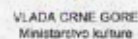
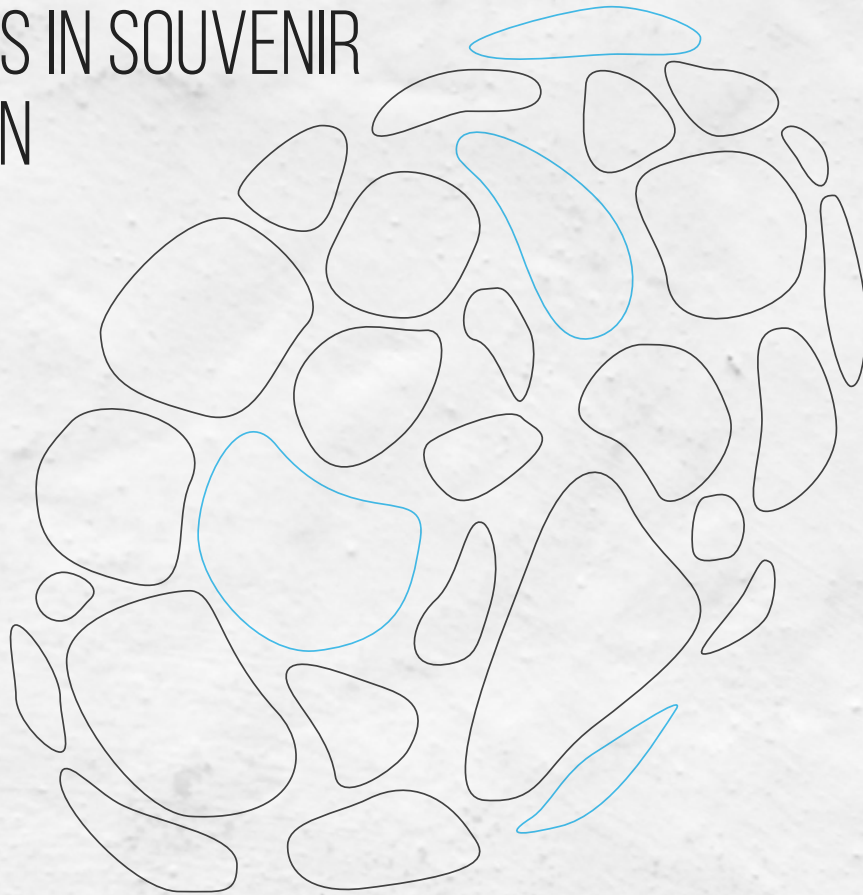


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OLD CRAFTS IN SOUVENIR PRODUCTION



This publication is issued as a part of the project **“Enhancing Montenegrin culture by stimulating international dialogue and developing partnerships through applied arts and traditional crafts”**. The project is implemented by **Foundation Business start-up Centre Bar and Education Centre Bar** and supported by **Ministry of Culture of Montenegro**.

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VLADA CRNE GORE
Ministarstvo kulture



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INTRODUCTION

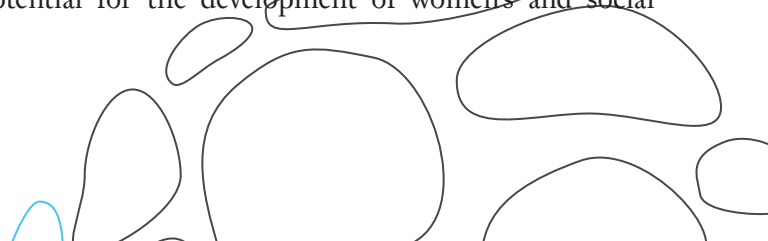
This publication shall present in short, the diversity of historical circumstances which influenced the development of the cultural heritage of Montenegro. It will showcase the most notable crafts that accompanied the development of the Montenegrin society, which may be applied to the modern-day souvenir production.

The crafts were at the height of their importance during the Ottoman rule, so it is not surprising that in the Balkans the word for craft “zanat” has its roots in a Turkish loanword of Arabian origin (san’at) and signifies the skill or knowledge of handicraft. These artisanal products are unique, most commonly made with very simple tools. The main features of crafts nowadays are: use of passed-down knowledge, traditional techniques, preferably coupled with that essential creativity of the craftsman. The results are unique products made of wood, metal, textiles, clay, stone, wax, plants, etc. Artisanal products are used in everyday life: reproduction of traditional weapons, jewellery, metal kitchenware or pottery, boat and shipbuilding, weaved baskets, musical instruments, iconography, unique handmade artefacts and souvenirs.

The development of crafts was instrumental to the increase of trade in Montenegro – particularly in larger communities – up to the second half of the 19th century, when the demand for artisanal products diminished significantly and almost ceased due to the industrialisation.

Today, fairs are the only events which cast a spotlight on various crafts and workshops and attempt to revive them.

With this publication, we aim to present these traditional crafts, remind people, in particular those who may find a steady source of income by producing artistic handicraft. Production of souvenirs with traditional craft techniques holds considerable potential for the development of women’s and social entrepreneurship.





HISTORY OF CRAFTS IN MONTENEGRO

Varied cultural facets found in the territory of Montenegro – stretching from the prehistoric era, Illyrian and Hellenistic periods, Rome and Paleo Christianity, through Byzantine, Slavic and the period of independence, Venetian and Ottoman rule up to the end of the 20th century – bear testimony to the evolution of crafts and artistic expression of these lands.

The oldest historical written traces indicate that the crafts were regulated by the laws in Kotor, as early as in the 14th century. This indicates the stage of their development, as well as the importance of crafts in that region.

Some crafts founded on that ancient knowledge were an integral part of the economy in each urban centre of yore and provided additional income to its inhabitants. This legacy passed from the Middle Ages through the Islamized parts of society which, in their turn, contributed to the development of guilds within cities. The oncoming Ottoman rule brought new crafts to our territories: ethnic costume tailors, filigree jewellers, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, farriers, locksmiths, bladesmiths, as well as wool scouring, leatherwork, soap production, charcoal production, etc.

1903 saw the founding of the first **Association for the Promotion and Development of Crafts in Montenegro**. The state decided to promote the need for crafts in Montenegro due to the change in socio-cultural and economic conditions. A recently founded association of the same name aims to revive several traditional crafts, which would significantly help the development of tourism, agriculture and other industries. It also intends to strengthen the position of masters in those rare crafts, which are in danger of extinction in Montenegro.

Due to the continued wars and adverse economic conditions in Montenegro, the crafts seem to be less developed, compared to the rest of the region. Rare crafts relevant to battling, such as weapons production or ferries thrived in urban areas, along with the agricultural tools production. Furthermore, archival records show that during the Petrovic rule, Montenegro was renowned for wound healers, and their production of salves and poultices.

The stages of development and learning the craft are **apprentice, journeyman and master craftsman**. The craft was taught to village children and sons of master craftsmen who wanted to improve the family trade. The apprenticeship lasted three years and was unpaid. Once the apprentice completed their training, the masters would issue certificates of professional adeptness, discipline and length of apprenticeship. The exam consisted of oral exam related to the theory of craft (types of raw materials, types of tools

and their use, description of the production process, assembly, etc.) and practical exam for which the apprentice had to make a “test”, a particular product to showcase acquired knowledge and skills. Once he passed the exam, an apprentice would receive the title of “kalfa” – journeyman, and most often would stay on with the same master craftsman; at this stage their work was paid. The title of a master craftsmen, required for a journeyman to have at least four years of working experience and be of age. Once a journeyman became a master craftsman, they would be direct competition to their previous employer, so many masters would delay the master’s exam for their journeymen and extend their internship. Journeyman’s working hours were sometimes 16 or 18 hours a day. Passing the master’s exam resulted with the title of master craftsman – awarded in a letter stamped by the guild and certified by the police. That letter was the only thing to grant the right to practice a craft independently.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CRAFTS

The field of craftsmanship is defined primarily through the “**Skilled Crafts Act**” (“Official Gazette” of Montenegro, No. 54/09 of 10th of August 2009, 64/09 of 22nd of September 2009, 40/11 of 8th of August 2011) which regulates the conditions for practicing a craft and other issues of importance, as well as through by-laws:

- **By-laws on the minimum of technical requirements for business premises, equipment and means of production in crafts** (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 76/10 of 23 December 2010),
- **By-laws on register of persons performing craft activities** (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 17/10 of 01.04.2010),
- **By-laws on crafts that may be performed in residential buildings** (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, No. 37/11 of 29.07.2011),
- **Decision on the establishment of crafts, activities similar to crafts and the list of simple and skilled crafts** (“Official Gazette of Montenegro” 63/2010).

Such legislative framework creates incentives and fosters entrepreneurial initiatives, it provides efficient instruments to help practice crafts. Removing administrative barriers, with a clear legislative framework and other steps taken by the Ministry of Economy, provide visible results, but there is still room for improvement.



CLASSIFICATION AND TYPE OF CRAFTS

Crafts in Montenegro may be classified into four basic categories:

Artistic crafts - Their main feature is the high aesthetic value of the product, which to a great extent influences the contemporary art design scene. E.g.: painting on glass, ceramics, wood or stone, artistic production of jewellery in metal.

Traditional crafts - Most of these have disappeared to date. Traditional production of various objects, crafts that are closely related to needs of rural life and artisanal techniques of food preparation can be found in this category. Examples: traditional pottery, quilting, bladesmiths and charcoal production, etc.

Homemade crafts - In the past, these crafts mostly entailed the production of textile items for the needs of a household, and less often intended for commercial purposes. In recent years, this type of craft is re-marketed in the service of tourism development. Examples: weaving, embroidery, crocheting, knitting, tailoring ethnic costumes.

Service industry – Present in all of the above categories. Services primarily involve repairs and maintenance of previously produced items within the same craft. Services such as barbers and cobblers also exist.

Individual crafts rarely fit exclusively in one category. For example: weaving is partly a traditional craft, and partly art, in the contemporary sense of the word. On the other hand, production and crafting of some items requires the use of several techniques.

Nowadays, recognising their importance, instruction of craft skills is done through formal and non-formal education, most often in the private sector. Some craftsmen found a way to bring their craft to the market in the form of traditional souvenirs in the tourism industry.

WEAVING

Weaving is the creation of fabric by interlacing the basic (longitudinal) threads with the horizontal (transversal) threads on a loom. The rich artistic history of weaving creativity in Montenegro stretches from the Neolithic cultures to the contemporary urban settings. Several raw materials of animal and plant origin are used to make threads and yarns: wool, hemp, flax, weaver's broom, silk, cotton, etc. Each of these raw materials required specific fibre-to-thread processing. Weaving practice in Montenegro developed especially well in the north, and the products were mostly made of wool. We highlight the artistic merit of rug and carpet weaving as a significant opportunity to improve and promote women's and social entrepreneurship.

Since 2016, "Bihorski" carpets have been part of the intangible cultural heritage of Montenegro

Nada Rocenovic is a weaver, and in her process, she applies tradition, but also current trends. "Until recently, beautiful products from natural materials were cast out from antique chests and replaced with synthetic rugs, overalls, overcoats ... Fortunately, in recent years, creative women have shifted this trend in the opposite direction, returning to tradition. Passion for manual waving is developing again, and it is turning, this beautiful craft, into art. Interest in waving is growing, especially among young and unemployed women who see a business opportunity in this craft. I am proud of the fact that I was the first in Bar to master the skill of weaving, showing that with beautiful woven details your house is more beautiful and your wardrobe becomes exclusive. I infuse every piece with myself – my creativity, my feelings... This makes my products special and gives them that unquestionable charm", says Nada.



EMBROIDERY

For our people, embroidery was a very important and common way of decorating clothes and fabrics used in the household. It dates back to the 6th century, which makes it one of the oldest domestic crafts. Literature notes that the specific kind of Montenegrin embroidery was developed in the 17th century. It is unique and interesting to examine because of its special, double-sided sewing technique that gives a particular look to the stitching. In English, it is referred to as the Montenegrin Stitch or the Montenegrin Cross Stitch. Montenegrin gold embroidery is one of the five most important international cross-stitching techniques, too.

Lirije Popovic learned to embroider and crochet as a child because this craft was prevalent in Ostros, in the rural part of Bar municipality, where she lives to this day. “In the beginning, I made crocheted and embroidered objects to suit only my own needs. Even today, I regularly crochet and embroider because I enjoy this type of work and it helps me relax”, says Lirije. She exhibits her work at fairs and sells most of them to locals who moved abroad. They are usually nostalgic buyers because crocheted and embroidered tablecloths, doilies, covers and mats remind them of past traditions and their origins.



CRAFT OF TAILORING ETHNIC COSTUMES

The craft of making traditional (folk) costumes was developed in Montenegro, in the few existing urban areas, and was kept alive after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Production of men's and women's costumes used very expensive imported materials, such as silk, atlas silk, satin, velvet and velour. After sewing, the costume would be decorated with silk and gold threads. Montenegrin costume is considered to be the richest and most complex in the region. Today, there are only a few tailors of Montenegrin costumes. They are mostly family businesses, run by women who hold and pass on the knowledge of this traditional production. Expatriates from Montenegro show great interest in their work, as well as cultural and artistic associations engaged in folklore. This craft has yet to be represented, valorised and introduced as specific and original souvenirs of Montenegro.

Vesna Tomanovic and her sister **Ljiljana Marojevic** make the most popular part of traditional Montenegrin costume, the traditional embroidered shirts. Both entrepreneurs have 30 years of experience in tailoring and sewing and they decided to use their skills to make traditional cloth souvenirs commercially. The first Montenegrin shirts they made in 2006, immediately found customers. They make two types of shirt of silk and cotton – the Montenegrin traditional and Montenegrin stylised. They are also using traditional Montenegrin themed embroidery for items such as: purses, eyewear cases, mobile phone cases, jewellery cases, belts, crocheted jewellery.





CROCHET

Crochet is the process of creating products with thread or yarn.

Crocheted wool is used to make hats, scarves and shawls. Crocheted lace is used in decorating: national costumes, sheets and bedspreads, mats, tablecloths, curtains. The necessary accessories for crocheting are a hook and thread. As a rule, a thinner thread requires a smaller hook. Smaller, thinner hooks are made of steel, while the aluminium hooks are used for thicker thread or yarn.

Contemporary sources, social media and tutorials make it much easier and quicker to learn this skill. In the past, women used this technique mostly to make table cloths, decorative cloths, curtains. Nowadays, however, crochet techniques are applied to different types of products such as jewellery, toys, etc.

Ana Milosavljevic graduated from the Central Art School in Cetinje and produces items using the techniques of applied arts. Most of all, she is dedicating her time to crochet and making crocheted toys. She learned the technique of crocheting from her grandmother, who crochets covers for furniture: tablecloths, doilies, napkins, and the like. "With the hook my grandmother gave me, I now make toys of vibrant colours and different shapes. I know that my toys always bring joy to the youngest, and this makes me particularly happy. At the same time, this small business helps me support my six-member family," says Ana.

KNITTING

Knitting is certainly one of the oldest handmade skills, and this craft technique was used to make clothes and various items for centuries. Knitting requires: needles (two or five, depending on what you want to do), yarn, thread or wool, a pattern and patience. As with crocheting, the thickness of the needle corresponds to the thickness of the wool or thread. Tight or loose stitching of the yarn is chosen according to desired looseness of the final product. In the past, knitting was used to make garments like socks, scarves, gloves, hats, vests, sweaters, cardigans. The clothing items were made mainly of wool, in order to protect from cold weather. In the north of Montenegro, even today, there are still women's businesses that continue and promote the tradition of knitting garments by using traditional yarn and colours. Most notable is NGO Sarenica from Pljevlja, which works with single mothers and individuals who have difficulties finding employment and teaches them ancient skills of knitting, crocheting, waving.



POTTERY

In the Balkans, there are several techniques of working with clay. Ethnological literature, references four: pottery made by hand, pottery made on a hand potter-wheel, pottery made on a foot potter-wheel and pottery cast from a mould. The first three techniques existed simultaneously. They were probably created and developed with the influence and during the rule of the Byzantines. Around mid-19th century, the production of pottery using moulds gained traction. Now, it is more prevalent than the previous three techniques. In the last few decades, pottery became more popular for making souvenirs and kitchenware in order to return to the traditional, more healthy ways of cooking. At the Museum in Old Town of Bar (former customs office) tourists can see museum exhibits collection of ceramics dating back to the 6th and 7th centuries BC.

Branka Djalac makes ceramic souvenirs. “I started my hobby, now my business, 15 years ago, thanks to a friend I worked with. From day to day, I made my own path, refined techniques, colours, shapes, movements, methods of firing and glazing... and I developed a recognizable style which makes my souvenirs stand out. Even my products of the same shape, no two are alike, they differ in at least a few strokes, lines or details. That’s exactly the beauty and value of handicraft”, says Branka.



TRADITIONAL SOAPMAKING

The word *sapo* (latin word for soap) appears for the first time in the “Natural History” (Historia Naturalis) by Pliny the Elder, which among other things describes the way of making soap from grease and ash. There are two methods of producing of soap: the cold process and the warm process. The resulting soap may be poured into containers shaped like long rectangles (cutters) and then cut into individual pieces, or into moulds which create individual pieces of soap. According to historical data, the first soap factory in Montenegro was built in 1888 by Mašo Vrbica in Bar. The factory was built next to the olive oil mill.

Mirjana Babic - The Babic family in Zupci cultivated olives for generations, and they own several hundred olive trees. Mirjana, who was always interested in natural cosmetics, saw this as a chance to grow her business, producing olive oil-based soap. Soaps manufactured in the “Olivmont” workshop are completely natural. The entire process is done by hand, which makes every soap unique. “The main ingredient of all our soaps is olive oil obtained from the autochthonous “zutica” variety found in the olive groves in Bar. Since our soaps are made with the cold process, olive oil and all other ingredients, retain all beneficial elements. We improve our soaps by mixing the primary materials with plants that complement the olive oil - medicinal herbs from the area surrounding Bar” - says Mirjana.

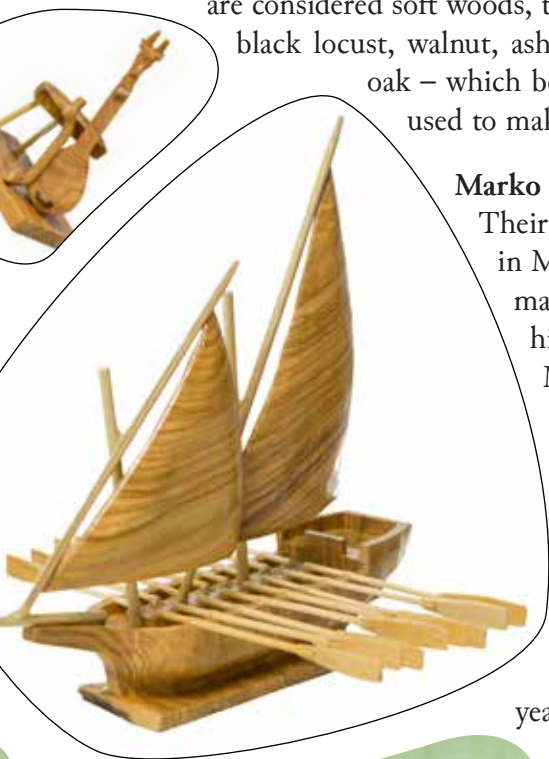
MAKING COSMETICS WITH TRADITIONAL METHODS

Producing cosmetics with traditional methods is a craft that can be used to make creams, lotions, and balms from natural raw materials – usually high-quality plant-based oils (obtained through specific and demanding process) or herb butters, waxes and various plants. Experiences from Montenegro and its region show that of late this craft has gained significant momentum, since users are becoming increasingly aware of the bad effects some ingredients, such as metals and preservatives, have on the skin.



WOODWORK

Woodwork or carving is an ancient craft used to manufacture a variety of wooden objects. The hardness of the wood is most important detail for this process. For example, mulberry trees, lime trees and poplars are considered soft woods, the softest is spruce tree, while hardwoods include beech, hornbeam, black locust, walnut, ash and oak. The hardest woods are white oak and particularly holm oak – which belongs to the family of evergreens. In the coastal area, olive wood is used to make souvenirs because of its beauty and distinctiveness.



Marko and Marija Brezanin craft various objects out of dry olive wood. Their business started 20 years ago, when the choice of original souvenirs in Montenegro was rather limited, with only a few souvenir shops in the market. Marko is a craftsman with a love of woodwork he inherited from his father and especially from his uncle and namesake, who was a famous Montenegrin sculptor, Marko Brezanin. Today, in his workshop, he passionately produces items inspired by the Montenegrin history, nature and its countryside.

Golub Kekovic also makes unique decorative and functional objects from dried olive trees. He inherited his love of the craft from his father, and a family line that traded in and processed stone and wood. We have been running this family business for a decade. In the production we use discarded trees and stumps that are over 100 years old and would otherwise be thrown away or burned. Olive is very hard and difficult to work with, so we need to treat it manually and mechanically. We use olives as inspiration, with these beautiful patterns and textures it has. In our products (glasses, candlesticks, plates etc) we try to show and accent those textures, Golub said.



MANUAL GLASSWORK AND DECORATION

The skill of glasswork in this region was influenced by the Venetian Republic. Once, there existed training for this craft, which produces extremely attractive results. Unfortunately, today this training exists only in Italy. However, just as with other crafts, here it is mostly a self-taught skill. In addition to the **manual glasswork** in the area, other glass decorating techniques, such as **stained glass** (a process of joining pieces glass using metal strips into a frame of soldered metal) and **colouring glass with special type of paint**. Through such colourful windowpanes, the very colour of glass changes in the course of the day, thanks to the refraction of light. Due to its interesting expression through light, the stained glass may be found in crowded public spaces such as hotels, airports, schools or religious buildings.

Even though, traditionally used for windows (stained glass usually shows an image), the contemporary creations of stained-glass, may also be three-dimensional structures and sculptures. Today, the term “stained glass” includes objects in everyday life such as vases, plates, or candlesticks reminiscent of the famous lamps made by Louis Comfort Tiffany.

Veselinka Vesna Lekovic makes stained glass and souvenirs using the technique better known as the Tiffany technique. Stained glass offers many possibilities to create elements of interior design, ranging in size from large to small. Vesna combines this technique with technique of decorating glass with paints, which makes her products even more unique. She produces items such as: vases, glasses, bottles, candlesticks, plates, lamps and more.



STONEMASONRY

Stonemasonry entails different techniques ranging from traditional crafts, such as stonework, carving, and making mosaics, to more recent ones, such as assemblage. Manual treatment of stone requires considerable time, effort and experience, which sometimes makes it prohibitively expensive. The final touches may be done in several techniques, stone cleaving, chiselling, carving, stripping or peeling into veneer, etc. The most important feature of stone is its longevity and durability resistant to the elements. The area of Bar is known for its beautiful, sought after red stone.

Out of all these techniques, the most common in souvenir production is mosaic, painting and assemblage.

Mosaic is a technique used to create murals, icons, jewellery, ritual masks and the like. They are made by assembling colourful cubic or irregular blocks of stone, glazed ceramics, glass, bricks, nacre,

metal or plastic. **Assemblage** (Assemblage - joining, folding) is a sculpting technique that involves assembling different parts and creating a new whole – a collage, if you will – thus creating a three-dimensional composition of different objects. The technique is very inspiring because it uses natural materials around us, everyday items or their parts.



Jasna Brnjada – worked in hospitality and her family shop for many years. Today, with the support of her family, she makes beautiful handicrafts using assemblage techniques, inspired by the sea and the Montenegrin nature. “The idea of assemblage came to me on a vacation in Croatia, when I first fell in love with objects made using that technique. So, I decided to take this idea home with me. My favourite material is stone. For my paintings, I use eight types of rock from the beaches of Bar, which I colour and integrate into my work. I should note that the creation of certain motifs requires about 200 pieces of stone” says Jasna. Along with stones, Jasna uses shells, marine debris, ropes, wires and so on.





For years, **Ljiljana Vujovic** has been collecting antiques from Bar area as a hobby.

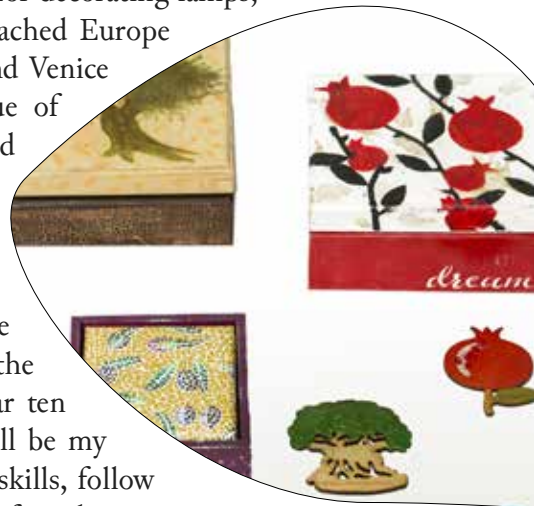
She collects photographs of old houses, antique garments, household items such pottery etc. A teacher by profession, recently she also became an entrepreneur by starting to create replicas of old doors and windows that she saw on the houses in the suburbs of Bar. In her work, she uses modelling technique, assemblage and mix media; at the same time, trying very hard to replicate to the best of her ability the architectural and cultural heritage of Bar – the town at the foot of Rumija.

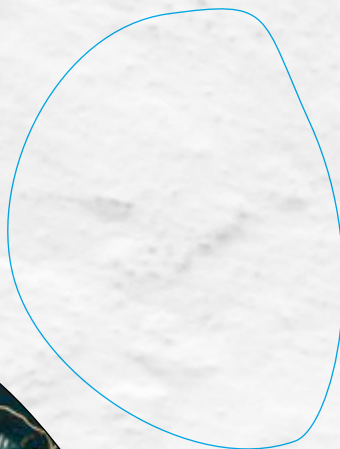


DECORATING WITH DECOUPAGE

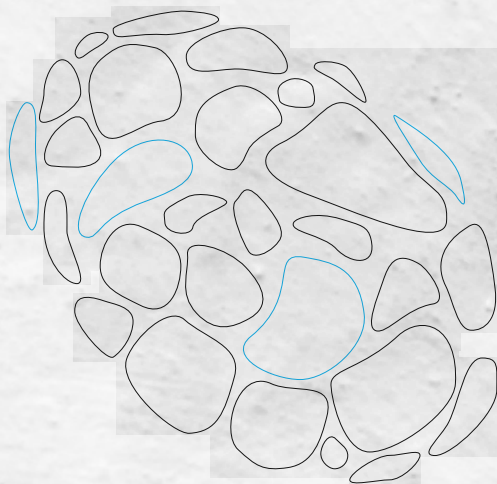
There is evidence that the decoupage was used in the 12th century, even if the term originated only in the 20th. Its origin is the French word “decouper”, which means “to cut”. The earliest findings of decoupage are traced to eastern Siberia, and through China – where it was used for decorating lamps, walls and windows – five centuries later, the magic of decoupage reached Europe through Italy. The technique was particularly popular in Florence and Venice where it was used to decorate furniture. Decoupage is a technique of embellishing an object, i.e. furniture with pieces of paper cut and glued to the surface. It is considered an art form.

Olja Fatic started creating unique souvenirs in decoupage, shabby chic, modelling and other modern techniques of applied art 10 years ago. “When you are genuinely interested in something and are looking for an opportunity, the roads practically pave themselves. At the decorating workshop in decoupage technique, organized by BSC Bar ten years ago, I tried my hand at this technique, and realized that it will be my hobby, but also my enterprise in the future. I started to improve my skills, follow trends, expand the scope of production and take part in fairs. The fact that my souvenirs were appealing to customers at a first glance, gave me the confidence to invest in this business. I seek inspiration for my works in the colours, nature and architecture of Bar and Montenegro,” says Olja.











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