

Preparation and realization of compact touring exhibitions on the example of exhibition projects of the Masaryk University¹

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The article focuses on the specifics of the preparation and realization of compact touring exhibition projects. In the introductory theoretical part, it deals with the issue of museum communication and museum presentation, their means, approaches and forms, on the basis of which several types of exhibition projects are distinguished. Special attention is paid to touring exhibitions, their specifics and possibilities in relation to the public. In the empirical part, the article contains several examples of the preparation and realization of compact touring exhibition projects, implemented in the field of Museology at the Masaryk University in Brno.

Keywords: museum presentation, compact touring exhibitions, museum suitcase, student exhibitions, Masaryk University in Brno

Museum presentation as a basic means of communication

The mission of museums is to collect, preserve, manage and present mainly three-dimensional relics of nature and human society, primarily for the purpose of dissemination and development of culture and science.² This places the museum in a unique and irreplaceable position among cultural and memory institutions. The aforementioned tasks of the museum are associated with a number of different professional activities, but the presentation activity of the museum is undoubtedly the most visible. Without this activity, the museum would not fulfil its social mission and functions.³ The museum is known and perceived in society through exhibitions which create its image, help it demonstrate its professional and scientific erudition, but also the exhibition-making skills as a whole. We classify exhibiting as one of the main professional activities of the museum, through which it communicates, mainly visually, with its visitors. The museum thus provides visual and intellectual access to the collections for the needs of sharing knowledge, thereby participating in cultural-didactic and educational activities

¹ The article is a result of the project: Ministry of Education, youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, AKTION Czech Republic – Austria 96p7 „Open Round Table of Museology II.“

² BENEŠ, Josef. *Muzejní prezentace*. Praha: Národní muzeum, 1981, p. 22.

³ HOOPER-GHREENHILL, Eilean. *Museums and Education : purpose, pedagogy, performance*. London: Routledge, 2007, p. 1.

in society.⁴ At the same time, it creates space for relaxation, entertainment and aesthetic enjoyment, which essentially ranks museums among communal and social institutions⁵ where people meet, gain new knowledge and experiences, simply put, spend their leisure time in a meaningful way.⁶

In the long term, the museum has been creating its basic communication channels, through which it addresses not only the “habitual and frequent” visitors who regularly return to the museum’s premises, but also acquires new ones through them. The museum’s communication channels and public relations are mainly created by getting to know the needs and expectations of the visitors in order to be able to satisfy their requirements,⁷ influence their consciousness on the rational and the emotional level,⁸ and to convey information.⁹

Although the museum can communicate with the public in various ways, e.g. through lectures, discussions on current topics, demonstrations of various activities, publications, etc.,¹⁰ the natural means of communication between the museum and the public is primarily the environment of an exhibition,¹¹ which is mainly targeted at gaining knowledge about the value content of the museum’s authentic collection items.¹²

In the exhibition space, the museum communicates primarily with the help of a permanent exhibition, temporary exhibitions, or more rarely through the presentation of a study depot.¹³ While the purpose of a permanent exhibition is to present the main focus and specialization of the museum based on its collection holdings, temporary exhibitions usually respond to current topics resonating in society. Following the visitor, the permanent exhibition is conceived more generally, for various different educational, generational or social groups.¹⁴ Since it is a long-term display of the core of the museum’s collection-building activities,¹⁵ the permanent

⁴ BENEŠ, Josef. *Kulturně-výchovná činnost muzeí*. 1. díl. Praha: SPN, 1981.

⁵ LORD, Gail Dexter. Museum as Social Institutions. In: LORD, Barry – LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, p. 41; KESNER, Ladislav. *Muzeum umění v digitální době. Vnímání obrazů a prožitky umění v soudobé společnosti*. Praha: Argo a Národní galerie, 2000, p. 34; FYFE, Gordon. Sociology and the Social Aspects of Museums. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, pp. 35–36; GEISLER, Robert, NIEROBA, Elżbieta. Museum transition toward market-oriented identity: between social issues and public policy. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 10, 2022, Is. 4, pp. 5–25. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2022.10.4.1

⁶ DEAN, David. *Museum Exhibition : Theory and Practice*. New York : Routledge, 1996, p. 2; FALK, John H. – DIERKING, Lynn D. *The Museum Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 109 sq.

⁷ CROOK, Elizabeth. Museums and Community. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, p. 171; HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. Studying Visitors. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, p. 363; HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. Counting visitors or visitors who count? In: LUMLEY, Robert (ed.). *The Museum Time-Machine*. London: Routledge, 1988, pp. 213–217.

⁸ BENEŠ, Josef. *Základy muzeologie*. Opava: Slezská univerzita, 1997, p. 120.

⁹ FORET, Miroslav. *Marketingová komunikace*. Brno: Computer Press, 2011, p. 17; WAIDACHER, Friedrich. *Všeobecná příručka muzeologie*. Bratislava : SNM, 1999, p. 131.

¹⁰ HOOPER-GREENHILL, Eilean. *Museums and their Visitors*. London: Routledge, 1994, p. 37.

¹¹ DEAN, Museum Exhibition..., p. 3.

¹² TIŠLIAR, Pavol, ČERNUŠÁK, Tomáš, LOSKOTOVÁ, Irena. *Výstava v archivu*. Brno: MUNI Press, 2019, p. 26.

¹³ KAČÍREK, Luboš, RAGAČ, Radoslav, TIŠLIAR, Pavol. *Múzeum a historické vedy*. Krakov: SSP, 2013, p. 45; TIŠLIAR, Pavol. Museology as a University Subject in Slovakia: History, Program and Course Design. In: *European Journal of Contemporary Education*, vol. 6, 2017, No. 1, pp. 160–161.

¹⁴ RODNEY, Seph. *The Personalization of the Museum Visit : Art Museums, Discourse, and Visitors*. New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 24.

¹⁵ MAROEVIĆ, Ivo. The Exhibition as Presentative Communication. In: *Into the World with the Cultural Heritage. Museology – Conservation – Architecture*. Petrinja 2004, p. 127.

exhibition should have something for all visitors, regardless of their age, education, social origin, etc. The temporary exhibition, on the other hand, is a short-term event, which is usually aimed at a specific age group or otherwise defined group of visitors. This enables to specialize the exhibition more deeply and more accurately, thus addressing a specific type of visitors in a far more targeted manner, fully adapt the exhibition language,¹⁶ i.e. the exhibition's means of communication, to their needs and thereby enable an easier understanding and acceptance of the message of the exhibited topic.¹⁷ The exhibition language is thus a set of means of expression that are used in certain connections and relationships,¹⁸ with the aim to visualize the thought.¹⁹ The effectiveness of museum communication itself thus largely depends on its adaptation to the needs of a specific audience²⁰ and the appropriate handling of the interpretation of the topic chosen. The museum thus presents a topic primarily through authentic evidence, which provides tools and means to represent the exhibited topic,²¹ and not the other way around. It is therefore essential to be able to adapt the exhibition language to the visitor, inclusive of the exhibition space in which the permanent or temporary exhibition is presented.²²

Z. Z. Stránský saw the fulfilment of the social mission of the museum presentation mainly in making reality accessible again through its relatively authentic documentation on a qualitatively new level.²³ A similar opinion was also published by F. Waidacher, who emphasized that the museum exhibition is an interpretive presentation of various situations, which are based on authentic evidence.²⁴

Successful communication with the visitor thus places emphasis on the thematic concept, context, on the expression of an idea, and not on collection items – presented objects whose task is to help express our ideas and support them with existing tangible evidence. If we would like to specify and distinguish the museum communication from general communication, then the museum communication is primarily about the integration of a collection item into the communication process, its integration into the communication task,²⁵ which Z. Z. Stránský described as the transformation of the thesaurus into a communication medium.²⁶

¹⁶ ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Petra. *Muzejní expozice jako edukační médium 1. díl. Přístupy ke tvorbě expozic a jejich inovace*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2014, p. 51; STRÁNSKÁ, Edita, STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Základy štúdia muzeológie*. Banská Štiavnica : UMB, 2000, p. 73. Stránský also called it a museum-presentation language. STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2005, p. 128; BAYER, Herbert. Aspects of Design of Exhibitions and Museums. In: *Curator*, IV/3, 1961, p. 258; HILLIER, Bill, TZORTZI, Kali. Space Syntax : The Language of Museum Space. In: MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006, pp. 282–301; LAZZERETTI, Cecilia. *The Language of Museum Communication : A Diachronic Perspective*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

¹⁷ BENEŠ, Muzejní prezentace..., p. 43; STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2005, p. 127.

¹⁸ BENEŠ, Muzejní prezentace..., p. 47.

¹⁹ STRÁNSKÁ, STRÁNSKÝ, *Základy štúdia...*, p. 73.

²⁰ HOOPER-GREENHILL, Museums and their..., p. 51; WAIDACHER, *Všeobecná příručka...*, p. 153.

²¹ BENEŠ, Muzejní prezentace..., p. 15; WAIDACHER, *Všeobecná příručka...*, p. 149.

²² LORD, Barry. Modes of display. In: LORD, Barry, LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, p. 213.

²³ STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Úvod do štúdia muzeológie*. Brno: UJEP, 1979, p. 104.

²⁴ WAIDACHER, *Všeobecná příručka...*, p. 149.

²⁵ PLOKHOTNYUK, Vladimir, MITROFANENKO, Ludmila. Semiotic models in museum communication. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 6, 2018, Is. 1, p. 21.

²⁶ STRÁNSKÝ, *Archeologie a muzeologie...*, pp. 126–127.

Strengthening, intensifying and improving the communication itself is then also the task of design,²⁷ but also of forms, methods and means of museum presentation.

In terms of typology, the exhibition projects are quite diverse. They differ from one another in their concept, form and method of presentation, but also in different aspects that pursue various points of view (aesthetic, emotional, didactic, entertaining, etc.). In the exhibition practice, these forms and approaches are usually combined with each other, or one of them may significantly prevail with regard to the presented topic and goals of the exhibition project.²⁸

The present-day modern exhibition presentation is usually no longer based on the presentation of solitaires, or on a formalistic approach (mainly the presentation in galleries), where the collection item is put to the foreground without context.²⁹ Conceptually, the basis of present-day museum presentation is most often formed by two prevailing approaches. One of them is the interpretive (conceptual) approach, where the emphasis is mainly placed on the content interpretation of the problem, i.e. on the contextual aspect of phenomena within the topic treated. In this approach, contextualisation primarily regards the interpretation and explanation of the issue in context, it emphasizes the description, individual exhibits are semantically interlinked and, together with other supplements and means of expression, create a comprehensive picture of the presented issue. The contexts, or their reconstructions, and phenomena are derived from the exhibited objects. The second, often sought-after, approach is a narrative, giving some kind of story, through which the topic is contextualised and the message of the exhibition project is depicted. The narrative can contain stories of people, animals, but also various things – objects. The plot of such a story usually progresses chronologically and often also contextually explains various events, phenomena, interesting things, etc., documented by authentic exhibits.³⁰ Narratives make it possible to express feelings, emotions, attitudes and opinions more easily, directly with the help of an involved character (object) or through a storyteller. The narrative concept can stimulate the visitor's imagination and perception of complex abstract concepts. The narrative form of the exhibition concept allows people to imagine themselves in an unknown world³¹ and can also have a relatively significant success in the field of interactive experience and participation of the visitor. The story and its characters do not have to be directly real, it can be a fictional story with an invented plot and characters, or a combination thereof.³²

In addition to the mentioned dominant approaches in today's museum presentation, we should mention, at least briefly, some other approaches, which at the same time emphasize the predominant typological characteristic of the exhibition. A special type is virtual exhibition,

²⁷ BAYER, Aspects of Design..., p. 257.

²⁸ WAIDACHER, Všeobecná příručka..., pp. 155–157.

²⁹ ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Muzejní expozice..., p. 134; INGEMANN, Bruno. An Essay on the Communicative Museum. In: DROTNER, Kirsten – Schröder, Kim Christian. *Museum Communication and Social Media : The Connected Museum*. New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 292; KOLAŘÍKOVÁ, Veronika. The museum exhibition in the context of dispositive analysis. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 10, 2022, Is. 3, p. 7. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2022.10.3.1.

³⁰ LAZZERETTI, The Language of Museum Communication..., p. 36.

³¹ RAPPOLA, Tiina. *Designing for the Museum Visitor Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 25.

³² ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Muzejní expozice..., pp. 132–133.

different from the other types in its online form of presentation, which has recently been gaining in importance.³³

- Aesthetic exhibition emphasizing the exhibits, with an emotional effect on the visitor (often used in galleries)
- Comparative exhibition, whose concept is based on opposites
- Didactic exhibition with educational functions, explaining and interpreting information about the object
- Interactive, or participatory exhibition with an effort to actively involve the visitor in the content of the exhibition
- Dynamic exhibition, comprising moving objects that enliven the exhibition space
- Entertaining exhibition with the aim to cheer up, make happy or simply help to relax

Current trends in museum exhibitions are not only based on static displays, showing objects. Present-day exhibition projects contain, in addition to direct interactive elements that can activate and involve the visitor in a certain activity during the exhibition tour, also various accompanying programs and activities related to the exhibition. Their role is relatively broad. From the point of view of the museum presentation itself, they can significantly help to interpret the exhibition's message, but they also allow an evaluative view of the knowledge that the visitor gained by attending the exhibition in the exhibition space. From the visitor's point of view, through targeted object-based learning, they can create a new and unusual experience, motivate, entertain, inform, but especially help to gain new knowledge in a simple, informal way.

Museum presentation thus represents the basic means of communication of the museum, the main goal of which is to address the visitors, to be able to present the exhibited topic in such a way that they understand its principal meaning and mission, intended by the author of the exhibition project. At the same time, the goal of the exhibition activity's message should also be a certain stimulation of curiosity, support of feelings, learning and human experience,³⁴ which are evoked in a certain form on the part of the visitors as their reaction "to what is seen". In this context, the museum presentation is not a goal, but in many regards rather a means.

The modern museum environment creates a natural space for the realization of exhibition projects. But at the same time, this environment does not have to be the only space in which the museum presentation can take place. A specific type of exhibition projects in this regard is mainly the touring exhibitions, the concept, preparation and realization of which are often specially adapted to their content and mission.³⁵

³³ BOYLAN, Patrick, WOOLARD, Vicky (eds.). *The Trainer's Manual: For Use with Running a Museum : A Practical Handbook*. Paris: Unesco, 2006, p. 24. The specific form of presentation of natural and cultural heritage in the form of the Ecomuseum is also successful. See for example KOŠTIALOVÁ, Katarína. The specific museum presentation forms of cultural heritage in rural areas, based on the example of the Hont ecomuseum and educational public footpath. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 10, 2022, Is. 2, pp. 5–22. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2022.10.2.1; CORRAL, Óscar Navajas. Ecomuseums in Spain: an analysis of their characteristic and typologies. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 7-26.

³⁴ DEAN, Museum Exhibition..., p. 6.

³⁵ JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie – TIŠLIAR, Pavol – KIRSCH, Otakar – FRECEROVÁ, Monika. *Muzejná výstava na cestách : Špecifika putovních výstav do škôl, múzeí i ďalších verejných inštitúcií*. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 2022.

Touring exhibition and its specifics

The touring exhibition is generally adapted to presentation at various different places, in different institutions, i.e. not only in a museum, but also in a non-museum environment that is not specially prepared or adapted for presentation purposes. The effort to realize a flexible touring exhibition consists mainly in taking into account its frequent mobility, and this moment resonates especially during the entire preparatory phase of the exhibition project. Preparing and realizing a touring exhibition is a time-consuming and in many ways certainly also specialized work.³⁶

Touring exhibitions can be divided into several groups. They can have the character of large exhibition projects, focused exclusively commercially. In this case, an exhibition is prepared and realized, for example, for large exhibition grounds. Displayed are mainly various substitutes, replicas or models, and such an exhibition is usually created by a specialized company-studio, focused on professional commercial creation of exhibitions, which employs not only a team of interior architects, but also designers, graphic artists, technicians and various specialists for specific scientific fields. Commercial exhibitions are usually held for a period of interest of the paying public, they are thematically mainly focused on attractive problems of society, technology, natural sciences or other fields that evoke a considerable amount of astonishment and wow effect in the public (the visitors), and often have a peculiar character with the aim of attracting as many paying visitors as possible. This is also reflected in the entire presentation form, which combines often even curious scientific information with a high proportion of the visitor's experience, attraction and interactivity. The presentation forms include top modern technologies, for example virtual reality, 3D imaging, etc.,³⁷ which enhance the experience of the presented topic. There is no doubt that the preparation of this type of touring exhibition requires not only good ideas, high-quality professional workmanship, skilful management, but also relatively considerable financial resources.³⁸

Another type of touring exhibitions is represented by museum exhibition projects, which are prepared for further possible touring directly in the museum environment. These exhibitions are based on authentic collection items and in their basic form, they do not differ from classic museum exhibition projects. Their goal is to present the topic and message of the exhibition in a way that will attract the widest possible audience in other museums as well. The use of authentic objects is a big advantage of touring museum exhibitions compared to commercially oriented exhibitions. During their travels, touring museum exhibitions can be additionally supplemented or changes can be made with some parts of the thematic units of the exhibition and displayed exhibits, which may come from the collection holdings of the museum in which the exhibition is being held at the given moment. Touring museum exhibitions are also specific

³⁶ PIACENTE, Maria. Traveling Exhibitions. In: LORD, Barry, PIACENTE, Maria. *Manual of Museum Exhibitions. Second edition*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014, p. 209.

³⁷ ŻYŁA, Kamil – MONTUSIEWICZ, Jerzy – SKULIMOWSKI, Stanisław – KAYUMOV, Rahim. VR technologies as an extension to the museum exhibition: A case study of the Silk Road museums in Samarkand. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 8, 2020, Is. 4, pp. 73–93. doi: 10.46284/mkd.2020.8.4.6; ŽUPČÁN, Ladislav. Platforma kultúrneho dedičstva v súčasnej kyberkultúre. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, Is. 1, pp. 57–73.

³⁸ PIACENTE, Traveling Exhibitions..., pp. 207–208.

by the fact that when planning them, it is necessary to take into account mainly financial resources related to transportation and insurance.³⁹

Another type is a touring exhibition, which is created for the purpose of presenting topics in a non-museum environment. In this case, frequent recipients are mainly school facilities, but also the premises of other memory and cultural institutions (archives, libraries), or public administration buildings or other public spaces. It is obvious that these facilities do not have suitable conditions for presenting original authentic collection items. It is not just about securing the necessary basic climatic conditions, but about a whole range of technical and safety prerequisites, including the problems with indemnification and protection of objects during the transfer and display of collections.⁴⁰ Therefore, in the case of a non-museum environment, preference is given to an exhibition project based on various substitutes, mock-ups, models as well as exhibition panels, combined with prepared accompanying activities, for example in the form of a comprehensively elaborated museum suitcase.⁴¹ F. Waidacher described this type of exhibition as a marginal exhibition, which is oriented primarily conceptually, informatively and illustratively.⁴² This group also includes exhibitions held in buses (“museum buses”), trains or other mobile exhibition projects⁴³ that actively search for, and travel directly to, their visitors. In this way, compact touring exhibitions are created, usually not demanding much space. This type of exhibitions is also important as a possible supplement to an already existing permanent or temporary exhibition held in a museum, thus drawing attention to this exhibition, but also as one of the possibilities to actively address the public with the presented topic. Touring exhibitions can also be inclusive, overcoming barriers, when reaching places where the museum environment is less accessible.⁴⁴ The advantage of a compact touring exhibition is the possibility to transfer the educational mission (including museum education) of the prepared permanent or temporary exhibition in a compact form outside the museum, to the public. This method of presentation and communication is particularly effective in relation to the school environment.

A compact touring exhibition can also cover new current issues, based on the specialization and focus of the museum’s collection holdings and on topics treated by its curators. The realization of such an exhibition can also precede a larger exhibition project that is still being prepared, or its selected thematic units.

Although the cooperation between museums and schools has been working for many years and schoolchildren visit museums in the form of various pre-planned and prepared excursions,⁴⁵ this does not mean that this cooperation must be sufficient. Thus, with the help

³⁹ PIACENTE, *Traveling Exhibitions...*, p. 211; TOMÁŠKOVÁ, Marianna. *Mobilita múzejných zbierok. Postupy a zásady pri manipulácii so zbierkovými predmetmi mimo ich uloženia v depozitároch*. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 5, 2017, Is. 2, pp. 169–181; also MAXIMEA, Heather. *Planning for exhibition and collections support space*. In: LORD, Barry, LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, pp. 235–245.

⁴⁰ MAXIMEA, Heather. *Planning for exhibition and collections support space*. In: LORD, Barry, LORD Gail Dexter, MARTIN, Lindsay (eds.). *Manual of Museum Planning : Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2012, pp. 235–245.

⁴¹ TALBOYS, Graeme K. *Museum Educator’s Handbook*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 111–112.

⁴² W Aidacher, *Všeobecná príručka...*, p. 154.

⁴³ JAGOŠOVÁ et al. *Muzejní výstava...*, pp. 12 and 64.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

⁴⁵ KAČÍREK, Euboš, TIŠLIAR, Pavol. *Múzejné exkurzie vo vyučovaní : minulosť a súčasný stav na Slovensku*. In: *Museologica Brunensia*, vol. 2, 2013, no. 3, pp. 10–15; KAČÍREK, Euboš, TIŠLIAR, Pavol. *The benefit of museum visits for the formal education of children in primary and secondary education in the Slovak Republic*. In: *Terra Sebus : Acta Musei Sabesiensis 9*. Sebes : Muzeul Municipal “Ioan Raica”, 2017, pp. 491–506.

of a compact touring exhibition, the museum can actively go to schools and proactively deepen this cooperation. Nowadays, it is a good standard for professional curators to prepare various thematic lectures or talks on current social issues for school students. Combining such museum activities with a thematically focused compact touring exhibition then significantly increases the effectiveness of the presented problem with the audience, all the more when the expert lecture is supplemented by the educational potential of the exhibition, which is realized through the museum educator.⁴⁶ At the same time, the museum educator can use several didactic methods and approaches, not only to captivate the audience, but also to convey in a simpler and informal form even more difficult topics, not only to younger visitors.⁴⁷

A specific of compact touring exhibitions is their design. Such an exhibition can be based on elements that are easily available to us and, if possible, inexpensive. Such properties are mainly found in two-dimensional material, copies of photographs, facsimiles and xeroxes of archival documents, various printed materials or graphic elements placed, for example, on the exhibition panels, but also various models, mock-ups, copies, substitutes, which do not completely replace the original, but work well as an illustrative aid. Nowadays, it is possible to use the potential of cheap 3D printing to create interesting illustrative 3D models. These can become part of a simple installation or can be used as a direct part of accompanying programs, for example a prepared museum suitcase (box) for object-based learning.⁴⁸ It depends on our financial resources and, of course, especially on the ideas needed to prepare the exhibition project. In a school, a simple model of a panel exhibition accompanied by a suitcase full of interesting things can be more effective than a panel exhibition combined with several small showcases, since working with the suitcase involves touch or other sensory organs in addition to visual perception.⁴⁹ Working with a museum box – suitcase, usually containing various substitutes and models, applies the didactic principles of illustration and develops, above all, an empirical way of learning.⁵⁰

Among the key characteristics that a compact touring exhibition should meet are mainly portability, durability, easy maintenance and, of course, simple installation. It is advisable to make it simple, light, preferably modular, but also durable,⁵¹ so that the planned travelling of the exhibition is not unnecessarily complicated by complex repairs.

Compact touring exhibitions on the example of exhibitions created at the Department of Museology at the Masaryk University in Brno

Within the follow-up Master's studies in museology at the Department of Archaeology and Museology (DAM) at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno, more space is also given to the field of museum exhibitions. In addition to the theoretical approach, this also includes a practical part focused on the preparation and realization of exhibitions. Students thus have the opportunity to try out different forms, procedures and approaches used in museum presentation and to gain their first experience and skills in exhibition making already during their studies. The multifunctional atrium of the DAM building, reconstructed and in

⁴⁶ JAGOŠOVÁ et al. *Muzejní výstava...*, pp. 74–78.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 78–82.

⁴⁸ JAGOŠOVÁ et al. *Muzejní výstava...*, p. 83.

⁴⁹ For more details, see MERTOŮVÁ, Soňa. *Muzejní kufrík : metodický materiál*. [online, 2023-01-03] <http://www.mcmp.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/vzdelavani/metodicke_texty/METODIKA_KUFRIK.pdf>

⁵⁰ JAGOŠOVÁ et al. *Muzejní výstava...*, pp. 86–87.

⁵¹ PIACENTE, *Traveling Exhibitions...*, pp. 211–212.

many respects modularly modified, is available for this purpose. The atrium functions as a proper exhibition space where small-scale exhibition projects can be realized. At a biennial basis, students organize a larger project of a touring exhibition. Since the field of exhibition management in the Master's degree in museology is complemented by several subjects from the field of museum pedagogy, there is room for the systematic elaboration of an exhibition project, which includes not only the exhibition itself, but also accompanying activities in various forms. In 2018, these starting points gave rise to the basic concept of our exhibition projects, including the preparation and realization of a compact touring exhibition, which is mainly intended for primary and secondary schools, a museum suitcase, containing accompanying activities and, finally, a handbook that elaborates the topic of the exhibition in more detail, but also offers instructions on how to work with the exhibition and individual components of the museum suitcase and explains the possibilities of implementing the accompanying activities. The mentioned parts of the exhibition project are primarily realized by museology students under the supervision and guidance of pedagogues.

Since 2018, three larger student exhibitions have been prepared in Brno. The target group for all three projects consisted of middle schoolers and high school students, i.e. they targeted the age group of 12 to 18 years. These are young people whose ability of abstract thought and basic scientific thinking are maturing, and we tried to use these prerequisites. The exhibition language as well as all accompanying activities were adapted to the mentioned age group. Thematically, the exhibition projects took into account the curriculum of selected school subjects and fit into the overall framework of the educational programme. They mainly covered the fields of history, social science, ethics or aesthetics. With regard to the interconnection of the treated topics with social and cultural impacts, there were also cross-subject connections to other teaching subjects, e.g. to Czech language and literature, Art education, but also to Biology, Geography, etc.

Since the Museology section at Masaryk University does not intentionally build its own collection holding, we collaborate in the preparation and realization of the exhibition with many museums or other cultural institutions, either in the form of various loans of objects, substitutes and copies or by providing visual or other usable material.

The basis of all exhibitions consists of exhibition panels, displayed exhibits, and the use of video technology. The travelling part then consists primarily of exhibition panels, using a simple roll-up with its own stand system. Their main advantages are low space requirements, high mobility and easy handling, i.e. easy portability and storage, undemanding transport and quick installation. The exhibition panels are supplemented by a museum suitcase containing copies, replicas, 3D models, etc. and various aids related to the accompanying activities.

The exhibition *Baráky u Svatobořic : Pohled do dějin 1914 – 1950* (The barracks at Svatobořice: A look into the history 1914–1950)

The first exhibition project, based on the above-mentioned foundations, was an exhibition thematically focused on the history, significance and legacy of the Svatobořice internment camp,⁵² which is connected to several years of successful efforts of the local community in the village of Svatobořice-Mistřín in South Moravia (Kyjov region, Hodonín region) to create a

⁵² TIŠLIAR, Pavol, MAŽÁROVÁ, Monika, JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie. *Baráky u Svatobořic : Pohled do dějin 1914 – 1950*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2019.



Fig. 1: *The exhibition Baráky u Svatobořic : Pobled do dějin 1914 – 1950 in Secondary school of informatics, postal administration and finance Brno. Photo: author.*

dignified monument in the original area of the internment camp.⁵³ The exhibition was opened in the premises of the Memorial and Museum of the Internment Camp in Svatobořice in May 2019.

The topic of the exhibition in Svatobořice is a relatively complex issue, which comprises not only the history of the camp in 1914–1950, when the purpose of the camp has changed quite often (refugee, emigration and internment camp, old-aged home, home for sick, and hospital camp), but also the difficult fate of many people, including small children, who went through the internment camp during World War II. In terms of capacity, it was one of the largest camps in our region, and its scope was undoubtedly not only local. The topic therefore required the search for broader contemporary contexts, related not only to the history of southern Moravia, but also the Czech Republic or Czechoslovakia as a whole, and in some moments also to wider Central European contexts. We used a diachronic and a synchronic research approach, and at the same time, in addition to broader interpretations, the topic also reached into micro-history, basically to the level of an individual's fate. When treating the topic, it was thus impossible to avoid the expression of various emotions, assessment and expression of good and evil, mutual tolerance, coping with the period of oppression, solving various economic and social, but also cultural problems of the inter-war and war periods of the 1st half of the 20th century. It is therefore a relatively complex issue, complicated by the effort to adapt it in an understandable form to the target audience of the exhibition, namely middle schoolers and high school youth.

As regards the basic approaches to the topic, dominant was the interpretation of individual phenomena and their contextuality, containing some elements of the narrative. The preparation of the exhibition project mainly consisted of a thorough archival research in several archives,

⁵³ <https://www.svatoborice-mistrin.cz/turista/internacni-tabor-svatoborice/internacni-tabor/> [online 2023-03-13].

libraries, several museum collections, but also in the collection of the municipality of Svatobořice-Mistřín, which was made available to students.

The topic of the exhibition is divided into seven thematic units, which do not only directly copy the historical stages of the development of the camp, although their chronological order was respected. With regard to the rich but also complicated history of the camp, we focused primarily on capturing the main elements of the development. The opening paragraph on the exhibition panels outlines the essence of the thematic focus. The opening paragraph and the explanatory texts contain a highlighted selection of essential ideas/words/keywords, which make it possible to read within a short time the main and essential ideas contained in the thematic unit and make it easier for students to orient themselves in the sub-themes of the exhibition.

The pictorial material includes mainly reproductions of period photographs, documenting the gradual development of the camp complex. Visual design also comprises reference elements, tables, plans and floor plans of the camp, maps of Austria-Hungary and of the Czech Republic. Special mention should be made of drawings and paintings by selected interned artists, as well as photographs of preserved handiwork of internees (bone and leather brooches, rag dolls, etc., provided for the exhibition by several museums) and selected quotes from the memoirs of internees. For the sake of clarity, one of the panels serves as a timeline with the most significant events from the history of the Svatobořice camp listed in brief.



Fig. 2: Museum suitcase from the exhibition *Baráky u Svatobořic : Pohled do dějin 1914 – 1950*.

The first thematic unit was the establishment of a refugee camp and its gradual construction development in the years 1914–1920. The second unit is devoted to the Czechoslovak emigration station (1921–1933), through which thousands of people, mainly from the eastern regions of Czechoslovakia, have passed in search of work and happiness abroad. The motif of the



Fig. 3: Elementary school students' activity with the museum suitcase and its result. Primary school and kindergarten Brno. Photo: author.

third panel is the placement of the Brno home for sick and old-aged (1921–1935) in the Svatobořice camp. For a long time, the area of the camp also became the headquarters of the gendarmerie station (1923–1942) in Svatobořice. In the next thematic unit, more space is given to the establishment of the internment camp (1942–1945) and the events that preceded it. The fifth thematic unit, comprising two panels, is focused on everyday life in the internment camp (1942–1945). It mentions its division into male and female sections and points to the relatively strict daily routine and labour duties of the internees. Small children were also interned in the camp. A special thematic unit deals with the post-war period of development, when the camp regained the form of a refugee camp (Greek refugees), but also played the role of an old-aged home and a hospital centre. Finally, the last panel is mainly intended to promote the local Svatobořice Memorial and Museum of the Internment Camp, which is managed by the municipality of Svatobořice-Mistřín.

The museum suitcase belonging to the Svatobořice exhibition contains a comprehensive programme of activities. Their number was quite large and the basic educational programme for the exhibition was relatively wide-ranging. The learning objectives were defined in three areas. The first was related to terminology and its correct understanding in order to define the concepts of the refugee camp and the concentration camp, including individual forms and types, and the difference between them. The second objective was aimed at the historical development of the Svatobořice camp in 1914–1950, and finally, using the example of Svatobořice, students had to demonstrate how general history is reflected in the regional context, but also in the fate of an individual. The suitcase also contained objects and tools for the basic educational programme, planned for two lessons.⁵⁴ The students were meant to use various copies, replicas, substitutes, 3D models, etc., which were linked to a specific period of the development of the camp, or symbolized a certain phenomenon. The suitcase thus contained a replica of a doll, a gendarme cap, a hat worn by Jewish men, an enamel sign with the inscription: “*Today's ration exhausted*”, referring to the difficult conditions in the camp and the rationing system, as well as other objects.

During the educational programme, students are divided into 3–4 groups and each of them receives its own “package”, containing objects, but also copies of various documents, photos, scaled-down exhibition panels or their parts and other items related to a specific stage of the development of the Svatobořice camp. The result of their research is their own design of an

⁵⁴ TIŠLIAR et al. *Baráky u Svatobořic...*, pp. 57–59.

exhibition panel – poster, which would capture some moments considered essential by them. Afterwards, they presented their panel designs to the other classmates.

Except for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Svatobořice exhibition was and currently still is touring very successfully in primary and secondary schools, especially in the region of southern Moravia.

The exhibition *Doba (před)covidová : Epidemie v minulosti a současnosti* (The (pre-)COVID era: Epidemics in the past and present)

The second large-scale exhibition project was realized during the COVID-19 pandemic and was thematically inspired by this issue. We dealt with the history of epidemics that affected



Fig. 4: Picture from the educational programme for the exhibition *Doba (před)covidová : Epidemie v minulosti a současnosti*. Part of the exhibition.⁵⁶ Photo: author.



Fig. 5: The character of Prof. Raška is stylised and animated on the exhibition panels.

⁵⁵ TIŠLIAR, Pavol, MAŽÁROVÁ, Monika. *Putovní výstava: Doba (před)covidová : Teoretický, koncepční a empirický pohled*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2021.

⁵⁶ JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie, TIŠLIAR, Pavol (eds.). *Doba (před)covidová : Epidemie v minulosti a současnosti. Materiály a statě*. Bratislava: MKD, 2021, 273 p.

Central Europe and especially the region of southern Moravia.⁵⁵ Although the same basic concept of the exhibition project was used, consisting of exhibition panels, a suitcase and a handbook, a different method of presentation was applied and we also separately published a collected volume of student materials and articles, which was the result of student heuristics in the preparatory

We interpreted the history of epidemics as a reminiscence of health and social crises in the past, where the selection of individual thematic units was also connected with the environment of South Moravia. The target group as well as the focus of the touring exhibition on the school environment remained the same.

In the case of this exhibition, the authors were not afraid to experiment, to extend the stories also by fictitious dialogues or monologues “mentioning death” as a result of the disease. The authors decided on a more personal approach to the presentation of the topic and incorporated also some

distinctive elements of the narrative into the presentation. They were primarily represented by one of the most important Czechoslovak epidemiologists, Prof. Karel Raška, who made Czechoslovak epidemiology famous for his successes against smallpox epidemics. He contributed to the definitive suppression of this disease, which has accompanied human society practically since prehistoric times. In the exhibition, K. Raška acts as a guide, an enlivening element that actively participates in various dialogues, discussions or plays the role of an explanatory expert. He goes through individual epidemics and holds a dialogue with important discoverers of diseases, but also of medicines, or with various personalities who directly experienced the epidemic. The character of Prof. Raška is stylised and animated on the exhibition panels, with the aim to make him more accessible to the target group of young visitors. Narrative elements are also found in other parts of the panels, where other figures of the aforementioned discoverers and personalities come to life and explain facts related to individual diseases. A combination of the context and elements of the narrative thus created the prerequisites for a simpler understanding of the issue. It was also supplemented with interesting graphic visuals. In addition to photographic materials, schematic pictures in various versions were used as a special element. The schematic depictions refer to relationships, connections, but also conflicts. Their nature is primarily illustrative and explanatory. We also used specially designed graphical symbols (pictograms) not only for quick recognition and easier remembering of the problem, but also as a meaningful and apposite reference element close to the present-day young audience, which is used to working with pictograms on social networks.

In this exhibition, many reference and explanatory elements were used. The first group is represented not only by the aforementioned schematic depictions, but also by tables, graphs, map sketches supplemented with other data with an interpretative dimension. The texts were divided into an opening paragraph, which was often symbolically retold by Prof. Raška or another historical figure, and the accompanying texts that dealt with selected focus questions. An enlivening element on the panels is the question “*Did you know...*”, which was used to explain something significant or to point out some rarity or curiosity.

Conceptually, the topic was divided into 14 thematic units. In addition to the timeline with mostly only approximate dates and estimated numbers of victims of individual epidemics, the first topic was about human society as a part of living and evolving nature. People domesticated various wild animals, which in large quantities became the reservoir of various diseases and infections that became endemic to man. That is why one of the elements of this panel is a map with domesticated animals, but also with pictograms symbolically indicating various ways of transmission of diseases.

Other panels were already dominated by the topics of individual epidemics. Starting with the epidemic of the first plague, through smallpox, on which Prof. Raška holds a dialogue with Edward Jenner, who came up with the idea of how to vaccinate and prevent this disease. We also dealt with typhus, cholera and tuberculosis, which in the 19th century were widespread diseases that affected social and cultural life. We have not left out venereal diseases, syphilis and HIV-AIDS, which are also frequent causes of death, but we know how to protect ourselves from them.

Influenza in its various forms can also be a dangerous viral disease. That is why even Prof. Raška does not underestimate it and explains to the schoolchildren that it is a frequent and unpredictable disease. The panel mentions the difficult times of the so-called Spanish flu and

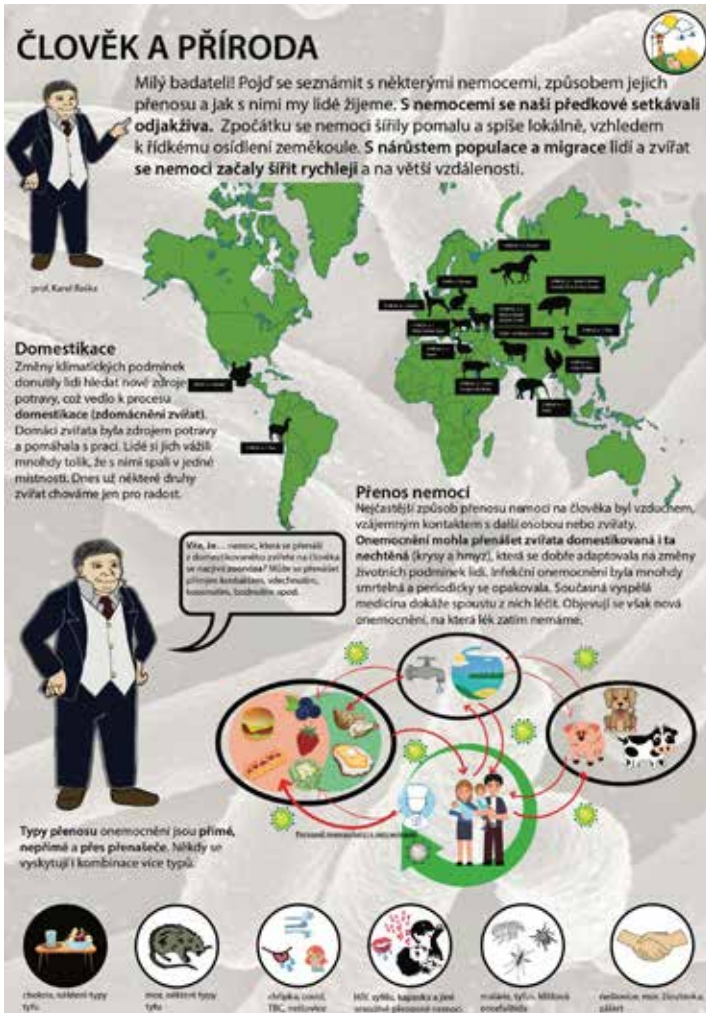


Fig. 6: Sample of the exhibition panel Man and Nature.

previous touring exhibition.⁵⁷ The educational programme is in many ways linked to the concept of the exhibition. The motif is a relatively near future, taking place in 2121, when humanity is experiencing another viral pandemic. But our ancestors left us a legacy, maybe even some medicine, which is hidden in a locked suitcase. We need to find the key to it by searching in cultural, historical and natural-scientific contexts. The educational programme uses worksheets referring to exhibition panels, various photographic and other three-dimensional material (e.g. respirator, bandage, disinfectant gel, protective mask of a plague doctor, protective clothing, test tubes, etc.), with which the students work and are looking for clues. The expected result is, in addition to finding the key to the suitcase, mainly the discussion on individual objects and problems that the students encountered during the search. The expected benefits of the activities are not only the students' acquired knowledge of the history of epidemics, using specific examples, but also the knowledge from the fields of biology, chemistry and geography, where

a sad story is told by the talented expressionist painter Egon Schiele, who died together with his wife from the Spanish flu.

The issue of the COVID-19 pandemic was elaborated by students in two panels, which are dominated by the manifestations and reflections/feelings of isolation, empty streets, individual loneliness and fear of the unknown, i.e. feelings that the society experienced at the time of the culminating pandemic. Therefore, these two panels let us feel a stronger, but simply expressed, symbolism of the mentioned emotions.

The last thematic unit with the symptomatic title "How to deal with epidemics?" is mainly devoted to hygiene and anti-epidemic measures, including vaccination.

Another part of this exhibition project is a suitcase with accompanying activities and a handbook with the same functions as in the pre-

⁵⁷ TIŠLIAR, MAŽÁROVÁ, Putovní výstava...

students get familiar with viruses and bacteria, their natural environment and the contribution of science in dealing with various diseases, generalizing epidemics as a natural part of the life of human society.

Several public institutions, including museums, also showed interest in this exhibition. However, it is offered as a priority to schools.

The exhibition *Slované – život a smrt* (The Slavs – life and death)

Finally, the latest touring exhibition, which was opened in June 2023, is thematically related to one of the main specializations of the Department of Archaeology and Museology. It is focused on the early medieval period and is related to the arrival and life of the Slavic population in the region of southern Moravia. The original material basis of the exhibition consisted of a rich study collection of archaeological artefacts at the DAM, which is the result of long-term archaeological research and excavations in southern Moravia, especially at the Pohansko stronghold near Břeclav, but also in Mikulčice. Chronologically, we focused on the period from the arrival of the Slavs (6th century) to the demise of Great Moravia (beginning of the 10th century), a state whose centre was situated in present-day Moravia. Individual thematic units were focused on the areas of material and spiritual culture and burial rites, that is, they were directed towards the history of everyday life.

This exhibition project also used a concept where the exhibition consisted of a panel presentation, which is considered the basis of the travelling part of the exhibition, and a showcase

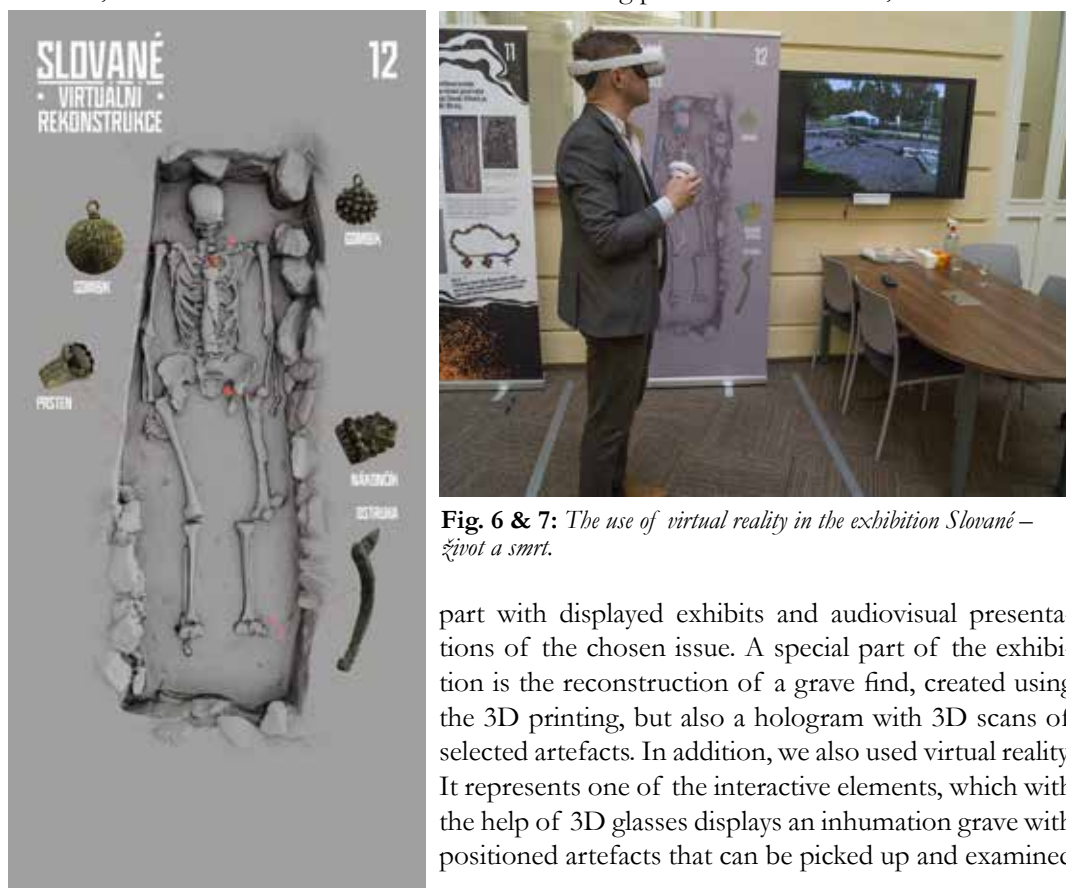


Fig. 6 & 7: The use of virtual reality in the exhibition *Slované – život a smrt*.

part with displayed exhibits and audiovisual presentations of the chosen issue. A special part of the exhibition is the reconstruction of a grave find, created using the 3D printing, but also a hologram with 3D scans of selected artefacts. In addition, we also used virtual reality. It represents one of the interactive elements, which with the help of 3D glasses displays an inhumation grave with positioned artefacts that can be picked up and examined



Fig. 8: Educational programme with pupils using objects from the museum suitcase. Photo: M. Molnárová.

in detail using the remote control. These artefacts are Great Moravian buttons, a finger ring, a belt end, a spur, and other items, that is, objects that the Slavs wore. The VR glasses have also become part of the museum suitcase, so they will travel together with the exhibition panels.

Conceptually, the exhibition was divided into three main thematic units. In addition to the timeline, which chronologically captures the most significant historical events, the first thematic unit deals with the arrival of the Slavs, settlement conditions and ways of living. In the second part, focused mainly on material culture, the students got familiar with what the Slavs have produced, i.e. with crafts and agricultural activities, especially clothing and jewellery. The third thematic block was mainly devoted to spiritual culture, changes in burial rites, original paganism and newly adopted Christianity. The topic is presented primarily contextually and interpretatively. The fundamental graphic motif became fire as one of the main elements worshiped by the Slavs. The exhibition panels also contain other interesting graphic visuals

and drawings that enliven individual thematic units and are complemented by many photographic reproductions of reconstructed objects, which the Slavic people have used in everyday life. Similar to previous museum projects, an opening paragraph was used, indicating the content of the panel.

In addition to the mentioned VR glasses, the museum suitcase also contains other substitutes and replicas. There is a replica of a typical Slavic ceramic vessel, made by a special method. It dates back to the 8th–9th centuries. An important element of the prepared educational programme is the so-called pagan idol from Kouřim, depicting faces, probably of the Slavic pantheon. This wooden statuette, which is one of the oldest sculptural works in the Czech Republic, was 3D printed for our needs. In addition, the suitcase contains replicas of Great Moravian buttons, a cross, but also wax tablets and a metal stylus, with which the more educated Slavs were taught to write in Glagolitic script, which was brought to Great Moravia by the brothers Constantine and Methodius. The objects in the suitcase are either metal replicas or 3D printed copies.

The educational programme for the exhibition is set in a story in which students observe the funeral of one of the Slavic men. The story will allow them to explore important aspects of Slavic culture, customs and everyday life. The grave goods and artefacts of the buried man serve as a key to understanding the past of the Slavs and their legacy that continues to the present. In this educational programme, students also work in groups and together create one large worksheet. Each group receives one object (ceramic vessel, belt end, cross, idol), fills in their worksheet and searches for contextual information about the given artefact on the exhibition

panels. After filling in the worksheet, each group informs the other classmates about the results of their search.

In conclusion

Compact touring exhibition projects are quite widely used, especially in the non-museum environment. Although they mostly do not contain authentic collection items, but are rather based on various replicas, substitutes and models, their importance for the museum institution can be considerable. Either in the form of an active marketing notification of a standard exhibition in the museum's premises, or created for informational purposes and dealing with topics that resonate in the relevant museum with regard to the specialization of its collection holdings. They thus offer the possibility of cooperation with communities, schools and other interest organizations, or simply draw attention to the existence of a museum in the region.

For the field of Museology at Masaryk University, this type of exhibitions has become the basis of an active collaboration with primary and secondary schools, since the touring exhibition projects are primarily aimed at the school environment. At the same time, they are also the result of cooperation with various museum facilities, as a great deal of information which is part of the exhibition project is secured, for example, by loans from these institutions. For museology students, it is the preparation and realization of an exhibition that contains all the essential elements of exhibition making in museum practice. It enables them to work comprehensively, from the elaboration of the topic, through the preparation of the storyline and contextual relationships of individual parts of the exhibition, to its direct implementation, including graphic visuals. At the same time, we consider it very beneficial to use the knowledge of the students' deeper thematic orientation for the preparation of an educational programme and other accompanying activities, which are subsequently realized in schools together with the exhibition and explain and interpret its selected thematic parts and problems in a simple, playful and stimulating way. At the same time, selected students can lecture the educational programme in schools and thus gain new experience in the field of museum pedagogy.

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