpolated and enables information access on several levels, from basic to advanced, depending on users curiosity. Authors of this paper would like to present on this occasion, first of all, their joint work on the creation of the interactive multimedia application. Željka Kolveshi was responsible for the documentation, research work and knowledge transfer concept in communication through interactivity, which Goran Zlodi has achieved in the multimedia application.

This new medium, so close to modern users' practice, has been engaged not only as informational and technology innovation in the permanent exhibition from 1998, but also as a quality improvement with features to show, navigate and search numerous data in several categories. The data is based on the research and formation of contextual cultural history content for every poster, appreciating Zagreb's social history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the added value of linking functional search in several directions.

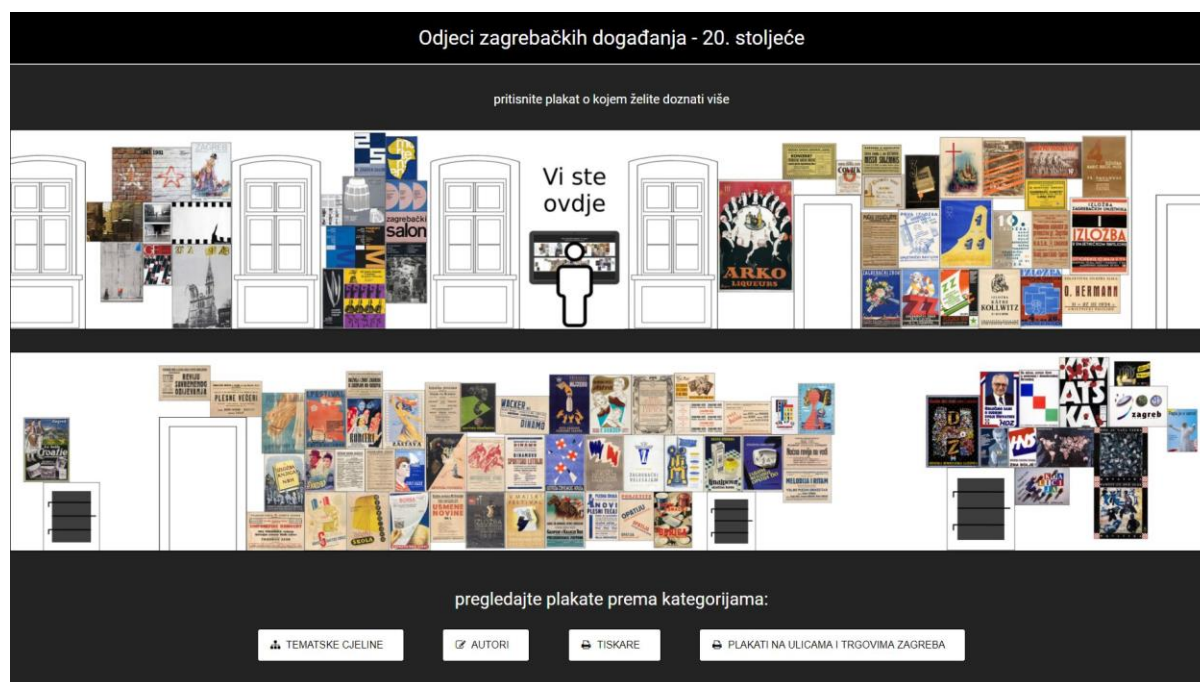
The interactive multimedia application interpolated in the museum's permanent exhibition provides not only visual representation and interpretative information about the posters but also a unique insight into Zagreb's societal, economic and political context from the period from 1910 to 1996. The historical evidence related to each poster includes information about, e.g. authors' lives, printing houses, event context, etc. The interactive

<sup>1</sup> Random history emerged as a research result of these posters from the Zagreb City Museum collection. If some other posters were explored, then random history would have been different. Historical interpretation of each poster builds that random history, the one that does not aim to be consistent and comprehensive.

<sup>2</sup> Parallel history is a complimentary interpretation of the posters that sees them as a part of graphic design art and it estimates artistic value of the posters and, in parallel, interpretation of historical context and its place in social history of Zagreb in 20<sup>th</sup> century.

multimedia interpolated in the permanent exhibition provides bilingual (English and Croatian) access to all posters and all interpretative layers depending on the users' profile.

Posters are displayed in the application in the same way as they are in the exhibition space, so to help users navigate to and easily select a poster (see Fig 5).



**Fig. 5.** The interface of interactive multimedia application interpolated in the museum's permanent exhibition

Parallel access points are provided in the form of links to key information segments. Posters can be browsed according to the following categories:

- Thematic units/topics
- Authors
- Printers
- Posters in the streets and squares (implemented as a timeline)

### Thematic units

Posters, which relate to various topics or events, are presented in chronological order, which enables understanding of the city's broader societal evolution. Themes/topics are hierarchically organized and enable selecting broader or narrower content (see Fig. 6).

The structure of thematic units is composed according to three levels of access: (I) the main division is conceived in chronological groups which are (II) subdivided according to specific thematic units and (III) further segmented in subdivisions where was appropriate:

- **Zagreb on the tourist market map**
- **Between the two world wars**
  - Reviews, lectures, entertainments
  - Croatian Music Institute
  - Croatian National Theatre
  - Specialised trade shows at the Zagreb Fair
  - Exhibitions in the Art Pavilion
  - Maintaining a healthy spirit in a healthy body
- **1945 – 1960 – In the new state / FPR Yugoslavia**
  - Cultural edification after the establishment of the new government
    - From the programmes of Zagreb cinemas / film
    - Concerts, lectures, exhibitions, events
  - Ideological enlightenment

- Education
- Sport
- Entertainment
  - In dance rhythm
  - Reviews and lotteries
  - Istra Concert Hall
  - Varieté / Theatre for artistes in Zagreb
  - Relaxation and entertainment in Opatija
- Economic progress and performance
  - Business exhibitions and reviews
  - Consumer products
- **1960s / A new age in graphic design**
  - Artist events
- **1970s and 1980s / Artistic events**
- **Zagreb, capital of the Republic of Croatia**
  - Intimation of changes in 1990 – First multiparty elections
  - Homeland War, 1991
  - Zagreb anniversaries

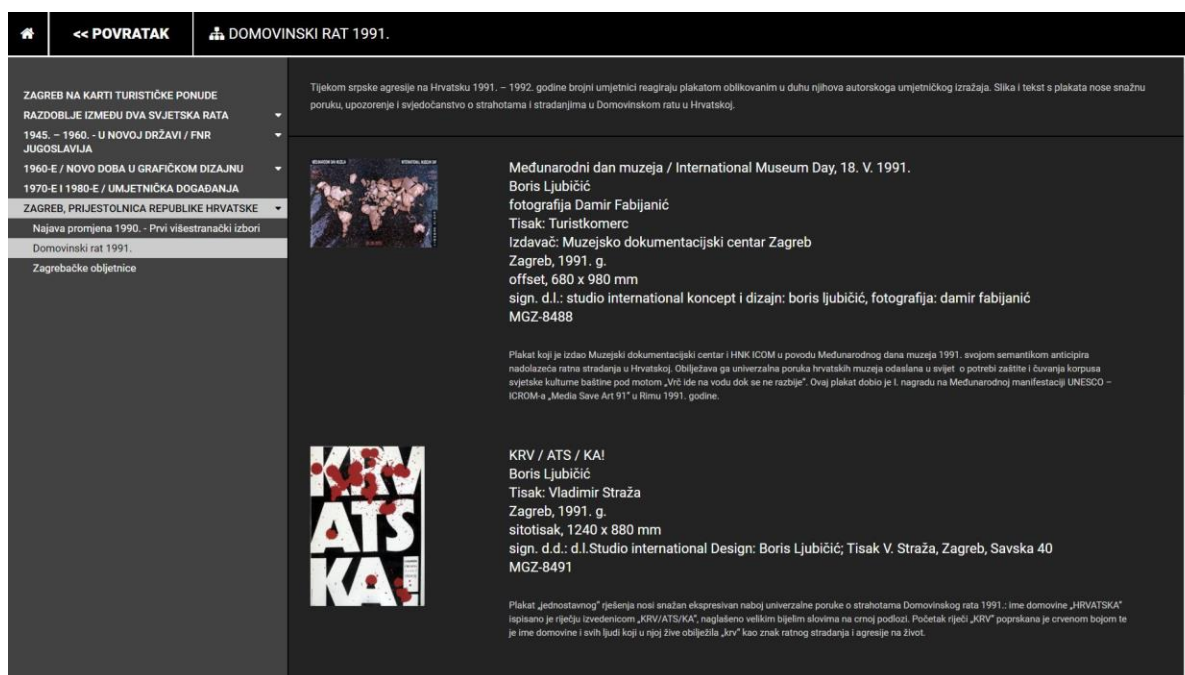


Fig. 6. Browsing posters by the structure of thematic units

## Authors

Browsing by author's name retrieves information about the work and life of the artist and information about each of their works.

For example, Zvonimir Faist page (see Fig. 7) contains a short biography of the author, focusing on artist's poster design work. Each poster in this author's gallery is titled below the picture. When selecting a poster picture from this gallery one is directed to the poster page, which consists of all catalogue data including: dating, technique, signature, inscriptions and additional information below providing a broader scope to the social background of the topic of this advertisement.

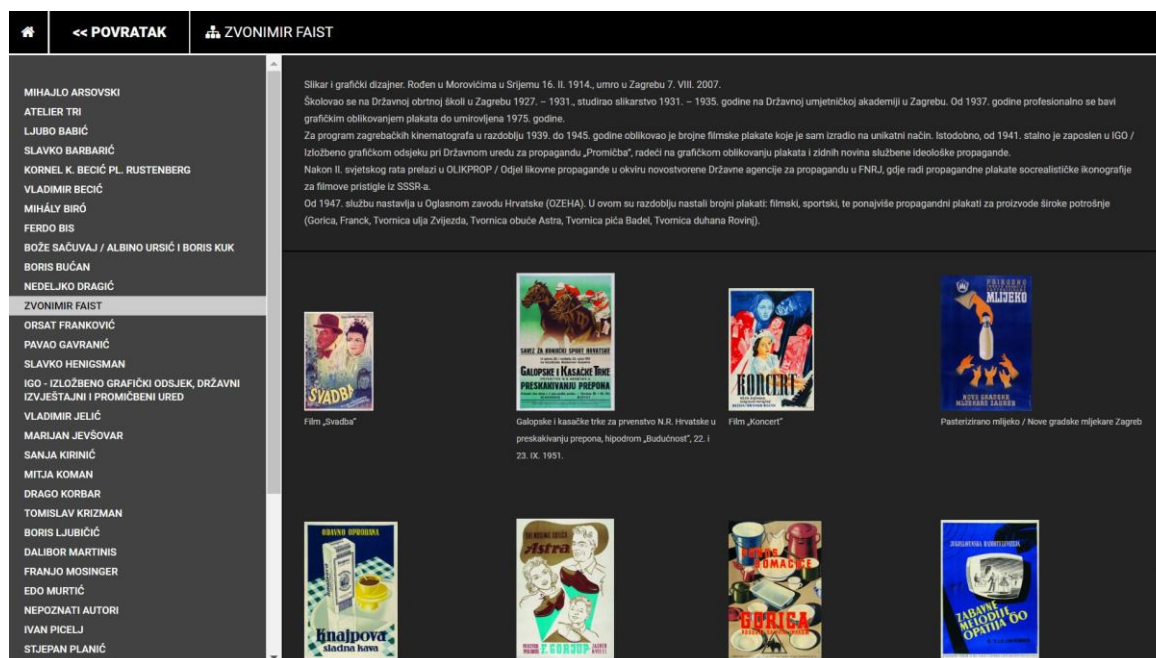


Fig. 7. Author index with information about the work and life of the artist and related works

Throughout the entire application, the posters are presented in a way that corresponds to their actual size. Therefore, in the views where posters are presented alongside, the user can gain insight into differences in their size. This could be achieved within the means of this application (only 100 items are presented, more or less of similar size), while in an online catalogue with a large number of items, this approach would not be feasible.

## Printers

Functional search provides location and summary information on each of the printing companies. Posters printed in the associated printer are listed below the summary. For example, the user opens a page on *SC Grafički servis* (Graphic Service) and finds information on its history when this printer was a part of a cultural and educational trend that made *Student Center* a focal point for students, as well as for relevant social scene in Zagreb in the second half of 20 century.

Selecting any of posters from the printer's list, users are directed to the page with the description and basic information about a poster (see Fig. 8).

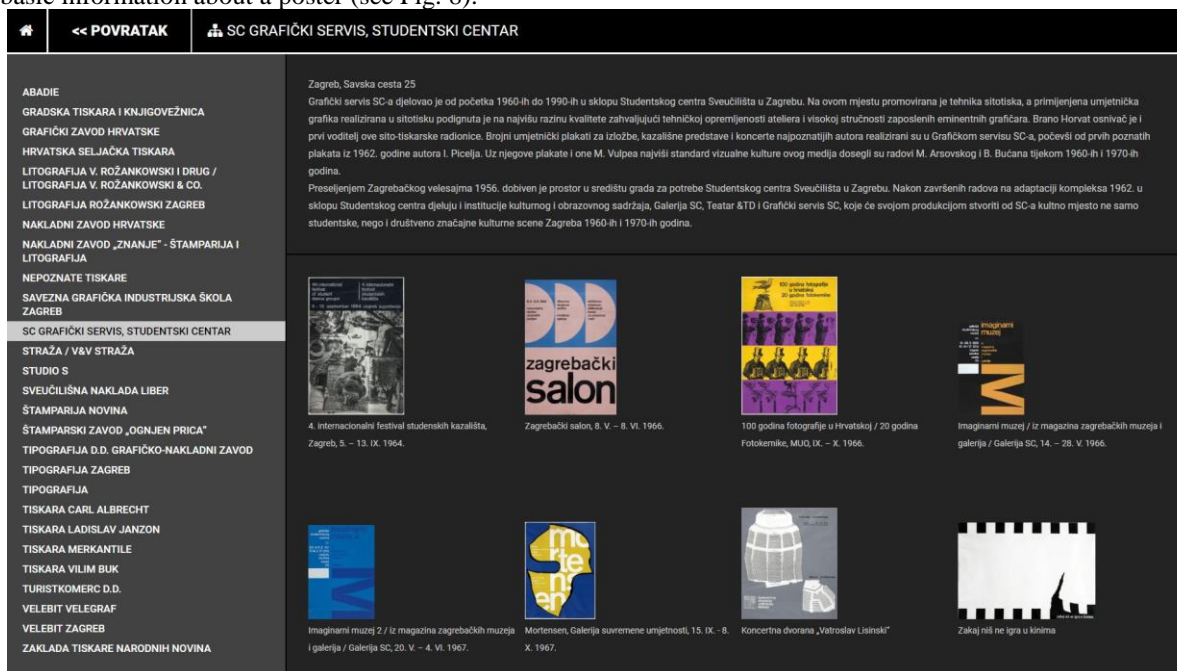


Fig. 8. The index provides information on each of printing companies



An engaging process was developed to relate practically the same printer with their different names that changed through times (names of the printers changed as the states sovereignties changed). In the following example (see. Fig. x), *Grafički zavod Hrvatske* (Graphic Institute of Croatia) came into being with the reorganisation of *Nakladni zavod Hrvatske* (1945-1951), the successor to the big printer's, and operated under this name from 1951 to 1996, when it was merged into the firm *Školska knjiga d. d.* Taking over the printing business, *Grafički zavod Hrvatske* became one of the biggest printers in Yugoslavia.

The printer mentioned above has a long history with rich tradition. It is thought to have been founded in 1874, the year in which *Tiskara Narodnih novina* started work. In 1879 it became a state institute and was renamed Royal Land Printer. The wholly owned building, into which all plants were moved, was built in 1892 in Frankopanska ulica 26, the address at which the printer then operate successfully for a hundred years. In the period between the wars, up to 1941, it operated as *Zakladna tiskara Narodnih novina*. From 1941 to 1945 it was taken over by the Independent State of Croatia and renamed *Hrvatska državna tiskara*. Immediately after the World War II it was nationalised by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and renamed *Nakladni zavod Hrvatske*.

Information management on successors and predecessors of corporate bodies (i.e. printer, in this example) is implemented within terminology control. In interactive multimedia communication environment this is presented by highlighting historical names (see Fig. 9). That enables users to link activities and view posters printed at the same printer in a certain period.

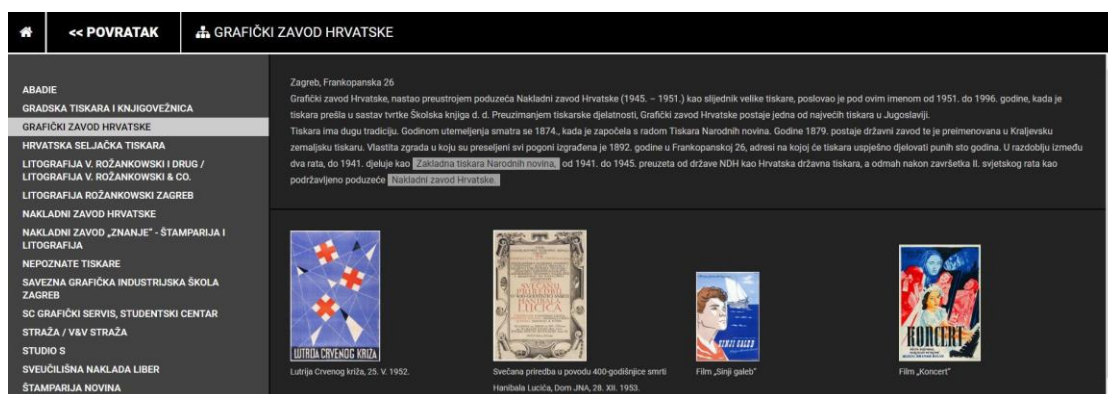


Fig. 9. Presentation of printing companies with their different names changed over time

### Interactive photographic timeline

Furthermore, the additional interactive photographic timeline includes original photographs that were taken in the primary context of posters – at the streets and squares of Zagreb, providing insight to the changes of the urban landscape throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Fig. 10).

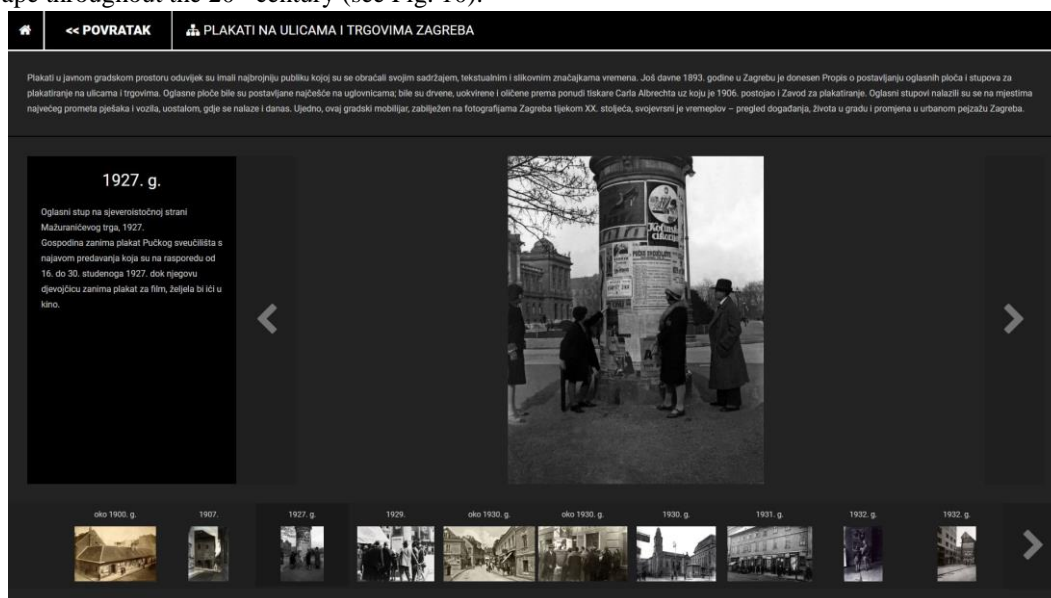


Fig. 10. An interactive timeline provides textual and visual information about primary context of posters



### 3.3 Online catalogue

Finally, the online interactive catalogue (to be finalized in 2019) will provide bilingual (English and Croatian) access to all posters and all interpretative layers to broader circle of internet audience. The online interactive catalogue can serve for preparing a visit and more likely as a research tool. User studies would give more precise answers to related questions and motivation of users in different contexts, because, as Werner Schweibenz writes, “[...]physical and the virtual visit are two different things. In some cases, they can offer complementary experiences, but the virtual experience will never be a substitute for the real one, especially as motivations for visiting in person and online are diverse.” (Schweibenz 2013)

The bilingual online catalogue uses linked open data (LOD) approach as a key opportunity to link local micro-thesauri to established controlled vocabularies such as The Art & Architecture Thesaurus, in order to establish multilingualism and interoperability at the international level. Museum item information and related vocabularies are prepared for publishing via the Modulor++ platform (see Fig. 11).

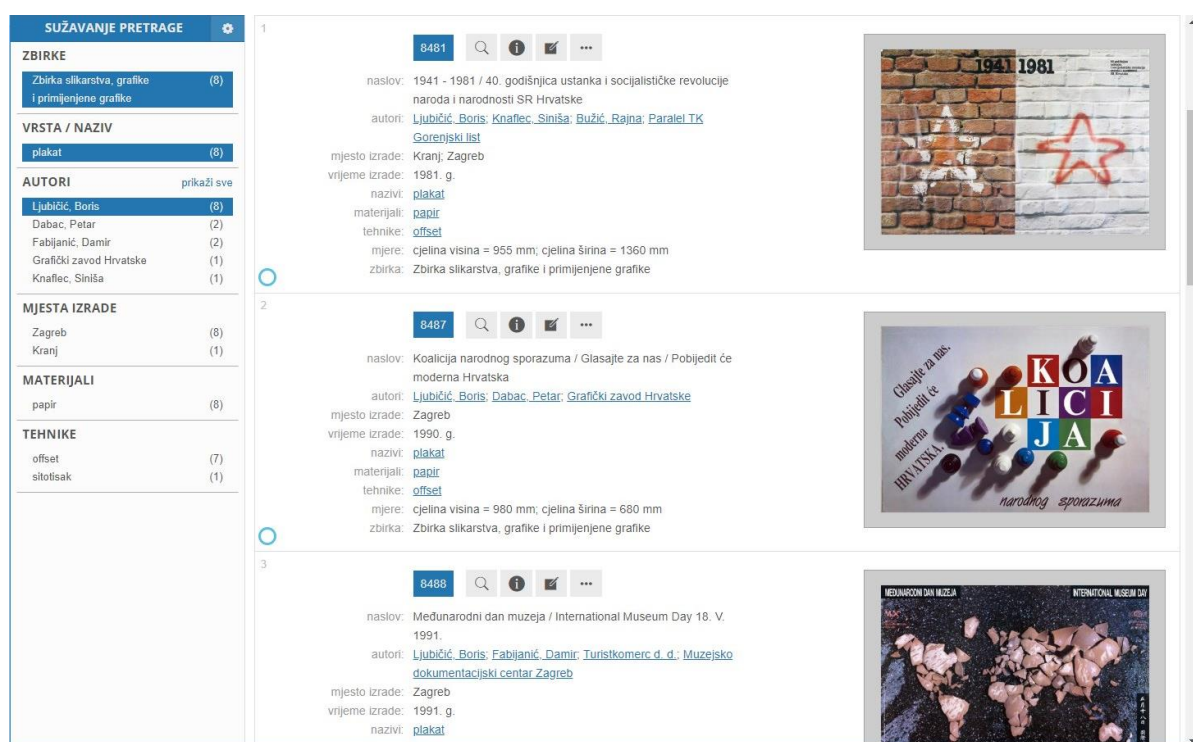


Fig. 11. Online catalogue functionalities provide full text and faceted search

## 4 Examples of documentation and communication of knowledge provenance

In following examples authors are going to share some experiences on documentation and communication of knowledge provenance.

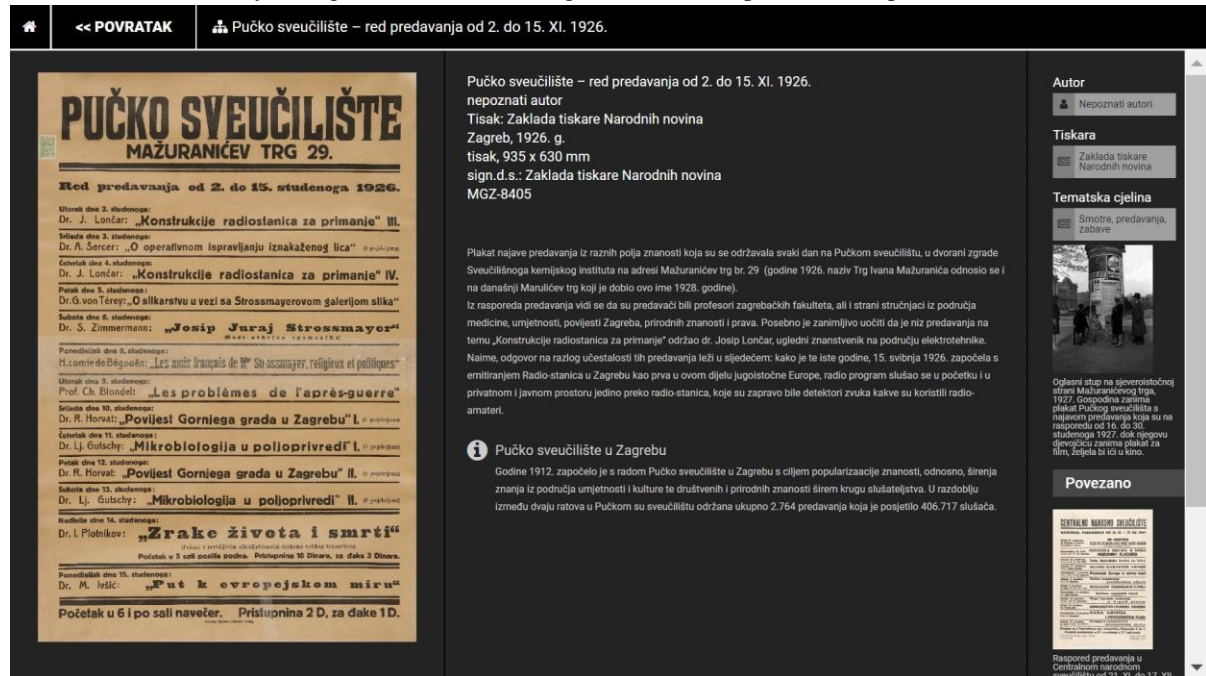
### 4.1 Example of an object as source of information about primary context of another object

An individual poster display in interactive multimedia application provides several functionalities. Displayed catalogue entry, that consists of all catalogue data including dating, technique, signature and inscriptions, is enhanced with predefined links based on key information categories relevant to the posters: poster author and printing office, are handed out. In given example (see Fig. 12) there is also a link to the broader topic (Gatherings, Lectures, Entertainment) that contains more objects related to that specific segment of social life.

Next important functionality of interactive media is poster display in its primary context - on the town streets. Here the setting is - the one cultural heritage object, in this case it's a photography (MGZ-FOT-13023)

testifies on primary context of another object, i.e. poster (MGZ-8405). Then, the display functionality of related objects makes user navigate smoothly to interrelated objects.

In this case, the poster with courses schedule in Public University from 1926 is related to two posters of Central State University from early 1950s that show same kind of courses schedule, as well. That kind of functional connectivity in virtual environment can be of substantial help during research of material. Namely, it helps us to better understand the historical course of events within a specific topic and to better understand peculiar social changes in time. It is particularly interesting that the displayed posters witness how Public University and Central State University, though the name was changed, still have kept similar scope of work.



**Fig. 12.** Presentation of the poster (author unknown. „People’s University – Lecture Timetable from November 2 to November 15, 1926“, printing, 1926, MGZ-8405, (Zagreb City Museum)) and related information

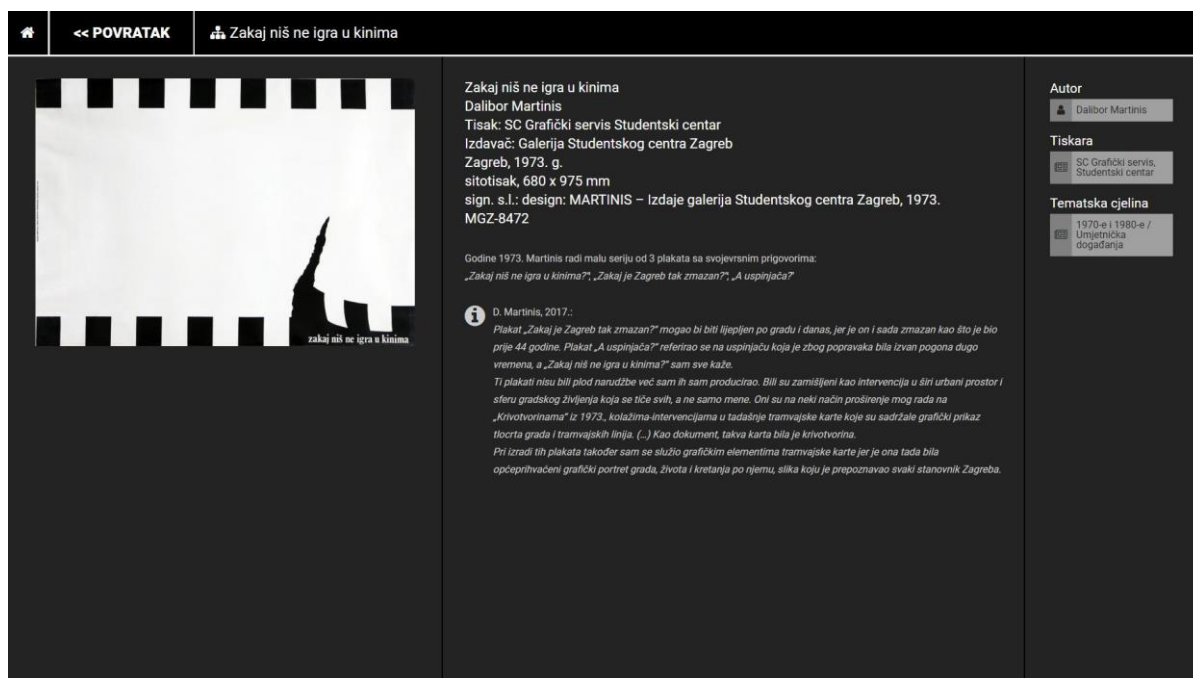
#### 4.2 Example of witnessing information (artist statement) in connection with objects

In 1973 Dalibor Martinis, Croatian transmedia artist and a video maker, did a small series of 3 posters with some kind of complaints: “Why ain’t there nothing in the cinemas”, “Why’s Zagreb so filthy?” and “What about the funicular?”.

A poster series from 1973, an autonomous work of art within the context of conceptual intervention, the author commented in 2017:

“The poster “Why is Zagreb so filthy?” might be pasted around the city today as well, because it is as filthy as it was 44 years back. The poster “What about the funicular?” referred to the funicular that was out of operation for a long time because of repair works, while “Why ain’t there nothing in the cinemas?” speaks for itself. These posters were not commissioned, I just did them. They were devised as an intervention in the wider urban area and sphere of city life that concerned everyone, not just me. In a sense they were an expansion of my work on Counterfeits of 1973 collage-interventions in the tramway tickets of the time that contained a graphic depiction of the map of the tram network in Zagreb... As document, such a ticket was a counterfeit. In the making of the posters, I also made use of the graphic elements of the tram ticket, because it was at that time a generally accepted graphic portrait of the city, life and movement around it, an image that every inhabitant of Zagreb would recognise.” (Golub 2017)

This is an example (see Fig. 13) of spoken testimony about works of art and it acts like author statement of the sort, which is of the key importance to the interpretation of the poster.



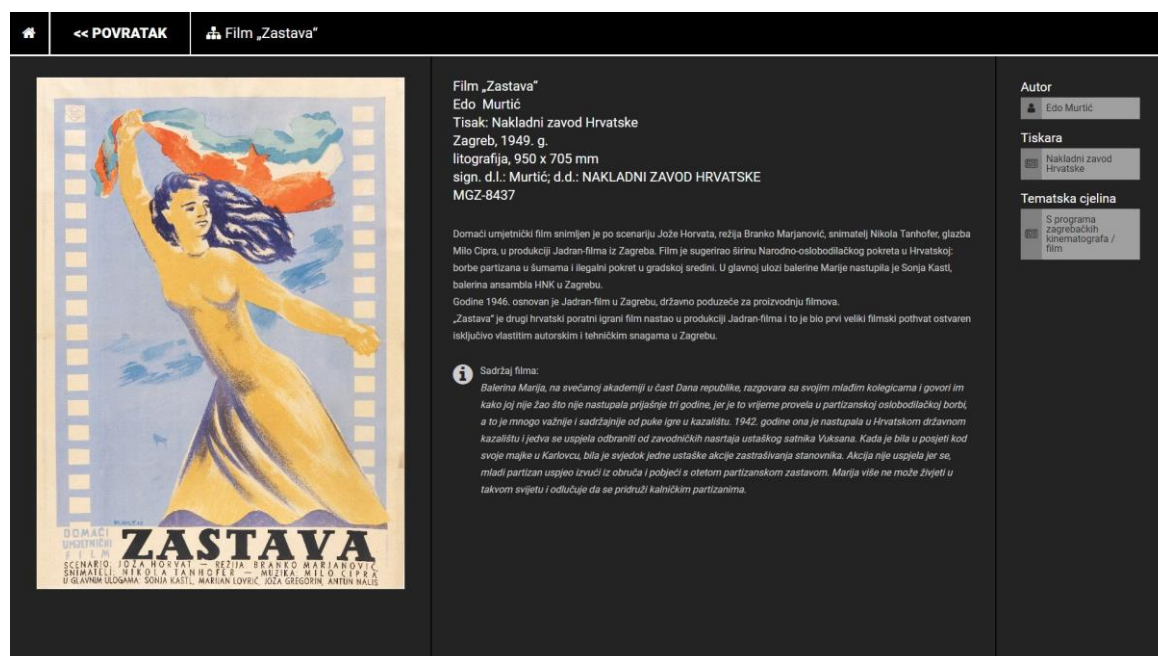
**Fig. 13.** Presentation of poster (Dalibor Martinis. „Why ain't there nothing in the cinemas?“, silkscreen printing, 1973, MGZ-8472, (Zagreb City Museum))

#### 4.3 Example of adding contextual information related with the theme of the work

Besides key information about the film, object is associated with a short film synopsis that adds up to the poster context showing it clearer as a document of time (see Fig. 14). That opens up to a new interpretation of the poster content as a witness of social as well as political context of the time the movie was released.

The art film shot to a script by Joža Horvat and directed by Branko Marjanović in a production of Jadran-film Zagreb should have emphasized the breadth of the People's Liberation Movement in Croatia: battles of Partisans in the forests and the underground movement in the Zagreb city centre. Sonja Kastl, ballerina of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, appeared in the central role of the ballet dancer Marija.

In 1946, Jadran-film, a state owned firm for the production of films, was founded in Zagreb. *The Flag* was the second Croatian post-war feature film produced by Jadran-film and the first big cinematographic enterprise realised with exclusively home-grown creative and technical talent in Zagreb.



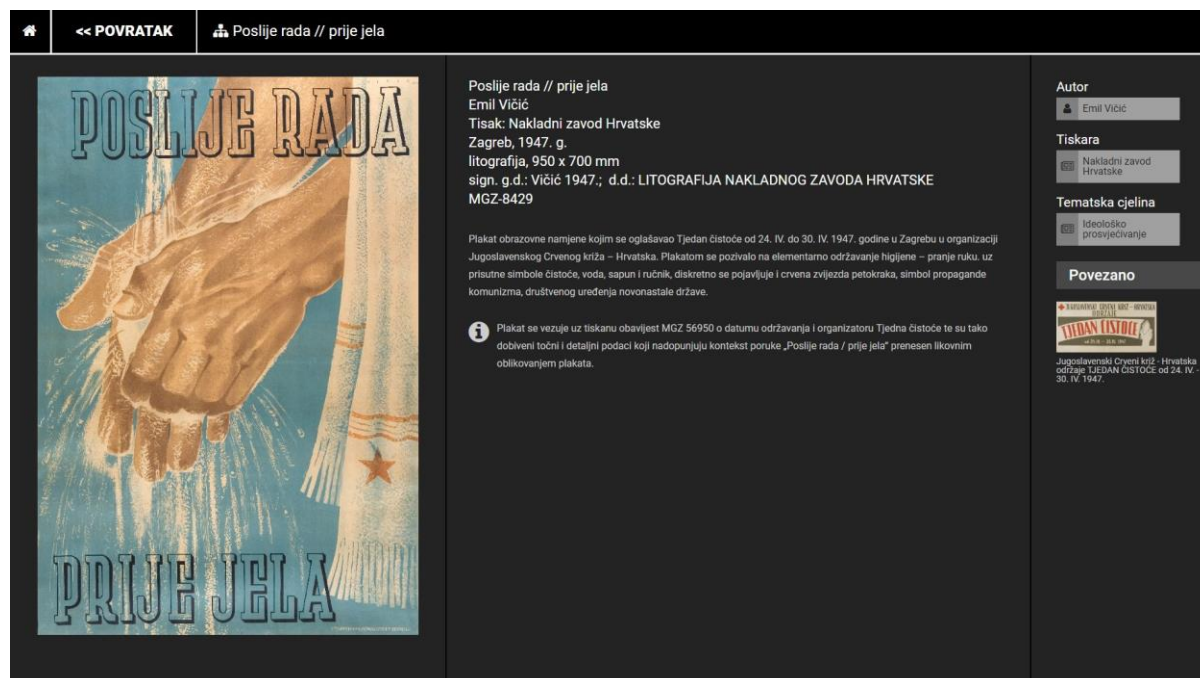
**Fig. 14.** Presentation of poster (Edo Murtić. „The film Flag“, lithography, 1949, MGZ-8437, (Zagreb City Museum))



#### 4.4 Example of an object which serves as a historical source that adds information related to another object

A poster of an educational purpose advertising “Cleanliness Week” from April 24 to April 30, 1947 in Zagreb as organised by the Yugoslav Red Cross – Croatia (see Fig. 15). The poster called on people to observe elementary hygiene – washing hands, with the symbols of cleanness, water, soap and towel, and the red five-pointed star also appeared, symbol of the propaganda of communism, the political system of the newly created state.

The poster is linked with the leaflet (author unknown. „Yugoslav Red Cross – Croatia is holding *CLEANLINESS WEEK* from April 24 to April 30, 1947“, printing, 1947, MGZ-56950, (Zagreb City Museum)) announcing the date of the “Cleanliness Week” event and the organiser, so, exact and detailed data were obtained to supplement the context of the poster message “After work / Before food”. This is an example of one heritage item serving as a historical source that adds information related to another heritage item.



**Fig. 15.** Presentation of the poster (Emil Vičić. „After Work / Before Food“, lithography, 1947, MGZ-8429, (Zagreb City Museum))

## 5 Conclusions

In interactive multimedia application interpolated in the museum’s permanent exhibition, authors tried to develop and implement means of presentation and interaction that correspond with concepts and relations between posters and related entities (authors, printing companies, historical events) represented through the various related contextual material, which in synergy provide the meaningful and relevant user experience. In other words, one of the projects’ key objectives was to give the audience all relevant content in “user-friendly and conceptually accessible way”, as Maria Economou (Economou 2008: 152) points out.

The printed catalogue would provide information about 200 posters more and extensive set of bibliographical units and sources, while the online catalogue would provide access to whole poster collection.

Thus, the presentation of the Zagreb City Museum poster collection, adapted to the characteristics of each of these media platforms, plays a critical role in communicating with various types of users and enables them to develop their own perceptions of Zagreb’s identity, which in turn is the main mission of the Zagreb City Museum.

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