

Artist Interview Workshop

January 29, 2024 (Monday), 9 AM – 4 PM

An artist interview is a tool used for collecting information about artworks, from the materials and methods of their making to how they are intended to look. This information is essential in the planning and execution of conservation-restoration treatments, as well as for the proper care and exhibiting of art.

The Artist Interview Workshop, taught by Dr. Sagita Mirjam Sunara, associate professor at the Arts Academy in Split – Conservation-Restoration Department, is aimed at conservator-restorers and other museum/heritage experts (curators, scholars, art professionals...) with an interest in preservation and presentation of contemporary art. It is also intended for educators and students coming from the fields of conservation-restoration, art history, museology etc.

Through lectures and examples from Sunara's interviewing practice, the participants of this workshop will learn about the possibilities and limitations of obtaining conservation-relevant information from the artists/creators, as well as other holders of information, such as artist's assistants, close associates, family members, artwork fabricators... Interactive workshop activities will enable the participants to understand what skills are required to carry out effective interviews, and give them the confidence to perform interviews.

The workshop will conclude with a roundtable discussion that will provide an opportunity to present and discuss similar cases of interviews with artists and/or senior conservators-restorers who have previous experiences with artists.

Workshop program

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| 9 – 9.30 | Introduction to the workshop (LECTURE) |
| 9.30 – 10.15 | Activity 1 (EXERCISE) |
| 10.15 – 10.30 | Coffee break |
| 10.30 – 11.15 | What information can be gained from an artist interview? Case studies from the Sisak Steelworks Sculpture Park (LECTURE) |
| 11.15 – 12 | Activity 2 (EXERCISE) |
| 12 – 12.15 | Coffee break |
| 12.15 – 13 | (I) The artist interview scenario developed by the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage and the Dutch Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art. (II) Insights from the Voices in Contemporary Art (VoCA) Artist Interview Workshop. (LECTURE) |

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| 13 – 14 | Lunch break |
| 14 – 14.50 | (I) Interviewing mistakes and challenging situations. (II) Tips and tricks for a successful interview. (III) Things to do after an interview. (LECTURE) |
| 14.50 – 15 | Q&A |
| 15 – 16 | Round-table discussion |

About the workshop instructor

Sagita Mirjam Sunara is an associate professor at the Conservation-Restoration Department of the Arts Academy – University of Split. She has a diploma in conservation-restoration from the Arts Academy in Split (2005) and a doctoral degree in art history from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb (2017).

She has been working at the Arts Academy in Split since 2005. The courses she teaches reflect her areas of professional interest and expertise: conservation-restoration of easel paintings and polychrome wood; preventive conservation; written documentation and communication skills in conservation-restoration; history and theory of conservation-restoration; artist interview as a research tool in conservation-restoration.

In parallel to her work as a conservation-restoration educator, for five years she worked as an external associate of the Croatian Conservation-Restoration Institute – Section for Stone Conservation-Restoration in Split (2005 – 2010). She spent one semester as a visiting teaching fellow at the Winterthur / University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation – WUDPAC (2010).

She presents regularly at national and international conferences. A full list of her publications with links may be found online at <https://umas.academia.edu/SagitaMirjamSunara>. She has led workshops in Croatia and abroad (for example, 'The Artist Interview Workshop' at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague in 2013, and 'Smart Tools: International Urban Design and Conservation Workshop' at the Dr. M.G.R. Educational And Research Institute – Faculty of Architecture in Chennai, India, in 2019). She has organized a number of conferences, guest lectures and workshops with invited experts.

She is devoted to professional development, and has attended and participated in numerous workshops and seminars, including ICCROM's workshop 'Communication and Teaching Skills in Conservation and Science' (2017), 'Planning Your RE-ORG Project' (2019), VoCA/NYU 'Artist Interview Workshop' (2022) and ICCROM's 'Digital Story Circle: Telling and Preserving Heritage Stories in the Digital Realm' (2023).

For over ten years her research interest has been focused on outdoor sculptures in general, and on the Sisak Steelworks Sculpture Park (Sisak, Croatia) in particular. Among other things, she conducted interviews with a number of artists – participants of the Sisak Steelworks Fine Artists Colony. She was the chief editor of the book *The Conservation of Sculpture Parks* (Archetype Publications, 2018). Within the European project Conservation of Art in Public Spaces / CAPuS (2018 – 2021) she coordinated the activities of the Croatian research group, developed an open-access digital repository of public artworks ([CAPuS Digital Repository](#)), produced an educational documentary titled *Time Has Not Helped*, and contributed to an [online course on conservation-restoration of contemporary public art](#) and a [multilingual illustrated glossary of terms](#) relating to street art and graffiti, and their conservation.

Sunara's select bibliography (papers related to artist interviews)

- Sunara, S. M. 2022. [Devising a method of teaching artist interview to conservation-restoration students](#). In: *Innovative Methods of Teaching in Arts : 3rd International Scientific and Artistic Symposium on Pedagogy in the Arts : Conference proceedings*, pp. 386–405.
- Sunara, S. M.; Tomšič, T. 2021. [Preporuke za konzervaciju-restauraciju i prezentaciju skulpture *Zid autorice Dore Kovačević*](#). In: *8th International Conference on Industrial Heritage "Renewal of Industrial Heritage", Rijeka, 25th – 26th May, 2018 : Conference Proceedings*, pp. 455–468.
- Sunara, S. M.; Tekić, R. 2019. [Problematika prezentacije *Ružičevih Vrata iz Parka skulptura Željezare Sisak*](#). *Anali Galerije Antuna Augustinčića*, pp. 413–434.
- Sunara, S. M. 2016. [Konzervatorske dvojbe na primjeru skulpture *Petra Barišića Muškarac i žena*](#). In: *6th International Conference on Industrial Heritage "The Man and the Industry", Rijeka, 24th – 25th April, 2015 : Conference Proceedings*, pp. 677–688.
- Sunara, S. M. 2015 [2013–2014]. [Problematika restauriranja obojenih \(metalnih\) skulptura na otvorenom: slučaj skulpture *Objekt II Josipa Diminića*](#). *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 37–38, pp. 197–210.



Sagita Mirjam Sunara and the artist Zvonimir Kamenar, discussing [his sculpture *Butterfly* \(1982\)](#) during the interview in Sisak in 2015 (photo: Tina Tomšič)