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HOW SUSTAINABLE IS DANCE AS ICH?

Closing Conference of the Project Dance - ICH:
Dance as ICH: New Models of Facilitating
Participatory Dance Events



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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

HOW SUSTAINABLE IS DANCE AS ICH?

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

21–23 May 2025, Atrij ZRC, Novi trg 2, Ljubljana, Slovenia

MEDNARODNA KONFERENCA

**KAKO TRAJNOSTEN JE PLES
KOT NESNOVNA KULTURNA DEDIŠČINA?**

PROGRAM IN POVZETKI

21.–23. maja 2025, Atrij ZRC, Novi trg 2, Ljubljana, Slovenija



Založba ZRC

Ljubljana 2025

Programme | Program

TUESDAY | TOREK, 20 MAY 2025

(Pre-Conference Day | predkonferenčni dan)

- 18:00–19:00 Registration | Registracija
- 19:00 Opening of the exhibition *Dance – Europe's Living Heritage in Motion* (at the conference venue) | Odprtje razstave *Ples – živa dediščina Evrope v gibanju*

WEDNESDAY | SREDA, 21 MAY 2025

- 8:30–9:30 Registration | Registracija
- 9:30–11:00 **Welcome Ceremony | Otvoritvena slovesnost**
Addresses by the Representatives of the Organising Institutions | Nagovori predstavnikov organizatorjev
Prof. Dr. Oto Luthar, Director of the ZRC SAZU | Direktor ZRC SAZU
Dr. Mojca Kovačič, Head of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU | Predstojnica Glasbenonarodopisnega inštituta ZRC SAZU
Blaž Verbič, Acting Director of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum | Vršilec dolžnosti direktorja Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja
Introductory Speeches | Uvodna govora
Špela Spanžel, Director-General of the Cultural Heritage Directorate, Ministry of Culture, Republic of Slovenia | Generalna direktorica Direktorata za kulturno dediščino, Ministrstvo za kulturo, Republika Slovenija
Tøne Erlien Myrvold, Project Manager of the Dance - ICH Project | Vodja projekta Dance - ICH
- 11:00–11:30 Coffee Break | Odmor za kavo
- 11:30–12:30 **Keynote Lecture | Uvodno vabljeno predavanje**
Chair | Vodi: Rebeka Kunej
Andriy Nahachewsky:
Dance and Semi-Tangible Cultural Heritage | Ples in pol-snovna kulturna dediščina

12:30–14:30 Lunch Break | Odmor za kosilo

14:30–16:00 **Session 1 | Sekcija 1**

Chair | Vodi: Dóra Pál-Kovács

Rebeka Kunej:

Dancing in Horjul in the 21st Century as Dance Heritage or Dance Tradition? | Plesanje v Horjulu v 21. stoletju kot plesna dediščina ali plesna tradicija?

Siri Mæland:

Sustainability of Participatory Dance Events – Revisiting the Importance of Human Relations and Interaction Patterns | Trajnostnost participatornih plesnih dogodkov – ponovno preučevanje pomena medosebnih odnosov in vzorcev interakcij

Zoi N. Margari and Maria I. Koutsouba:

Sustainability and Resilience of Traditional Dance and Dancing as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Greece: Ethnographic Insights and Perspectives | Trajnostnost in odpornost tradicionalnega plesa in plesanja kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine v Grčiji: etnografski vpogledi in perspektive

16:00–16:30 Coffee Break | Odmor za kavo

16:30–18:00 **Session 2 | Sekcija 2**

Chair | Vodi: Georgios Fountzoulas

Mats Nilsson:

Can Dancing Be Sustainable and ICH? | Ali je ples lahko trajnosten in del nesnovne kulturne dediščine?

Chi-Fang Chao:

Sustaining Dance as the Intangible Cultural Heritage: An Okinawan Example in Japan | Ohranjanje plesa kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine: primer z Okinave na Japonskem

Konstantinos Dimopoulos:

Why Safeguard a Dead Dance and Dance Ritual? The Case of the *Sergiani* Dance in Megala Kalyvia, Trikala, Greece | Zakaj ohranjati izumrli ples in plesni ritual? Primer plesa *Sergiani* v vasi Megala Kalyvia, Trikala

THURSDAY | ČETRTEK, 22 MAY 2025

9:00–10:30

Session 3 | Sekcija 3

Chair | Vodi: Maria I. Koutsouba

**Tøne Erlien Myrvold, Celina Gallo, Tone Fegran
and Eirik Fagerslett:**

Facilitating a Process for Co-creating Action Points
in Fulfilling Needs and Wishes for the Dancing Future in
Trondheim | Omogočanje procesa soustvarjanja aktivnosti za
izpolnitev potreb in želja po plesni prihodnosti v Trondheimu

Mieke Witkamp and Debora Plouy:

Empowering Heritage Communities: Rethinking Institutional
Support for Sustainable Folkdance | Opolnomočenje
dediščinskih skupnosti: ponovni razmislek o institucionalni
podpori za trajnost ljudskega plesa

Amandine Leporc:

Les Sauts Béarnais, a Lever for Cultural and Local Action |
Les Sauts Béarnais, vzvod za kulturno in lokalno delovanje

10:30–11:00

Coffee Break | Odmor za kavo

11:00–12:30

Session 4 | Sekcija 4

Chair | Vodi: Chariton Charitonidis

Aristoula Toli:

Transmitting Tradition: Dance Community between Epirus
and Athens | Prenašanje tradicije: plesna skupnost med
Epirom in Atenami

Miloš Rašić:

Krivo Kolo: Dance, Nostalgia and Sustainability in Transnational
Space | *Krivo kólo*: ples, nostalgija in trajnostnost
v transnacionalnem prostoru

Nóra Kovács:

Authenticity, Ethnicity, Ownership? The Peculiar Dynamics
of Translocal Social Dance Communities of ICH in a Globalised
World and the Example of Tango Argentino | Avtentičnost,
etničnost, lastništvo? Svojevrstna dinamika translokalnih
družabnih plesnih skupnosti nesnovne kulturne dediščine v glo-
baliziranem svetu in primer argentinskega tanga

- 12:30–14:30 Lunch Break | Odmor za kosilo
- 14:30–16:00 **Session 5 | Sekcija 5**
Chair | Vodi: Tone Fegran
- Adela Pukl and Anja Jerin:**
Music and Dance at the Intersection of the UNESCO Paradigm and Museology | Glasba in ples na stičišču Unescove paradigme in muzeologije
- Eszter Csonka-Takács and Fruzsina Arkhely:**
Dance Communities and Museum Representation in the Practices of Intangible Cultural Heritage | Plesne skupnosti in muzejska reprezentacija v praksah nesnovne kulturne dediščine
- Raluca Ioana Andrei and Simona Malearov:**
Facilitating Dance Activities in an Ethnographic Museum. Case Study: Lads' Group from Rucăr Village, Braşov County | Omogočanje plesnih dejavnosti v etnografskem muzeju. Študija primera: fantovska skupina iz vasi Rucăr, okrožje Braşov
- 16:00–16:30 Coffee Break | Odmor za kavo
- 16:30–17:30 **Session 6 | Sekcija 6**
Chair | Vodi: Debora Plouy
- Maria Magdalena Garbagnoli:**
Embodying Heritage: The Vital Contribution of Basque Dance to Heritage and Museum Spaces | Utelešenje dediščine: ključni prispevek baskovskega plesa k dediščinskim in muzejskim prostorom
- Mantha Ziva:**
Greek Traditional Dance and Museums in the Hellenic Region | Grški tradicionalni ples in muzeji v helenski regiji
- 19:00–21:00 **Dance Events of Practice Exhibition | Plesna delavnica učenja plesov**
Venue | Lokacija: Slovene Ethnographic Museum | Slovenski etnografski muzej, Metelkova ulica 2, Ljubljana

FRIDAY | PETEK, 23 MAY 2024

9:00–10:30

Session 7 | Sekcija 7

Chair | Vodi: Zoi N. Margari

Maria Małanicz-Przybylska:

Bringing Traditional Dance Back into Social Practice | Ponovno vključevanje tradicionalnega plesa v družbeno prakso

Drago Kunej:

The Importance of Music and Musicians for the Sustainability and Resilience of Folk Dance | Glasba in glasbeniki kot pomembni akterji trajnostnosti in odpornosti ljudskega plesa

Chariton Charitonidis:

Converting Dances (as ICH) into Dancing: The Case of the “Dance in the Square” Project in the Municipality of Hellinikon-Argyroupolis, Greece | Iz plesov (kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine) v plesno dejavnost: primer projekta »Ples na trgu« v občini Hellinikon-Argyroupolis, Grčija

10:30–11:00

Coffee Break | Odmor za kavo

11:00–12:30

Session 8 | Sekcija 8

Chair | Vodi: Adela Pukl

Dóra Pál-Kovács:

The Sustainability of a Local Dance Culture through the Example of the Sárköz Wedding | Trajnostnost lokalne plesne kulture na primeru poroke v regiji Sárköz

Georgios Fountzoulas:

Challenging Sustainability of Dance as ICH in Greece: The Case of *Balos* Dance from Kythnos (Thermia) Island | Izzivi trajnostnosti plesa kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine v Grčiji: primer plesa *Balos* z otoka Kythnos (Thermia)

Anja Verderber:

Polka and Its Sustainability in the Slovenian Context: The Emergence and Current Popularity of This Dance-Music Genre | Polka in njena trajnostnost v slovenskem kontekstu: nastanek in trenutna priljubljenost tega plesno-glasbenega žanra

12:30–14:30

Lunch Break | Odmor za kosilo

14:30–16:00

Session 9 | Sekcija 9

Chair | Vodi: Konstantinos Dimopoulos

Zuzana Palanová:

“There Are a Couple of Reasons Why We Dance Less Nowadays”: Springboards of the Sustainable Environment for a Dance Repertoire in Village Folklore Groups in the Liptov Region | »Obstaja več razlogov, zakaj danes plešemo manj«: izhodišča trajnostnega okolja za plesni repertoar v vaških folklornih skupinah v regiji Liptov

Kendra Stepputat, Magdalena Maria Wolf, Bernadette Planner and Caroline Krasser:

Sustainable Network Structures in Styrian Folkdance Member Recruitment | Trajnostne mrežne strukture pri vključevanju novih članov v štajerske folklorne skupine

Tomaž Simetinger:

Developing Support to a Sustainable Community of Dancers in Folk Dance Ensembles | Razvijanje podpore za trajnostno plesno skupnost v folklornih skupinah

16:00–16:30

Coffee Break | Odmor za kavo

16:30–17:30

Session 10 | Sekcija 10

Chair | Vodi: Chi-Fang Chao

Vesna Bajić Stojiljković:

Sustainability and Resilience of Dance Practices through Various Social and Stage Performances of the Serbian Community in Slovenia | Trajnostnost in odpornost plesnih praks skozi različne družbene in odrske uprizoritve srbske skupnosti v Sloveniji

Tanya Merchant:

Queer and Trans Inclusivity Efforts as Sustainability Strategies in Urban Contradance | Prizadevanja za vključevanje kvir in trans oseb kot strategije trajnosti v urbanem *kontradánsu*

17:30–18:00

Final Discussion | Zaključna razprava

19:00–21:00

Closing Ceremony and Dance Events of Practice Exhibition | Zaključna slovesnost in plesni dogodek na razstavi

Venue | Lokacija: Atrij ZRC, ZRC SAZU, Novi trg 2

SATURDAY | SOBOTA, 24 MAY 2025

(Post-Conference Day | pokonferenčni dan)

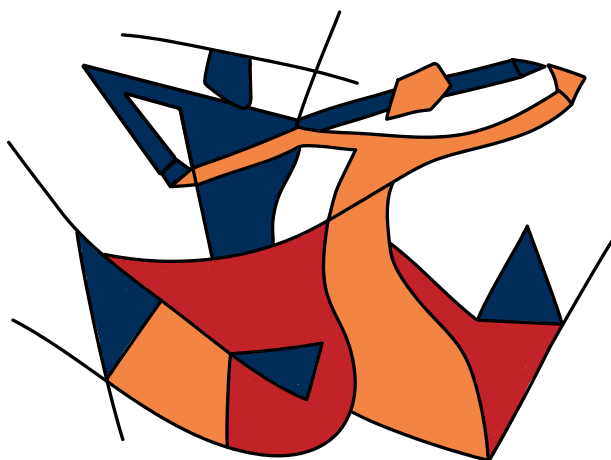
10:00–16:00 Partners' Meetings | Partnerski sestanki

20:00–24:00 Field Research: Participation in the Dance Event *veselica* |
Terensko raziskovanje: Udeležba na plesnem dogodku –
veselici

SUNDAY | NEDELJA, 25 MAY 2025

(Post-Conference Day | pokonferenčni dan)

10:00–16:00 Partners' Meetings | Partnerski sestanki



Keynote Lecture | Uvodno vabljeno predavanje

Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky, Professor Emeritus

University of Alberta, Alberta, Canada
andriyn@ualberta.ca

Dance and Semi-Tangible Cultural Heritage Ples in pol-snovna kulturna dediščina

In this paper, I discuss the concepts “intangible” and “heritage” in relation to the 1972 and 2003 UNESCO heritage conventions. First, I argue that we should continue to differentiate between the concepts of “tradition” and “heritage”. I propose that traditions are repeated activities in our ethnosphere that are normal and integrated into our cultural world. Traditions are very common and are useful in many ways, though as insiders, we are not always alert to them on a conscious level. Heritage elements are a particular subset of traditions for which the culture bearers are self-conscious historically or cross-culturally. When a tradition becomes “heritagised”, it gains added value as a symbol of the past or an emblem of a particular culture, and often also acquires other new positive values (and sometimes its older functions and meanings decrease).

Heritagisation is not a random process, but can have ideological, political, technological, economic, aesthetic and other dimensions. Modernity has tended to increase heritagisation overall and the ICH movement has intensified this process sharply.

“Tangible” elements are those that we can physically touch, but the concept is commonly extended to concreteness in other ways. Heritagisation is directly related to tangibility and inversely related to intangibility. Indeed, when a tradition becomes regarded as heritage, it is typically much more documented, described, measured, delimited, commodified, “linearised”, standardised and stabilised. I elaborate these processes in the presentation with examples.

Dance is often described as an intangible activity, though I propose that this applies to dances as non-reflective “traditions” more than to dances as self-conscious “heritage”. Insofar as the ICH convention emphasises that communities of culture bearers should participate in developing inventories and nominations, it privileges

those traditions that are already pre-heritagised. People that are less historically/culturally self-conscious about a tradition are not as motivated and thereby it is not as represented. In several ways, the dance elements inscribed in national inventories and UNESCO ICH lists are better described as “semi-tangible” cultural heritage. This observation has potential implications for bearers of traditional culture, for heritage managers and for people who imagine the future of the UNESCO cultural conventions.

Abstracts | Povzetki



Raluca Ioana Andrei, Simona Malearov

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Facilitating Dance Activities in an Ethnographic Museum. Case Study: Lads' Group from Rucăr Village, Braşov County

Omogočanje plesnih dejavnosti v etnografskem muzeju. Študija primera: fantovska skupina iz vasi Rucăr, okrožje Braşov

ASTRA Museum “grows heritage communities”, always taking into account that if the heritage resources and knowledge remain and are used by the community, they can generate income and contribute to sustainable development at local and regional levels (<https://muzeulastra.ro>).

When it comes to dance as a living expression of intangible cultural heritage, ASTRA Museum initiates documentation and research projects that involve audio-visual recordings, interviews with community members and collecting relevant materials. The museum also organises exhibitions and cultural events that include representative cultural goods for the community, as well as interactive presentations or practical demonstrations.

Through exhibitions and educational programmes on various themes, ASTRA Museum engages its audience in a participatory way in getting acquainted with intangible heritage. These programmes include folk dance workshops, lessons on musical expression or other activities that promote the local cultural traditions. The Lads' Group from the village of Rucăr was selected by ASTRA Museum as a case study as part of the project Dance as ICH: New Models of Facilitating Participatory Dance Events due to the field research undertaken by ASTRA Museum's specialists that documented several communities from the Țara Oltului Region starting in the 1950s.

Vesna Bajić Stojiljković

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Sustainability and Resilience of Dance Practices through Various Social and Stage Performances of the Serbian Community in Slovenia

Trajnostnost in odpornost plesnih praks skozi različne družbene in odrske uprizoritve srbske skupnosti v Sloveniji

The Serbian community in Slovenia has been involved in organised dance events and stage practices since the 1990s. Dance events organised by cultural and artistic associations throughout Slovenia are particularly important for the safeguarding of Serbian culture and tradition.

Celebrations of cultural society anniversaries, folklore concerts and festivals, dance seminars and workshops address the importance of sustainable structures and resilience of dance practices organised with the aim of community's social inclusion, well-being and intergenerational transmission. All these events are co-shaped by the people of the Serbian cultural association, including participators – dancers, musicians and observers. Days of Serbian Culture is a central multi-day event organised once a year in different parts of Slovenia, presenting elements of tangible and intangible cultural heritage through various organised forms – dance, music, literature and theatre. Traditional dance and stage folk dance have an important role in these manifestations in which their roles are intertwined with social inclusion. In this presentation, I will explore its vibrant and evolving role for a sustainable development of the Serbian community within postmodern society in Slovenia, its enduring significance and adaptability in a rapidly changing world. I will discuss different social and stage performances through the form of the “folk dance choreography” over the past three decades and their evolution, challenges and contemporary movements that affect dance practices nowadays.

Chi-Fang Chao

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Sustaining Dance as the Intangible Cultural Heritage: An Okinawan Example in Japan

Ohranjanje plesa kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine: primer z Okinave na Japonskem

In view of cultural sustainability, this paper discusses the dynamic interplay between local, national and global institutions and forces with a peculiar ethnographic example of Okinawan dance that has been sustained as a living tradition and designated as the intangible cultural heritage in Japan. Adopting the concept of heritage as a modern notion (Harrison 2013) and a historical fact (Oshima 2007), the paper traces the evolution of the Japanese system of Cultural Assets nurtured under specific historic trends of nationalism and folklorism. It serves as the scheme against which the local living tradition of the Okinawan dances have been recognised, re-categorised and re-integrated into the national cultural repository. After the announcement of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, sustainability of the Okinawan dances also develops its contemporary and global strategies. Through the author's long-term ethnographic study and participation in the relevant forum, this paper demonstrates the sustainability of dance as intangible cultural heritage, resulting from the dynamic interplay of continuation of traditional practices (the local), education of performing arts (the national) and promotion of tourism (the global).

Chariton Charitonidis

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Converting Dances (as ICH) into Dancing: The Case of the "Dance in the Square" Project in the Municipality of Hellinikon–Argyroupolis, Greece

Iz plesov (kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine) v plesno dejavnost: primer projekta »Ples na trgu« v občini Hellinikon–Argyroupolis, Grčija

Since 2017, in the town of Hellinikon-Argyroupolis (South Athens regional unit, Attica, Greece), the Municipal Department of Traditional Dance has initiated a project called "Dance in the Square". The project includes two types of "open-air" dance events in the town's public squares. The first type refers to "open-air dance classes" with recorded music, which combine teaching and participatory dancing in a simultaneously educational and entertaining context. The second one refers to "participatory dance events" with live music. Both events succeed in bringing people together on a public dancefloor and the actualisation of the project on a regular basis could comprise a good safeguarding practice of Intangible Cultural Heritage in contemporary urban settings. However, which ICH do we refer to? The aim of this paper is to examine the content and the characteristics of the dance repertoire regarding the "Dance in the Square" project in the Municipality of Hellinikon-Argyroupolis. The research draws on ethnography, including long term participant observation and interviews, as well as on a process of reflexivity, since I am strongly involved – through multiple roles – in planning and implementing the project. It is argued that in public squares Greek traditional dance, as a genre, is practiced and performed through an urban supra-local approach, which refers to quite a broad and inclusive repertoire out of different local dance traditions. These traditions are contextually interpreted and transmitted as part of a dance class and/or a participatory dance event by an "expert", who acts as a mediator in selecting, delimiting and converting dances (as ICH) into dancing. The participants in this dynamic process become members of a hybrid community with its own living – and fluid – dance tradition, while creating their own perception of Greek traditional dance.

Eszter Csonka-Takács and Fruzsina Arkhely

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Dance Communities and Museum Representation in the Practices of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Plesne skupnosti in muzejska reprezentacija v praksah nesnovne kulturne dediščine

Our presentation aims at exploring the concept of community as a starting point in the examination of the elements of dance heritage on the national inventory of intangible cultural heritage and their representation in museums.

In the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the focus is on communities, as they are the key actors in the recognition, care and maintenance of heritage. As explained by the text of the convention, communities are the maintainers, practitioners and bearers of heritage. It is primarily their responsibility to ensure that heritage is preserved and that the knowledge acquired is passed from generation to generation. However, the convention does not define what is meant by community or community involvement. In order to preserve our intangible heritage and promote sustainable development in Hungary we have adopted a type of methodology that promotes a bottom-up approach, i.e. community participation, rather than a top-down approach. Participation aims at actively involving communities practicing their heritage in addressing issues that affect heritage assets.

The concept of community is difficult to define in today's individualised society. Through the example of dance communities listed on the Hungarian National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage, we examine how community existence can be maintained in the globalised world of the 21st century.

We will also discuss how dance communities are represented in the collections of the Szentendre Hungarian Open Air Museum and at various museum events, as well as how the communities present their heritage in museum settings, including exhibitions, performances and multimedia programmes. We will also examine how this type of representation influences community identity and awareness of heritage in local communities. Museum interactions give visitors the opportunity to understand and experience community cultural traditions more deeply, bringing them closer to their communities. Our presentation explores the relationship and interaction between the museum and the community.

Konstantinos Dimopoulos

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Why Safeguard a Dead Dance and Dance Ritual? The Case of the *Sergiani* Dance in Megala Kalyvia, Trikala, Greece

Zakaj ohranjati izumrli ples in plesni ritual? Primer plesa *Sergiani* v vasi Megala Kalyvia, Trikala, Grčija

If someone surfs the internet and looks at the Dance-ICH website, he/she will notice that one of the main goals is to find sustainable solutions for the future of the dance activity. But what happens when a dance ritual and more specifically a dance is no longer danced? What happens when it does not seem to exist sustainability or there is no future for this dance?

This paper aims to identify challenges that occur when a dance and a dance ritual are no longer performed by the locals. More specifically, it aims to highlight the case of the *Sergiani* ritual and the *Sergiani* dance in the community of Megala Kalyvia, Trikala, Greece, which no longer exist. Moreover, what happens when a great disaster happens and “erases” all the tangible documents that are necessary to insert this dance in the intangible cultural heritage. This paper also aims to spot the difficulties in trying to safeguard this dance and to give answers to the questions that are fundamentally related to this. These questions are, for example, why safeguard this dance, what are the fundamental factors, practices and infrastructures that make this dance sustainable, what needs to be locally adapted and what is the role of the local society or of the researchers in this case.

These are the questions that need to be discussed if the *Sergiani* dance or the *Sergiani* ritual are to be recognised as intangible cultural heritage. It also needs to be discussed who would make the decision about this and according to what criteria.

Georgios Fountzoulas

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Challenging Sustainability of Dance as ICH in Greece: The Case of *Balos* Dance from Kythnos (Thermia) Island

Izzivi trajnostnosti plesa kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine v Grčiji: primer plesa *Balos* z otoka Kythnos (Thermia)

Greek traditional dance, in general, plays an important role even in contemporary Greek society, creating new scopes of transmission and re-defining social practices. In an ever-changing world, many local dance communities seem to be able to renew their traditions and appear resilient in this dynamic process. Such paradigm is the dancing community of the Aegean island of Kythnos (Thermia). The best-known dance of that community, *Balos*, was recently included in the national catalogue of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Greece, however, during fieldwork many questions arose. Why does a living element of local heritage need safeguarding? Who is responsible for this? What is the role of the community or the dance “expert”? Based on the above, the aim of this paper is to highlight the challenges of including a living element in the catalogue of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece, emphasising the issues that arose during fieldwork. The methodology of the study was based on dance ethnography and especially auto-ethnography and self-reflection practices during and after fieldwork. It is argued that the performance of *Balos* still functions in the local society and the dance is not only celebrated as a collective memory. At the same time, a new supra-local community has arisen involving dance “experts”, musicians and dance enthusiasts. In short, *Balos* is performed, managed and transmitted in various ways and by different transmitters, forging a very complex network that balances between the local and supra-local contexts and vice versa. In summary, there are no “legal” and “illegal” administrators of a given dance tradition, however, everyone who is involved in this – even from different perspectives – take their share of the pie. In this dynamic process of constant changes, ICH is not responsible for guarding something static, but for marking the starting point for further discussion, development, transformation and continuation.

Maria Magdalena Garbagnoli

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Embodying Heritage: The Vital Contribution of Basque Dance to Heritage and Museum Spaces

Utelešenje dediščine: ključni prispevek baskovskega plesa dediščinskim in muzejskim prostorom

Dance is an important element of social and cultural life in the Basque Country. With a strong symbolic significance, it serves as a ground for identity negotiations and is a “creator of social ties”. It is characterised by its local roots while simultaneously connecting individuals dispersed throughout the territory, thereby developing its cross-border character. The evolution of the relationships that individuals maintain with this practice reflects the very evolution of the social universe that welcomes it. Today, Basque dancers push their practice beyond traditional social spheres: dance groups perform shows that explore various themes and are presented to the public outside the traditional festival calendar. Moreover, dancers organise themselves into companies or artistic collectives, developing professional or semi-professional activities.

In this context, different groups of *dantzaris* participate in events organised by social and cultural organisations, scientific institutions and museums, among others, presenting innovative and original ways to engage with heritage and museum spaces. Indeed, today, Basque dance occupies these spaces in two main ways, i.e. firstly, through events that feature dance as a central theme of Basque cultural heritage, and secondly, by leveraging the symbolic and representative capacity of dance in events organised around other Basque socio-cultural themes. Dance then appears as a living illustration, an ephemeral complement that enhances communication, and as a practice that encourages public participation and engagement in the event.

To the question, “What is there to exhibit?” Basque dance responds with the following: the community itself is exhibited through the danced expression of relationships, memories, history and art. The immaterial, ephemeral and spontaneous nature of dance allows us to condense the past, present and future of a community, making it an interesting medium for the exhibition of heritage.

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Authenticity, Ethnicity, Ownership? The Peculiar Dynamics of Translocal Social Dance Communities of ICH in a Globalised World and the Example of Tango Argentino

Avtentičnost, etničnost, lastništvo? Svojevrstna dinamika translokalnih družabnih plesnih skupnosti nesnovne kulturne dediščine v globaliziranem svetu in primer argentinskega tanga

The paper focuses on the complex problematics related to the dance practices of translocal social dance communities of ICH. Translocal communities, formed on the basis of ICH dance practices, operate outside the birthplace of the dance convention of a particular ICH. Similarly, their members have different ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. Issues related to authenticity, ownership and community resilience are seen from a different perspective. The “Tango of Argentina and Uruguay” was inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in 2009 to be safeguarded as one of humanity’s outstanding cultural achievements. The paper connects academic and dance community reactions to the patrimonialisation of Argentinean tango. Controversies and shortcomings related to the inscription have been pointed out by several scholars working on tango as a social phenomenon. The criticism concerning the nomination document and the decision about the inscription targeted two principal focus areas and was expressed from two different standpoints. Both miss the inclusion of living grassroots tango communities and what they stand for based on the heritage definition of tango. The empirical part of the paper is based on participation and personal observations of recent trends in the international and especially the European context of tango. The paper discusses the increasing presence of two- or three-day international tango dance events commonly referred to as tango marathons and encuentros milongueros. In the complex, multi-layered and multi-vocal global tango world, these events have been associated with essential, authentic milonga experiences, a sense of prolonged intimacy and community through shared dances and shared dance space.

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The Importance of Music and Musicians for the Sustainability and Resilience of Folk Dance

Glasba in glasbeniki kot pomembni akterji pri trajnostnosti in odpornosti ljudskega plesa

Dance music is generally not meant for listening, but for dancing. And dancing to well-played music is much more enjoyable and inspiring. On the one hand, the active involvement of dancers allows folk dance music to survive, keeping it sustainably in the sphere of folk dancing. On the other hand, suitable folk dance music ensures a continued existence of folk dances. In recent decades, however, it has often been observed that instrumental folk music performed in Slovenia is more suitable for listening than for dancing. This is also the case, for example, in dance music performed by folk dance ensembles and various instrumental forms of the folk music revival movement. In fact, musicians are less and less skilled at playing music for dancing, and their music is moving away from the previously typical danceability. The paper explores the role and importance of instrumental music and musicians for the sustainability and resilience of folk dance, especially in participatory folk dance communities and in the process of folk dance revitalisation. It is based on experiences from Slovenia and emphasises the importance of dance music in the study and revitalisation of dance traditions. By presenting the interweaving of music and dance in the Slovenian folk culture and based on the results of research on the (stage) presentation of music and dance in the context of folk dance ensembles and folk music revival groups, the aim is to present the efforts and experience of folk dance revitalisation so far and draw attention to some starting points and possibilities of attempts at bringing music and dance back from the archives to a local community. Although the dominant role of folk dance is often highlighted in the context of dance heritage, music can play an important role in the sustainability of these activities.

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Dancing in Horjul in the 21st Century as Dance Heritage or Dance Tradition?

Plesanje v Horjulu v 21. stoletju kot plesna dediščina ali plesna tradicija?

The presentation will consider the importance and impact of ethnochoreological research in shaping perceptions of what constitutes the dance heritage of a particular area. Researchers have had, and continue to have, a significant impact on heritage discourses in the 21st century through their interest in and study of one particular dance tradition while overlooking others. Today's re-creation and interpretation of dance heritage (and related musical heritage as well) appears to be facilitated in areas where bearers (individuals or groups) can draw on previous dance research and studies. But how do communities that have not been the subject of ethnochoreological research in the past present (their) dance heritage today and what can they draw on?

Based on my ethnographic research experiences gained as part of the Dance - ICH project in the Horjul Valley, this paper aims to provide an example of how dance heritage is understood and (re)presented in a local environment. I approach heritage as a form of reflected tradition. In contrast, I also explore actual tradition-based dance practices that are sustained and maintained by the community on an unreflected level, which means that they are not explicitly declared as dance heritage. People in a local community can be both "users" and "keepers" of folk dancing, to borrow Egil Bakka's terminology. In this paper, I analyse the activities of a folk dance ensemble, on the one hand, and the living traditional dance practices that continue to be embedded in the everyday and festive life of the people in the Horjul Valley, on the other. In doing so, I focus on the difference between presentational and participatory dance practices based on folk dance tradition.

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Les Sauts Béarnais, a Lever for Cultural and Local Action

Les Sauts Béarnais, vzvod za kulturno in lokalno delovanje

Intangible cultural heritage has become a real social issue: it represents the treasure of communities. However, even after twenty years of existence of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, few people and institutions are aware of the importance of this heritage, which can become a real lever for cultural and territorial action. In Béarn, a small historic region in south-western France, ICH is an integral part of local life. The region's identity is built around the Occitan language, agro-pastoralism (transhumance) and cultural and festive practices (polyphony, carnival, traditional dance such as the *Sauts Béarnais*). As a result, many local associations have been involved in ICH management for decades, and cultural and linguistic practices have suffered a certain decline. Today, political stakeholders are increasingly interested in this new category of heritage to position the Béarn language and culture as vectors of territorial development and creativity. For example, to achieve this objective, the Pays de Béarn metropolitan cluster has coordinated a European INTERREG SUDOE programme called "Living heritage for sustainable development", the aim of which was to find replicable ways of promoting intangible cultural heritage and making heritage a tool and lever for sustainable cultural and economic development. One of the experiments is called "Biarnès team-building", a team-building programme for local elected representatives and employees. These are two-hour workshops focused on discovering practices such as polyphony and *Sauts Béarnais*, aimed at newcomers to the area and older residents who see it as an opportunity to rediscover their culture. This paper will provide an opportunity to discuss my observations on the reflections/actions of political institutions concerning dance as a lever for local development, and also of newcomers who are noticing the evolution of a practice and the opening up of new spaces for learning dance.

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Bringing Traditional Dance Back into Social Practice

Ponovno vključevanje tradicionalnega plesa v družbeno prakso

Today, in Poland a growing popularity of traditional music can be observed as one of the possible modern ways of life. As I have noticed, the path to this lifestyle is most often through dance. In Warsaw and other large Polish cities, there are more and more opportunities to learn traditional Polish dances in non-stylised forms. At the basic level, dance instructors aim to teach participants how to move in a natural way, according to the non-artificial movements of the body. They tell stories about life in the old country and its connection with music, dances and social relations. They do not teach how to dance, but rather how to interact and build relationships in a dance situation. Their main idea is that music and dance are inseparable spheres that together create a context for social practice and relationships. They also believe that what is really lacking in the modern world are the intense, direct, social, group relationships that they try to rebuild.

Some of the participants in these dance classes just treat them as a one-time adventure, while others stay for good. They continue learning, discovering the richness, variety and nuances of Polish traditional dances. They attend more and more dance parties, summer traditional music camps and workshops. For some people, this kind of life becomes a driving force and a passion. Very often they want more and decide to learn to sing, play the drums or the violin. Traditional village music becomes their life.

In my lecture, I will talk about the ideas and teaching techniques of Polish traditional dances in non-stylised forms that are practiced today. I will emphasise how they act as a social practice and process in the community of traditional Polish music lovers. I will consider whether the practice of village dances in modern cities can be treated as heritage.

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Sustainability and Resilience of Traditional Dance and Dancing as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Greece: Ethnographic Insights and Perspectives

Trajnostnost in odpornost tradicionalnega plesa in plesanja kot nesnovne kulturne dediščine v Grčiji: etnografski vpogledi in perspektive

The paper, grounded in an interpretive and analytical approach to ethnographic insights, aims to investigate the multifaceted nature of traditional dance and dancing practices as intangible cultural heritage. Focusing on the Greek context and utilising ethnography as both a method and a lens, the paper will address the pivotal role of academics, ethnographers, dance instructors-teachers and knowledge bearers as key agents in catalysing the evolution, resilience and sustainability of dance and dancing phenomena. Focusing on exemplary case studies, the research will examine the impact of dance scholars on the study, reception, perception, (re)interpretation, (re)discovery, (re)invention, management and governance of dance as heritage across local, supra-local and hybrid communities, as well as within communities of practice. The paper will undertake an interpretive and analytical exploration of the complex policies that have surfaced in Greece amidst the intensifying global discourse on the sustainability and resilience of dance and dance-related practices. In the context of the growing interest and the increasing concern that has gained particular momentum following the implementation of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, prompting new approaches to the protection, preservation, transmission and adaptive transformations of dance, cultural policies for dance traditions will be addressed within contemporary socio-cultural landscapes. By dissecting the intricate relationship between local cultural contexts, academic interventions and community engagement, the paper will delve into sustainable management practices and lived experience of dance as living heritage of Hellenism within the 21st century's rapidly shifting societal landscapes.

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Sustainability of Participatory Dance Events – Revisiting the Importance of Human Relations and Interaction Patterns

Trajnost participatornih plesnih dogodkov – ponovno preučevanje pomena medosebnih odnosov in vzorcev interakcij

Today, one might argue that cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary research has shown that rhythmic music-dance experiences and events creates good effects of well-being and human pleasure, and has even demonstrated how music and dance engage our emotions, which support the development of qualities needed for a deep transformation and the emergence of inner sustainability, providing a source of individual and societal resilience (Bojner Horwitz, Korošec and Theorell, 2022). However, an ethnochoreology study group meeting held in 1989 called for studying dance events as a whole, as the context is just as important as the music-dance itself. This paper will therefore discuss good practices through two different case studies: that the sustainability of participatory dance events is due to the dance event's organisation, the involvement and the relationships created among the people, rather than only good musicianship, a good atmosphere and pleasurable dance moments. The discussion is based on ethnochoreological fieldwork, participant observation and interviews conducted in two case studies, local community's dance events and dancing community's dance event (dance clubs). The emphasis will be on mapping human relationships and interaction patterns prior to, during and after the events. The aim is to contribute a framework that may bring us closer to "the mystique" of sustainability of participatory dance events.

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Queer and Trans Inclusivity Efforts as Sustainability Strategies in Urban Contradance

Prizadevanje za vključevanje kvir in trans oseb kot strategije trajnosti v urbanem *kontradánsu*

Contradance, a practice that came to North America via British colonisation in the 17th and 18th centuries, can be considered a sustainability success story. Since the folk revival movement in the 1970s, practitioners have adapted contradance to their evolving aesthetic and kinesthetic preferences, as well as social norms and pressures. In the last decade, organisers, callers, musicians and dancers have sought to attract and support younger dancers by making dance events explicitly inclusive to queer and trans community members. Aspects of this transition include de-gendering dance roles and de-centring heterosexual courtship as both a motivator for dance attendance and an underlying metaphor for the dancing partnership. These strategies have also involved making the implicit community norms explicit (norms such as switching partners for each dance and being mindful of others' mobility). Explicit norm statements are most often accomplished via stage announcements, signage and codes of conduct, as well as through individual practices on the dance floor (such as asking about injuries and role preference). Though there has been significant positive response to these changes, organisers have faced challenges: backlash against "wokeism", concerns about deviation from tradition and reluctance to de-centre heteronormative courtship on the dance floor. Dance organisers, callers and community members have addressed this resistance through discussion, polling and incremental change, in service of keeping the community dancing together. Based on eight years of ethnographic data and autoethnographic insight from urban contradance groups across the United States, this work takes up ethnomusicologist Huib Schippers charge to better understand musical sustainability through analysis of this particularly successful case study. The result is a set of practices that can be applied broadly throughout social dance organisations.

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Facilitating a Process for Co-creating Action Points in Fulfilling Needs and Wishes for the Dancing Future in Trondheim

Omogočanje procesa soustvarjanja aktivnosti za izpolnitev potreb in želja po plesni prihodnosti v Trondheimu

The Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music and Dance and Ringve/Rockheim – National Music Museum invited the traditional dance and music communities in Trondheim to co-create action points for how to best safeguard intergenerational dance parties. In Norway, dance heritage communities are a very small part of their local communities, however, they are often part of a wider regional milieu.

The model we will present responds to bottom-up initiatives, as well as offers guidance on the tools used in our project, such as co-creating participatory dancing events, dance pedagogy, and creating dance events of practice exhibition(s). We will guide you through our in-depth methodical work with Trondheim's dance communities. We facilitated meetings, processes and did fieldwork at their dance arenas. During a long co-creational period, we worked with the communities to acknowledge the challenges of transmitting local dance knowledge today. In this presentation, we will show how we were hands-on in the process.

What can facilitators, curators, museum workers and dance experts/researchers do within the archive-, research- and museum-related context to create dance events on the premises of the dance heritage bearers? How can this cooperation work bottom-up with the dance communities' needs and wishes for safeguarding, awareness raising and dissemination both on and off the museum arena?

The purpose of this case study was to cooperate with the dance community thoroughly and on a long-term basis. Through the process, we expanded and improved the way we offer resources of intangible cultural heritage to dance communities. It is essential that the dance communities are knowledge sources and dialogue partners for the museums and archives. Together we created a list of action points for how to proceed together towards Trondheim's dancing future.

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Can Dancing Be Sustainable and ICH?

Ali je lahko ples trajnosten in del nesnovne kulturne dediščine?

It is obvious that dance is an intangible cultural heritage practice. The question, however, is what makes dancing sustainable and in what way? Participatory dancing might be a goal, but it seems that ICH creates presentational dance rather than participatory experiences.

There are many dancing traditions, many dance genres, and ICH dances are probably becoming one of them. My point is that ICH needs documentation, archiving and gatekeepers. Dance becomes ICH when the gatekeepers say that it is ICH. The activities of commodification create a tradition of its own – the ICH-dance tradition. People at dance clubs, museums and archives select which dances are worth documenting. But what values guide the selection of ICH dances and the creation of bureaucratic structures?

My Swedish example, *Polska* dancing, is both popular, living, vital dancing and guarded, controlled museal dancing – what I will refer to as a dancing museum, even if it does not happen in a museum. My example here is the *Polismärket – The polska medal*. The living, vital dancing at folk music festivals and dance-houses is another context of *polska* dancing. In my presentation, I will expand my discussion and show examples of these two parallel *polska* dancing traditions, the medal dancing and the festival dancing. They are two different dancing contexts that fulfil different goals for the dancers; they are important and create identity for the dancers' communities. If dance is or can be sustainable is an interesting question. It is not quite clear to me what sustainable means in this context and what it has to do with dance and dancing. Maybe this is a question about if and how the dances are passed down to new generations and how they survive over time. If dances are interesting for people to dance, they will survive and will be danced. If not, they will die out and disappear. If dancing as such becomes an obsolete activity and nobody wants to dance any more, dances will die out as a live activity. Maybe there is a possibility that dances stored in archives can be reactivated and danced again.

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The Sustainability of a Local Dance Culture through the Example of the Sárköz Wedding

Trajnostnost lokalne plesne kulture na primeru poroke v regiji Sárköz

In the changed social environment of the 21st century, the sustainability and survival of elements of traditional culture (dance, music, customs etc.) is influenced by many factors. Local communities have developed several strategies to ensure that their traditional culture is maintained and transmitted to future generations. In my presentation, I will analyse an event in a community with a heritage practice listed on the Hungarian National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. I will try to illustrate local responses to cultural sustainability issues, with a special focus on dance practices, through the example of a local event (Sárköz wedding) held by an intangible cultural heritage community. Communities express their self-image through cultural practices, which is a form of communication with their environment. This representation is based on tradition, which sustains community identity. The Sárköz community is trying to promote their traditional culture through a local festival. The framework for this festival and event is the traditional peasant wedding. In the traditional peasant culture, the wedding had a prominent role, being one of the main dance occasions in the life of the community, attended by both old and young generations alike. The question arises how traditional dances of the wedding-event fit into the changed socio-cultural context and what is their place and role in today's society. What challenges does the local community face in safeguarding and transmitting traditional dances, going further to sustain this piece of their traditional culture? In my presentation, I will seek answers to these questions.

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"There Are a Couple of Reasons Why We Dance Less Nowadays": Springboards of the Sustainable Environment for a Dance Repertoire in Village Folklore Groups in the Liptov Region

»Obstaja več razlogov, zakaj danes plešemo manj«: Izhodišča trajnostnega okolja za plesni repertoar v vaških folklornih skupinah v regiji Liptov

The vital world of the revival folklore movement in the Liptov region in Slovakia is generally rich in manifold village folklore groups that work with folklore material specifically preserved in the villages of the groups' origin. While from one angle, there are groups which effectively work with the traditional dance material both within participatory and presentational domains, one may likewise easily find groups that purposefully minimise activities that might include dancing. The outcomes of four series of interviews conducted within the village folklore groups' environment show that the stakeholders themselves do not perceive the lack of access to the archival material related to the traditional dance as the main reason for such reduction in dance events or tendencies to avoid the dance material as part of their presentational activities. The members of the two groups agreed on several key aspects perceived as fundamental to a good functioning "cell" – a village folklore group that nowadays often acts as a bearer of traditions. This text, therefore, builds on these delimitations and communicates their further ties to a possible sustainable approach towards the vernacular dance material in village communities.

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Music and Dance at the Intersection of the UNESCO Paradigm and Museology

Glasba in ples na stičišču Unescove paradigme in muzeologije

The role of the Coordinator for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage brought the Slovene Ethnographic Museum a new perspective on intangible cultural heritage, which the museum has been dealing with since its foundation. The presentation focuses on intangible cultural heritage related to music and dance, which is illuminated from two angles. The first focus is on the systemic safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage from the position of the UNESCO paradigm: an overview of the Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and the placement of music and dance within it. The second focus is on the music and dance as important components of annual and life-cycle customs and their musealisation.

The musealisation of the intangible cultural heritage presents a challenge for museum curators who are in charge of the protection of movable heritage. Various questions arise, such as: what and how to exhibit intangible cultural heritage, since it is impossible to materialise knowledge, skills, habits, customs etc.? Dance and music are especially demanding when it comes to musealisation, as their final product is not tangible (unlike, for example, in pottery). Preparing an exhibition about dance and music presents many challenges which can be looked on as advantages and in some cases as disadvantages. Our main goal as museum curators during the creation of an exhibition is to introduce and inspire museum visitors to pay more attention to music and dance. But how to do this? In our presentation, we will present the process of creating content for the exhibition *Dance – Europe's Living Heritage in Motion*, the involvement of the dance community in this process and the importance of their role and the responses of museum visitors. As part of the case study, we collaborated with members of the Folk Dance Ensemble of the Cultural Association "Marko" Beltinci, who keep alive two couple dances, *sotiš* and *šamarjanka*.

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Krivo Kolo: Dance, Nostalgia and Sustainability in Transnational Space

Krivo kólo: ples, nostalgija in trajnostnost v transnacionalnem prostoru

Contemporary research on dance within the framework of ICH emphasises an emic perspective – understanding traditions “from within” – which aligns with UNESCO’s concept of preservation. This approach necessitates collaboration among scholars, choreographers, communities and policymakers to ensure the sustainability of dance traditions in a changing sociopolitical landscape. Unlike earlier studies that primarily focused on historical continuity, UNESCO underscores the future of ICH and the socio-cultural challenges that influence its transmission.

Building on UNESCO’s principles of heritage preservation and sustainability, my decade-long ethnographic research investigates the dance practices of Serbs from Slavonia (Croatia), a community that now navigates transnational realities. Displacement from Slavonia during the 1990s crisis fragmented this group across multiple countries, generating complex patterns of mobility, nostalgia and cultural reproduction. Through multi-sited ethnography, I trace these movements and explore how dance functions as a site of memory, identity negotiation and social cohesion in transnational contexts.

Employing a bottom-up approach, I engaged community members in the identification of key elements of their cultural heritage, with *krivo kolo* emerging as a crucial symbol of belonging. More than just a choreographic form, *krivo kolo* serves as a ritualised practice that reaffirms connections to the homeland, structures social interactions and embodies affective ties across generations and borders. It initiates gatherings, marks celebrations and becomes a performative space where nostalgia, collective memory and identity politics intertwine. This raises critical anthropological questions about the role of dance in sustaining intangible cultural heritage within transnational frameworks. By situating dance as both a performative and discursive space, this presentation contributes to broader discussions on transnationalism, cultural sustainability and the evolving role of ICH in migrant communities.

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Developing Support to a Sustainable Community of Dancers in Folk Dance Ensemble

Razvijanje podpore za trajnostno plesno skupnost v folklornih skupinah

The understanding and perception of folkdance activities and the community of folk dancers in Slovenia is a product of various cultural and historical factors. Over the last decades, this segment of amateur cultural activities has gone through different phases of development. The fact is that today many dancers are getting older and thus face a variety of different difficulties in their dance activities.

In the highly centralised model of cultural politics in Slovenia, public support for collective dance creation, as is known in the case of folk dance ensembles, is conditioned by the definition of the public interest. So far, ensembles have been understood as artistic performance activities that have gained public support through codifications of dance as artistic pursuits. However, such support mechanisms are no longer sufficient.

Demographic trends have made a good part of dancers older and, at a systemic level, they are confronted with ageism, stereotyping and the positioning of collective dance practices in contexts of the pejorative. Moreover, existing uniform cultural policies no longer address the specific needs of the dance communities of this vulnerable section of dancers. The critical absence of advocacy organisations further complicates the articulation of the needs of these dance communities.

Only by raising awareness of what a community's needs are, how to identify them in the first place, and only then defining them, will they pursue the basic goal of sustainability and resilience. Redefining the needs of dance communities in Slovenia will thus no longer be in the role of artistic practices, but will be the beginning of the implementation of a new paradigm. This new paradigm follows the idea of how collective dance practices, with the support of the state, make it possible to raise the quality of people's/dancers' lives.

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Sustainable Network Structures in Styrian Folkdance Member Recruitment

Trajnostne mrežne strukture pri vključevanju novih članov v štajerske folklorne skupine

In 2022, we started a research project focusing on the networking structures of Styrian folkdance clubs. Based on a social network analysis, our aim was to explore the ties and knots between Styrian folkdance clubs. We quickly realised that networking – or the lack thereof – seemed to have a strong impact on the sustainability of folkdance groups. Strongly related to this is the issue of sustainable membership; the fear of losing, and moreover, not finding new members is a major concern for all the folkdance clubs we have spoken with. This led to our research question: is active networking an important factor for recruiting new members? Does being well-connected help a folkdance club to stay vital?

By collecting quantitative data via an online survey, doing field research, conducting qualitative interviews with people in leading functions in Styrian folkdance clubs as well as observing the clubs' outreach behaviour, we gathered a broad spectrum of data and understanding on the topic of membership recruitment and intergenerational transmission.

We have pinpointed several aspects that seem to be crucial for successful member recruiting and engaging, both related to networking activities. For instance, to form a sustainable group, young and adult, already settled people need to be approached and catered for equally. One aspect of this is media presence: actively using various platforms, from print to social media, seems to be essential for keeping a group actively engaged.

In our talk, we will focus on these and other elements of folkdance club organisation, outlining to what extent networking is relevant for Styrian folkdance clubs to keep their dance practice sustainable.

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Transmitting Tradition: A Dance Community between Epirus and Athens

Prenašanje tradicije: plesna skupnost med Epirom in Atenami

This paper explores the role of traditional dance as an integral component of intangible cultural heritage in the context of a feast in a mountain community in Epirus, Greece. This celebration, which takes place annually on 26 October in the village of Aetópetra in Ioannina, is an “invented tradition” that includes a complex series of activities, such as religious practices, eating and drinking together, traditional music, participatory dancing and singing that is organised by the people whose place of origin is this village. People from Athens in particular travel to actively participate in the celebration, renewing ties with the place but also strengthening the company that has been created by the dance teacher and the president of Aetopetra’s Fraternity, Nikos Zekis. Throughout the year, individuals are connected through weekly dance classes that contribute to social continuity while preserving the cultural practice of dance in performative/staged and participatory contexts.

Adopting an ethnographic approach, this study investigates how the teaching and transmission of dance, music and related practices reinforces aspects of cultural identity and strengthens the resilience of the “local” community in its diaspora creating various “Dancescapes”. By examining interactions between residents, returnees and the wider public, this research highlights the role of dance in maintaining a living tradition while adapting to contemporary contexts. In addition, challenges related to the sustainability of such cultural practices and their transmission beyond the boundaries of the feast are examined, providing insight into how weekly dance classes in the cultural association of the village, held in urban spaces such as Athens, serve as immersive, participatory approaches to transmission of these traditions. These transmission mechanisms highlight the adaptability and resilience of traditional dance practices, even as they face the challenges posed by a rapidly changing, globalised world.

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Polka and Its Sustainability in the Slovenian Context: The Emergence and Current Popularity of This Dance–Music Genre

Polka in njena trajnostnost v slovenskem kontekstu: nastanek in trenutna priljubljenost tega plesno–glasbenega žanra

In Europe, the first dance sources place the earliest mentions of the polka in the 1830s and classify it as one of the most popular and widely recognisable dances of that time. Hand in hand with its popularisation and spread on many European dance floors, its form has evolved and changed over time, but despite its (almost 200 years) long existence, the polka still represents an important element of mass/popular culture in Slovenia. As a dance and music genre, it regularly appears in leisure culture, at celebrations, *veselicas* and other dance parties, but also at competitions, festivals, television shows, media channels and commercials on radio and television. With its multifaceted appearance, the polka in Slovenia is not only a dance or music genre, but also a carrier of complex symbolic meanings that are often characterised by value in society.

In the article, I will use field research and interviews to find out how the polka has survived this long period of existence and how, despite a certain stigmatisation, it is still interesting for younger generations. I am interested in the form and appearance of the polka in modern times and how its sustainability and public image is influenced by contemporary social dance events, particularly *veselicas* as public dance events where this dance-music genre is most often performed today.

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Empowering Heritage Communities: Rethinking Institutional Support for Sustainable Folkdance

Opolnomočenje dediščinskih skupnosti: ponovni razmislek o institucionalni podpori za trajnost ljudskega plesa

CEMPER, Centre for Music and Performing Arts Heritage in Flanders, is committed to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Flanders, with a focus on music and performing arts. As part of the project Dance as ICH: New Models for Facilitating Participatory Dance Events, CEMPER initiated research to explore the sustainability of folkdance in Flanders. One of the main objectives of this research project was to empower dance communities to lead their own safeguarding processes towards a sustainable future, while providing institutional support in a way that aligned with their specific needs.

While community members responded positively to CEMPER's initiative to consult and engage them in discussions about folkdance traditions, specific challenges arose during the follow-up phase, particularly related to the limitation of a top-down approach. Institutional involvement sometimes hindered the community's ability to take full ownership of the safeguarding process. This highlights the complexities of balancing institutional support with the need for grassroots leadership and decision-making.

Moving forward required a more flexible, bottom-up approach, where the community could take the lead in setting the agenda and assuming responsibility for the process, yet still benefitting from institutional initiative and encouragement. This sparked new reflections on the role of heritage institutions, emphasising the importance of offering guidance and resources without overwhelming community-led initiatives.

This presentation will explore the dual impact of the project: the positive strides made in raising awareness and understanding of sustainability challenges, as well as the difficulties encountered. We will present the lessons learned in relation to fostering sustainability in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

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Greek Traditional Dance and Museums in the Hellenic Region

Grški tradicionalni ples in muzeji v helenski regiji

After the ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), there is an intense activity in the field of museums regarding the preservation and promotion of cultural expressions and practices of the past. In other countries in particular, the presence of dance in the museum context is now an important challenge that museum curators face. The presence of Greek traditional dance – one of the most vivid forms of the country's intangible cultural heritage – in Greek museums has not yet been investigated. On this basis, the aim of this work is to investigate the presence of Greek traditional dance in the museums of the Greek area. For this purpose, databases were searched using the keywords “Greek traditional dance” and “museum”. In addition, its aspects, role and function in the museum context were investigated. The insights were also collected following field research in five Greek museums and also after looking into museum activities on the internet. The results showed that in Greece there has been no research regarding the presence of dance in the museum context. Moreover, it has been observed that, until now, the actions of the museums have been minimal and limited to the field of performing. Nevertheless, its musealisation as ICH opens up new practices and approaches. Therefore, the musealisation of Greek traditional dance is a challenge on many different levels.

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