

# “Games” using old photographs in the time of the pandemic: Archival photographs in museum education

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*Muzeologia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, 2022, 10:3:61-79  
doi: 10.46284/mkd.2022.10.3.4

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The purpose of the article is to show what knowledge on the ludic culture of Cieszyn Silesian residents at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be obtained through the resources of the Photography Section of the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia. The project required both preliminary research and an analysis of archival photographs. The research questions regarded the usefulness of old photographs depicting past games in the preparation of both online and offline museum classes on the local cultural heritage. In the article, the author discusses photographs documenting past toys and pastimes, divided into 10 thematic groups, and presents outlines of lesson scripts as well as other museum activities prepared on their basis. The research conducted during the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic required netnographic methods and the analysis of historical sources, while the application of methods of design thinking made it possible to prepare scripts of museum classes.

Keywords: old photography, museum online, cultural heritage in lockdown, participatory museum, reconstruction of past games and toys

## Introduction

The article constitutes a report on the realisation of one stage of wide-spectrum studies on the reintroduction of past games and toys that used to be popular decades ago in Cieszyn Silesia.<sup>1</sup> This article, continuing this thematic cycle,<sup>2</sup> is a reflection on the methods of introducing variety in educational activities of museums through archival photographic resources. The author has undertaken the studies in order to verify the hypothesis of the possibility of utilising museum photographic resources, in both online and offline (participatory) forms, to spread knowledge on the past ludic culture and cultural heritage of the region.

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<sup>1</sup> Since 2018 the author has been realising the project titled: *Reintroduction of traditional toys and regional games in Cieszyn Silesia*. The research is being conducted in museums, libraries, archives and cultural centres. The next stage will involve reviewing archival resources in Książnica Cieszyńska (the Cieszyn Library), assessing the Cieszyn collectors' interest in ludic issues, interviewing regional toy creators, older residents of the region and those employees of the culture sector who include the elements of traditional toys and games in their work.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g.: SZALBOT, Magdalena. Toys within the collections of selected Cieszyn Silesia museums as a source of knowledge of the former ludic culture of the youngest inhabitants of the region. In: *Muzeologia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 7, 2019, is. 2, pp. 63-76; SZALBOT, Magdalena. Photographs from Digital Archives of the Polish Ethnographic Atlas As a Source of Knowledge about Rural children's Toys and Games in the Years 1954-1971. In: *Etnografia Polska*, vol. 65, 2021, is. 1-2, pp. 147-167 <https://doi.org/10.23858/EP65.2021.2645>.

The archival photographs from the Photography Section of the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia, partially made available online years ago in the "virtual storage" tab, constitute the research subject. The museum shows photographs of collections divided into seven thematic areas. The virtual storage makes it possible to browse more than 55 thousand photographs for free. These depict selected objects in the fields of archaeology, ethnography, history, cartography, numismatics, art, technology and photography. The last-named, which includes more than 20 thousand items, was selected as the study area for the preliminary research.

Each photograph in the virtual storage can be magnified on a computer screen and is marked with an inventory number. Each photograph is also provided with a data imprint a record of basic data on the exhibit item in the MUSNET catalogue card which is only as comprehensive as is the knowledge on the photograph. All sections of the virtual storage fall under the same search engine, which makes it possible to search via catalogue numbers that is inventory numbers of the items and any tags associated with a given subject. For instance, finding a photograph from the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia used by, for example, some publishing house is possible through entering the inventory number, as long as it was included on the website of the museum. The engine automatically searches all sections, although it provides only those results entered in the data imprint that match the tags used during the search.

The author has browsed the virtual storage of the Photography Section in search of photographs depicting old toys, games and pastimes of the residents of the region at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The research issue undertaken is of significance for several reasons. The research constitutes another stage of a research project that has been ongoing since 2018. The studies were made even more interesting due to the changes to the museum-related activities brought on by the outbreak of the pandemic. The author, who has been teaching museology classes at the University of Silesia in Katowice, has observed a progressing virtualisation and implementation of more and more technologically advanced solutions in this institution. Since the spring of 2020, the preparation of various exhibitions in the virtual form became a necessity, and frequently the only option of active operation. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, there have already been first analyses of research results on the activities of museums in lockdown.<sup>3</sup> These studies also required an assessment of the functioning of museums on both the Polish and the Czech sides of Cieszyn Silesia from the March of 2020. The author has conducted both an overview of the contents of websites of individual museums and phone or written interviews in 12 selected Polish museums and nine selected Czech museums in Cieszyn Silesia. Neither have shown a drastic increase in online activities for the museum e-audience.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g.: SAMAROUDI, Myrsini – ECHAVARRIA, Karina Rodriguez – PERRY, Lara: Heritage in lockdown: Digital provision of memory institutions in the UK and US of America during the COVID-19 pandemic. In: *Museum Management and Curatorship*. London – New York: Routledge, Vol. 35, No. 4, 2020, pp. 337–361, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2020.1810483>.

<sup>4</sup> The research encompassed the following museums: Muzeum 4 Pułku Strzelców Podhalańskich in Cieszyn, Muzeum Drukarstwa in Cieszyn, Muzeum Protestantyzmu in Cieszyn, Muzeum Zofii Kossak-Szatkowskiej in Górk Wielkie, Muzeum im. Gustawa Morcinka in Skoczów, Muzeum Beskidzkie im. Andrzeja Podzorskiego in Wisła, the Jan Jarocki Museum in Ustroń, "Na Grapie" Muzeum Regionalne in Jaworzynka, the Naturalist House in Hażlach, Muzeum Regionalne Stara Zagroda in Ustroń, Muzeum im. Jana Wálacha in Istebna, Muzeum "Zbiory Marii Skalickiej" in Ustroń, Sala Wystawowa Muzeum Ziemi Cieszyńskiej in Jablonków, Sala Wystawowa Muzeum Ziemi Cieszyńskiej in Orlová, Kotulaš wooden hut in Havířov-Bludovice, Muzeum Těšínska in Český Těšín, Světové Muzeum a Knihovnu Bible in Jablunkov, Hasičské muzeum in Český Těšín, the Ostrava Museum, Muzeum Beskyd in Frýdek-Místek, Zámek Fryštát in Karviná.

## Literature review

The research issue is located at a crossroads of several currents and it refers to selected theoretical perspectives discussed in the subject literature overviewed below. The studies described in this article constitute the opinion of a cultural anthropologist on the necessity to research and take actions aimed at reintroducing past games that are part of the cultural heritage of the region.<sup>5</sup> The project takes into account conclusions regarding the museum audience, which displays the qualities of the consumerist society identified by its need for finding new attractions, sensations and feelings.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the research required cogitation on significant issues in the fields of museum education,<sup>7</sup> visual anthropology,<sup>8</sup> the methods of practical realisation of the premises of a participatory museum,<sup>9</sup> the issue of trivialisation of photography in modern culture<sup>10</sup> and the availability of digital archives.<sup>11</sup> When researching various aspects of past culture, ethnologists find reaching for old photographs obvious, although not entirely free from the doubts associated with the methodological aspects of analysing and interpreting such sources.<sup>12</sup> The pandemic situation turned out to be a crucial context to the research. It

<sup>5</sup> BURDYKA, Konrad. Gry i zabawy ruchowe jako element dziedzictwa kulturowego polskiej wsi. In: BUKRABARYLKA, Izabella – WIERUSZEWSKA, Maria – BURDYKA, Konrad. *Lokalne dziedzictwo kulturowe w doświadczeniu mieszkańców wsi*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR: IRWiR PAN, 2017, pp. 81–95, 226–234; PRABUCKI, Bartosz. Badanie tradycyjnych sportów i gier jako perspektywiczny obszar badawczy. In: *Homo Ludens*. Poznań: Polskie Towarzystwo Badania Gier, 1(5), 2013, pp. 205–217; PRABUCKI, Bartosz. Zabawy, gry i sporty tradycyjne. Potencjal i możliwości ich wykorzystania w działalności muzealnej. In: *Studia Lednickie*. Dziekanowice: Muzeum Pierwszych Piastów, (17), 2018, pp. 63–86; KLASINSKA, Barbara. *Kształtowanie zainteresowań kulturą ludową uczniów klas trzecich przez systemowe integrowanie zajęć*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2011; KLASINSKA, Barbara. Wartość i sens zabawy w polskiej kulturze ludowej: implikacje dla współczesności. In: *Zabawy i Zabawki. Studia Antropologiczne*. Kielce: Muzeum Zabawek i Zabawy, (13), 2015, pp. 195–210.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g.: COMBS, James E. *Świat zabaw. Narodziny nowego wieku ludycznego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011; KANTOR, Ryszard. *Zabawa w dobie społeczeństwa konsumpcyjnego: szkice o ludyzmie, ludyczności i ponadzę, a w istocie o jej braku*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> PATER, Renata. Edukacja muzealna – wychowanie do aktywnego uczestnictwa w kulturze. In: *Parezya*. Białystok: Wydział Pedagogiki i Psychologii Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, vol. 1(7), 2017, pp. 74–92; KONIECZKA-SŁIWIŃSKA, Danuta – ROSZAK, Stanisław. Między szkołą, muzeum i archiwum. Dylematy współpracy i konkurencji w edukacji historycznej. In: *Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym*. Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, vol. 34 (3), 2015, pp. 43–61.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g.: COLLIER, John – COLLIER, Malcolm – foreword by HALL, Edward T. *Visual Anthropology: photography as a research method*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986; COLLIER, John. Photography and Visual Anthropology. In: HOCKINGS, Paul (ed.). *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 1995, pp. 235–254; PEŁCZYŃSKI, Grzegorz – VORBRICH, Ryszard. *Antropologia wobec fotografii i filmu*. Poznań: Biblioteka Telgte, 2004; PINK, Sarah. *Etnografia wizualna: obraz, media i przedstawienie w badaniach*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2009; BANKS, Marcus. Visual Anthropology. Image, object and Interpretation. In: PROSSER, Jon (ed.). *Image - based research*. London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 6–19; BANKS, Marcus. *Materiały wizualne w badaniach jakościowych*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009; NOWOTNIAK, Justyna. *Etnografia wizualna w badaniach i praktyce pedagogicznej*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Impuls, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> SIMON, Nina. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> SZTANDARA, Magdalena. *Fotografia etnograficzna i "etnograficzność" fotografii. Studium z historii myśli etnologicznej i fotografii II poł. XIX i I poł. XX wieku*. Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytet Opolski, Polskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk. Studia i Monografie nr 372, 2006, pp. 211–221.

<sup>11</sup> KRAWCZYK-WASILEWSKA, Violetta. *E-folklor w dobie kultury digitalnej. Szkice i studia z przedmową Andy'ego Rossa*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2016, pp. 47–63.

<sup>12</sup> Cf., e.g.: GOMBRICH, Ernst H. *Sztuka i złudzenie. O psychologii przedstawiania obrazowego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Arkady, 1981; PANOFKY, Erwin. *Ikonografia i ikonologia*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971.

unexpectedly forced museums to reorganise their functioning,<sup>13</sup> and in terms of ethnographic studies it forced the application of netnographic techniques.<sup>14</sup> In the subject literature, academic, popular and album studies have published some photographs found in museum resources<sup>15</sup> depicting toys, games, pastimes and methods of recreation of past regional inhabitants, even if devoid of explanatory commentary.<sup>16</sup>

## Materials and methods

The photographs from the Photography Section of the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia constituted the basic empirical foundation of the project. The photographs enriching various publishing houses dedicated to the culture of Cieszyn Silesia were treated by the author as supplementary material which also served to verify the results of the preliminary research. Another control source included photographs presented during the temporary exhibition titled *Ukryte na dawnej fotografii: życie codzienne w Cieszynie końca XIX w. do lat 30. XX w.* (Hidden in old photographs: everyday life in Cieszyn from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s), prepared from the collections of the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia. The exhibition concerned numerous aspects that were part of everyday life decades ago, including forms of entertainment and pastimes.<sup>17</sup>

The first of the methods applied selecting photographs in order to find examples of the main theme of the research involved entering selected keywords into the search engine of the virtual storage of the museum. The keywords were related to play and ludic issues, e.g. *game*, *toy*, *entertainment* and *sports* as well as names of various game- and toy-related accessories. The project utilised the method of studying historical sources, which involved the use of techniques and tools applicable in the qualitative and quantitative analysis of archival secondary sources. On the other hand, when working with students, the author referred to the premises of design thinking, which stimulated reflection on which exhibitions and museum classes thematically related to old photographs would be attractive to the modern audience.<sup>18</sup>

In this work, the author referred to both the methodology of the division of collected photographs and the definitions of names of individual photograph groups. The solutions were applied on the basis of several aspects, briefly described below.

The initial purpose of the preliminary research was to find examples of archival photographs depicting the circle of ludic phenomena in the broad sense, that is toys, games, forms of entertainment, recreation, sports and leisure of the inhabitants of the region from decades ago. The photographic resources of the virtual museum archive were selected on the basis of

<sup>13</sup> NIKONOVA, Antonina A. – BIRYUKOVA, Marina V. The Role of Digital Technologies in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage. In: *Muzeologia a kulturné dedičstvo*, vol. 5 (1), 2017, pp. 169–173.

<sup>14</sup> KOZINET, Robert V. *Netnografia: badania etnograficzne online*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012; MARKHAM, Annette N. Metody, polityka i etyka reprezentacji w etnografii online. In: DENZIN, Norman K. – Lincoln, Yvonna S. (eds). *Metody badań jakościowych*. Vol. 2. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009, pp. 219–256.

<sup>15</sup> MAKOWSKI, Mariusz. *Těšinská /Cieszynska/The Teschen belle époque*. Překlady do češtiny Stanislav Komárek, překlady do angličtiny Marie McDonald. Český Těšín: Ducatus Teschinensis ve spolupráci s Muzeem Śląska Cieszyńskiego, 2016, pp.122–163.

<sup>16</sup> PIERONKIEWICZ-PIECZKO, Krystyna and PAUL, Małgorzata. *Lale, misie, koniki...: zabawki w zbiorach Muzeum Śląskiego w Katowicach*. Katowice: Muzeum Śląskie, 2013, pp. 193–215.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g.: <https://zwrot.cz/2020/04/wystawa-zycie-codzienne-w-cieszynie-konca-xix-w-do-lat-30-xx-w-oczywiscie-wirtualnie/> (accessed June 30, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g.: OKRAJ, Zofia. *Design thinking. Inspiracje dla dydaktyki*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DIFIN, 2020; BROWN, Tim. *Zmiana przez design: jak design thinking zmienia organizacje i pobudza innowacyjność*. Współpraca Barry Katz. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo LIBRON, 2016.

photograph subjects, that is ludic objects, actions and events.

The first methodological aspect of the division of photographs is related to the typologies of photographs discussed in subject literature. The assessment of the collected archive materials confirmed there are both difficulties in classifying photographs and imperfections in the systematics proposed by theoreticians.<sup>19</sup> When organising the materials, the author considered the chronological development of the photographs. The photographs collected were taken between 1860 and 1967. This time frame made it possible to isolate typological representatives of documentary photography, conventional photography, painting photography and illustrative photography. Yet, ultimately, dividing the photos into such groups turned out to be unsuitable for fulfilling the main purpose of the research.

The second methodological aspect of the adopted division of photographs is based on the traditional approach used in culture studies. The description of individual societies with a division into specific fields of life and culture is a useful tool for ethnologists, and often also historians, who attempt to understand their history. Those fields include: 1) the vision of the world, 2) family and home, 3) food, 4) work, 5) public life and 6) social life and entertainment.<sup>20</sup> This division or a similar one, often reflected in the indices of ethnographic or historical monographs and utilised through an intuitively-constructed catalogue of notions, then helps portray the history of past societies. It makes it possible to collect specific motifs in one place and present an anthropological universe of phenomena that determine a unique character of each group's culture. The merit of the exemplified division is that it can be further specified within several main categories which – in this research – involve ludic issues.

The third hint that would facilitate the classification of collected photographs was the review of picture albums presenting photographs taken at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In such publications, the method of classifying the selected aspects of past life is also somewhat repetitive. Individual, thematically-profiled chapters of album publications are illustrated with photographs that show activities associated with everyday life and occasional events, both in work and out-of-work settings celebrations, social life, recreation and leisure in the past. Some group names were borrowed from these publications, while others were omitted or replaced with broader or narrower terms which determined the subjects of collected photographs more adequately.

An additional reference point in the adopted division of photographs was the descriptions of the exhibition titled *Ukryte na dawnej fotografii...* (Hidden in old photographs...).<sup>21</sup> This exhibition grouped photographs by specific themes illustrating aspects of everyday life public places, work, schooling and fashion – and leisure – entertainment, celebrations, recreation, balls and masked balls, banquets, parties and sports as well as tourist activities.

In some cases, the issue of adding photographs to a specific thematic group was settled by the titles handwritten on their backs by the authors. However, it should be mentioned that

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g.: GARZTECKI, Juliusz. *Trzęście oko*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1975, pp.15–24; LIGOCKI, Alfred. *Fotografia i sztuka*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1962, pp. 9–13; FERENC, Edward. *Typologia fotografii jako punkt wyjścia. Analizy ejdetycznej dzieła fotograficznego*. Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1984, [https://repozytorium.kul.pl/bitstream/20.500.12153/831/1/Ferenc\\_Edward\\_Typologia\\_fotografii\\_a\\_analiza\\_ejdetyczna.pdf](https://repozytorium.kul.pl/bitstream/20.500.12153/831/1/Ferenc_Edward_Typologia_fotografii_a_analiza_ejdetyczna.pdf), pp. 15–21.

<sup>20</sup> Cf.: CHWALBA, Andrzej (ed.). *Obyczaje w Polsce. Od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2004, pp.16-17.

<sup>21</sup> See footnote no. 17.

the titles or descriptions assigned by the photographers do not determine their fixed place in a given thematic group.

Ultimately, the author decided to divide the photographs into 10 groups according to the subject. Those were: 1) portraits of children with toys, 2) games and social gatherings, 3) balls and masked balls, 4) ludic games, 5) music-making and dance, 6) harvest festival, 7) amateur theatre performances, 8) marches, 9) recreation activities, and 10) sports and tourism. Yet, there are photos within the collection that could belong to two or even more groups. This classification refers to the solutions applied in subject literature, but also selections by the author due to the type of sources that constitute the research subject.

## Results of the preliminary research and their implications with regards to the project

Looking for the games once played by the locals via the search engine does not bring satisfying results. Only with the help of a museum employee did the author manage to obtain more photographs. The research yielded a total of 174 photographs which were then divided into 10 thematic groups: 1) portraits of children with toys (17 photos), 2) games and social gatherings (9 photos), 3) balls and masked balls (16 photos), 4) ludic games (43 photos), 5) music-making and dance (9 photos), 6) harvest festival (4 photos), 7) amateur theatre performances (8 photos), 8) marches (2 photos), 9) recreation activities (19 photos) and 10) sports and tourism (38 photos). The museum possibly owns more photographs that hold information about the ludic culture of the residents of Cieszyn Silesia. Yet, this selection constitutes a representative collection which illustrates this, so far unresearched, thematic area.

The author presents the preliminary research results, supplemented with selected photographs, based on the above-mentioned division of photographs into 10 thematic groups.<sup>22</sup>

MC/F/12912/003



Muzeum Śląska Cieszyńskiego

**Photograph no. 1:** Marketplace on the corner of *Wyspiańskiego* and *Kolejowa* Streets. MC/F/12912/003.

Photograph by: Kodak Ekspres, 2003.

To preserve the coherence of the presentation, the results and the practical implications resulting from the research are discussed jointly for individual groups in the order mentioned earlier on.

1. The first, interesting, although non-uniform group constitutes photographs of children with toys. The preliminary research made it possible to find numerous examples that have not been published so far. Photographs found in the museum archive (a mere 17 photographs) provide insight

<sup>22</sup> Adding inventory numbers of photographs or links to all photographs obtained during the preliminary research would result in exceeding the maximum length of the article. The author encourages readers interested in this information to contact her via the e-mail address provided.

into what kinds of toys had been used by Cieszyn Silesian children over a period of 100 years. The oldest photograph, dated 1860, is a photograph taken in a studio and depicting a dressed-up child, approximately a 2-3-year-old, with a furry toy dog on a wheeled platform. On the other hand, the 3 photographs taken in 1967 show manufactured toys – rubber ducks as well as plastic rattles, bears, dolls, toy watches and trumpets, rubber throwing rings (*ringo*) – on sale in the Cieszyn marketplace (photograph no. 1). Even such a simplified juxtaposition of the oldest and newer toys shows the changes that have occurred in this cultural area within a mere hundred years.

The oldest photographs in this group are taken in the style characteristic of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that is portraits of individual children with their toys.<sup>23</sup> The border of a photograph sometimes has the name of the photographic studio it was taken at. The backs of other photographs have personal data of the people in them. Quite frequently commemorative photographs of people were taken in a similar fashion: children leaning on tables, sitting alone (either on chairs, or toy horses) or with siblings, dressed up, girls with parasols and serious facial expressions, and depicted with toys. This sub-group also has some more natural shots showing children's indoor games, usually involving blocks, or outdoor games, with wooden wheelbarrows, bows and arrows, metal rings for rolling, three-wheeler bicycles, miniature carriages or miniature wooden garden houses. Some photographers also captured children's timeless fondness for any mobile equipment used during individual or group play. Others depict childhood-related objects, whose structure strayed from their modern versions, for instance a stroller, whose photograph was published in an album dedicated to the Cieszyn "belle époque".<sup>24</sup>

Today, showing people old photographs of children with their toys during a museum class may constitute a starting point for story-telling about what childhood was like decades ago.<sup>25</sup> Childhood was also joyful, despite the fact that its memory was preserved in a sombre sepia colour.<sup>26</sup> On this occasion, the participants may be informed that the type of toys used by children at that time largely depended on their family's wealth. Objects were made from materials differing from modern ones, and toys were more frequently hand made by both children and adults, often from whatever was on hand.<sup>27</sup> However the most loved collections of toys – dolls, teddy bears, rocking horses and blocks – remained largely the same despite the passage of time.

2. The subsequent nine photographs, dated between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s, show social gatherings of Cieszyn Silesians of the time and the games they played. This set of photographs makes it possible to approach the issue of past popular ludic behaviours of the residents of the region in a more in-depth way, since, on the one hand, it goes beyond the notion of childhood, and, on the other, it does not concern public, spectacle-like events, which were ludic, but also official in nature. Some photographs give an idea of what feasting among

<sup>23</sup> See: SZTANDARA, *Fotografia etnograficzna...*, pp. 120–135.

<sup>24</sup> MAKOWSKI, *Těšínská / Cieszyńska...*, pp. 124–125.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. in 2011, Grzegorz Studnicki prepared a temporary exhibition titled *Świat dziecka dawniej wczoraj dziś...* (The world of children in the past, yesterday and now...) in the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. KAPUŚCIŃKI, Ryszard. *Z Afryki*. Bielsko-Biała, 2000, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> KACZMARCZYK, Bożena. *Tradycyjne oraz współczesne gry i zabawy dziecięce*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 2012, pp. 47–69; KACZMARCZYK-GWÓŹDŹ, Bożena. *Wśród lalek, misiów i smartfonów. Od zabawek tradycyjnych do gadżetów kultury popularnej*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 2021, pp. 95–200; ŻOŁĄDŹ-STRZELCZYK, Dorota et al. *Dzieje zabawek dziecięcych na ziemiach polskich do początku XX wieku*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Chronicon, 2016, pp. 107–126.

a wider social circle or family looked like, at home, in wineries or cafés. Other photographs exude the atmosphere of card games played by men while drinking strong alcoholic beverages in smoke-filled Cieszyn restaurants. Then there are those that depict small sources of entertainment enjoyed at home, for instance, the picture of two girls playing chess shown below.



**Photograph no. 2:** *Chess game.* MC/F/288.  
Photograph by: J. Witalis, 1935.

depict ludic behaviours most authentically, people in the photographs make sweeping, spontaneous motions that frequently accompany card games. They face their companions, have half-open mouths and appear in casual positions (see photograph no. 3). Therefore, the photographs were sometimes staged, and at other times, the photographers merely captured a given form of entertainment in its natural, spontaneous course.

The museum classes inspired by this group of photographs could include a discussion with



**Photograph no. 3:** *A card game.* MC/F/9437/011,  
after 1920.

the viewers on the changes in customs occurring in individual decades. Old photos constitute an interesting reservoir of tidbits of information on the past. When viewing an exhibition, the viewers usually only look at the photographs, sometimes glancing at the captions. Many details draw attention for a short while, but ultimately escape and remain without an explanation. One such example is the question of why nineteenth-century boys were wearing dresses (as shown in the photographs in the previous thematic group) or why smoking was so popular only among men at that time. Technology used by the muse-

ums nowadays makes it possible to add variety and flavour to even the most traditionally-prepared exhibitions which present collections of photographs from years ago. One option is to transform the materials from the temporary exhibitions presented up till now into online



events – interactive and activating the e-audience. Participatory features can also be “built-in” into the scripts of offline, museum-based exhibitions. An exhibition based on old photographs could use a computer station, a valuable educational element, which would make it possible to demonstrate the functioning of the virtual storage of the museum (since some people are still unaware of its existence). A short guide or training on how to use the computer station could also be included. The museum should also have no greater difficulty in preparing QR codes which would supplement a given exhibition. An online exhibition could have an additional element in the form a quiz downloadable via the museum application. The quiz would test the viewers during the viewing or afterwards on what was remembered. It could also invite the viewers to make their own old photographs digitally available, especially those that concern a given section of the exhibition. People who had to avoid their favourite entertainment venues, such as restaurants, cafés, wine bars, inns, etc., could be interested in a temporary exhibition with old photographs depicting the functioning of such places in the region decades ago. Some Cieszyn Silesian facilities have been open in a given location for a long time uninterruptedly and they emphasise that fact by displaying old photographs. In this way, they refer to local traditions which not only make them more appealing to tourists, but also make them places often visited and perceived with fond attachment by the oldest residents of the region. Although such actions require additional work, they often attract people and draw them in. They give the impression that a museum may have an open format, and some activities can be undertaken together with the viewers.



**Photograph no. 4:** *Dressed “as infants”*.  
MC/F/25.  
Photograph by: H. Jandaurek, circa 1900.

3. The 16 photographs in the third group are examples of visual archive materials, depicting Cieszyn balls and masked balls. The oldest photograph dates back to 1895, but many are carnival keepsakes from the 1930s. Most depict adults: individuals, pairs or rarely groups. These photographs are distinguished by their comical overtone, which can be exemplified by two women dressed as infants in the photograph below (photograph no. 4).

Carnival costumes depicted are often: exotic – women wearing the costumes of: a geisha, a gypsy, Scheherazade; fantastical – fairy tale characters; or representative of various professions – a sailor, a butterfly hunter, a mailwoman, a troubadour. There were also photographs of people in traditional Cieszyn attire as well as methods of decorating rooms where these social ludic events took place. An interesting example is the so-called “living painting” of people dressed as gypsies.

Attempts to achieve mimicry, that is taking on different roles, were present in culture regardless of time or place.<sup>28</sup> Currently, dressing as another person requires merely renting a

<sup>28</sup> CAILLOIS, Roger. *Gry i ludzie*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 1997, pp. 308–328.

costume, buying a pre-made one in shops or online from a range made for cosplayers.<sup>29</sup> In the past, the participants of masquerades needed creativity and imagination in order to make their own outfits. The costumes preserved in the photographs delight with their ingenuity, clarity of message and the elaborate care with which they were made. They also bring to mind the mindset of "doing something from nothing" popular for many post-war decades, encompassing



**Photograph no. 5:** *Elly Pindór, the daughter of a Cieszyn pastor, dressed as a mailwoman. MC/F/1843. Photograph by: H. Jandaurek, circa 1900.*

also carnival costumes for children's school or kindergarten balls. The photograph of Elly Pindór, taken circa 1900, wherein she is dressed in an intricately and cleverly made costume of a mailwoman, is a perfect example of carnival outfits (photograph no. 5).

Contemporary youth could be interested in facing a challenge set by the museum and consisting in firstly, selecting one of the characters in the old photographs, secondly, trying to dress and pose like them and, thirdly, sending a digital copy of the result of their transformation juxtaposed with the photograph that inspired them. This idea of establishing contact with the viewers is not new. In the early days of the pandemic, the media have shown the results of such competitions, organised mostly by artistic museums, where the participants attempted to resemble, for instance, the characters painted by famous artists.

4. The next group of photographs from the preliminary research is photographs under a collective label of "ludic games". It contains more than 40 photos taken in the 1930s, depicting masqueraders, carollers and monsters from the ritual named "*Mikolaje*", practiced in Istebna village and its vicinity. The Museum decided to also digitalise their reverse sides, where their descriptions were handwritten. In this group there are also examples of "transforming" selected photographs of old rites into postcards. The researchers of ludic culture at that time photographed annual customs of the locals<sup>30</sup> that gave the opportunity for playing in a larger group. Many of these photos are used as illustrations in modern publications on the observances and rites performed in Cieszyn Silesia.<sup>31</sup> Since the masqueraders were frequently children, these photographs were displayed in exhibitions dedicated to childhood or local customs.<sup>32</sup>

The usefulness of this particular group of photos should be emphasised when taking into account the main purpose of the project, that is the preparation of museum tools that would facilitate the popularisation and practice of past forms of entertainment, games and play. The sources described above and preserved photographs can be used in the educational work of

<sup>29</sup> LAMERICHS, Nicolle. Stranger than Fiction: Fan Identity in Cosplay. In: *Transformative Works and Cultures*. Organization for Transformative Works, vol. 7, 2011. doi:10.3983/twc.2011.0246.

<sup>30</sup> GAJEK, Józef. Zadania i metody Polskiego Atlasu Etnograficznego. In: *Lud*. Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, vol. 44, 1957, pp. 153–204.

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g.: STUDNICKI, Grzegorz. *Lidové zvyky a obyčjeje na Těšínském Slezsku / Obrzędowość doroczna i rodzinna na Śląsku Cieszyńskim*. Cieszyn. Ducatus Teschinensis: Muzeum Śląska Cieszyńskiego, 2011, pp. 70–71, 82, 90, 94, 121.

<sup>32</sup> See: Archiwum wystaw czasowych Muzeum Śląska Cieszyńskiego: <http://www.muzeumcieszyn.pl/> (accessed March 31, 2021).

the museum in numerous, so far untried ways in the search for new methods for making the museum audience interested in the ludic aspects of past regional culture. These photographs could serve, for instance, to create a museum narrative on the participation of children and youth in annual ludic rites. The customs currently, although sporadically, observed involve visiting houses before Christmas or around Epiphany, also known as the Feast of the Three Kings. The analysis of the selected group of photographs makes it possible to explain the significance of the custom, but also identify the differences between the modern, symbolic elements of the costume worn during this occasion and the costumes of the *Mikolaje* groups used at the time – made from simple, but very diverse fabrics. If the museum has such celebratory costumes, it would be interesting to not only show them, but also create an opportunity to dress up as a selected character from the *Mikolaje* group. Organising workshops for people to recreate the costumes of individual characters using the materials used at the time, such as straw, yarn, fabrics, ram or rabbit leather, animal horns, twine and pieces of wood would bring even more interesting educational results. Such a stimulating undertaking would show the possibilities of the application of these materials. It would also leave a permanent imprint of this element of Cieszyn Silesian culture in the memories of the participants.

The analysis of photographs depicting the *Mikolaje* custom can also be used as an opportunity to discuss the role of masks in culture. To modern people, a mask may be associated mainly with people of distant, non-European cultures or the image of Guy Fawkes, popularised via the Internet. An analysis of nineteenth-century photographs related to the culture of the region may serve to demonstrate that masks were also present in the local ludic customs.

A presentation of handwritten, almost one-hundred-year-old captions on the backs of photographs can be used as a basis for a lecture on the art of calligraphy, the rules of phonetic representation of dialectal texts and changing linguistic styles – in this case, concerning the writing



**Photograph no. 6:** *Masqueraders*. MC/F/3197v, reverse of the photograph, photograph by: L. Malicki, circa 1937.

of the words “*żid*”, “*dochtór*” (photograph no. 6). The participants of museum classes could also be invited to design an e-postcard which would illustrate a modern custom passed on from the ancestors and would therefore pass the knowledge thereof onto the next generations, providing both the educational value and an opportunity to have fun crafting.

5. The central theme of the next group of photographs, amounting to nine photos and isolated during the preliminary research, is music-making and dancing. The photographs which immortalised Cieszyn Silesians dancing and/or playing various instruments can become the foundation of a lesson on the regional music folklore, especially one with an addition of the musical items owned by the museum. The photographs, taken over 100 years (1860–1960), depict a form of ludic activity that is hard to capture with a camera. Individual groups of dancers or musicians were usually captured in static form, during breaks, and rarely mid-performance. These photos

constitute a source of knowledge on musical instruments and outfits – both ceremonial and stage costumes. The oldest are characterised by conventionalisation and the physical rigidity of the photographed. On the other hand, mid-dance movements are frequently captured in the newest. These photographs can be used together with the ones discussed in the previous group to organise museum classes related to dance and music issues, making it possible to conduct a music class that would surprise the participants. Presenting such photographs to modern people, who are generally less inclined towards singing, dancing and joint music-making, may provoke reflection on their mostly passive attitude to music, usually limited to watching and listening to personally-unknown artists. Obviously, it should not be assumed that such music-oriented workshops would result in the creation of numerous amateur bands, even if they were to enable the participants to test their skills in using the copies of old instruments to produce sounds. Yet they could at least encourage individuals to get better acquainted with the musical culture of the region or even learn to play a given instrument. There is also a possibility of creating much more entertaining and interactive elements of museum classes, for instance with the participation of special guests: instrumentalists or ethno-choreographers, who would not only speak about the past musical culture of the region, but also teach the steps to once popular dances, such as “*taskany*”, “*grozjik*”, or “*boškany*”.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, the audience could prepare “a living painting” by dressing up as the musical band from a given photograph and posing with replicas of the instruments. Young people, to whom music is an important part of everyday life, may be particularly interested in identifying the names of individual instruments, learning



**Photograph no. 7:** *An employee of the Cieszyn printing house (Mr. Graf) playing a zither.* MC/F/1679, photograph by: P. Cherny, circa 1860.

their evolution or finding the photographs of modern bands and artists that could be modern equivalents of the old photographs of people with instruments, such as the below photograph of a Cieszyn printing house employee playing a zither who reminded the students of a modern DJ (photograph no. 7).

6. The next group of photographs constitutes mementos from harvest festivals. The photographs come from the 1920s to 1930s. Shots of dressed up participants with banners standing in rows, and groups of people sitting on bedecked wagons or marching in celebratory processions through main streets predominated. The most interesting, from the perspective of the studies, are photographs of dance performances. One example is a photograph depicting choreography prepared by 20 girls standing in four rows of five and feigning the reaping of crops with sickles in their hands (photograph no. 8).

Even nowadays various Cieszyn Silesian towns still hold harvest festival celebrations at the end of the summer. The museum could “meet the audience halfway” by preparing a temporary exhibition, preferably a mobile, travelling one, which would reach the places where

<sup>33</sup> MARCINKOWA, Janina. Kozoka bych tańcowała. In: *Płyniesz Olza. Zarys kultury duchowej ludu cieszyńskiego*. KADŁUBIEC, Daniel (ed.). Ostrawa: Wydawnictwo Profil, 1970, p. 147.



**Photograph no. 8:** *Harvest festival, album of the School Educational Society in Czechoslovakia.* MC/F/444/40, photograph by: L. Bee, 1929.

such celebrations occur. It would create a space where the participants of the festivals could both reflect on their personal contribution to the continuation of local traditions and confront the past elements of these seasonal celebrations with the present ones on their own – all without the need for additional museum input, aside from the presentation of the selection of magnified photographs.

7. The next, seventh group includes shots from the activities of amateur theatre groups. The photographs, from 1930–1966, include group shots of a Cieszyn group “*Skrzutki?*”, taken during and after a performance. There are also photographs that constitute a trace of performances, spectacles and nativity plays performed decades ago. Those are mostly static, staged, official and collective photographs commemorating both old and young amateur actors. Few of them document the course of performances. Yet, their value lies in the fact that they store information on what the costumes, pup-

pets on sticks and other props used by amateur theatres looked like. They have high educational value for the museum, since they are a source of knowledge on amateur theatre – a cultural form of activity which used to be much more popular than nowadays among both children and adults. They can serve as a basis for finding information about the repertoire of the time, with stage adaptations that were highly anticipated by the audience, since there was no television or Internet.

8. Only a few photographs taken in the 1930s document the celebratory marches that passed through the Cieszyn city centre. According to its annotation, one of them documents a Mother’s Day celebration. Another one shows mostly girls in summer dresses in the foreground with



**Photograph no. 9:** *Children’s summer camps.* MC/F/4716. Photograph by: L. Beer, 1926.

the fragments of the western frontage of the Cieszyn market in the background. In student projects of museum lessons centred around these photographs, nobody suggested any educational activity related to the events in them. Yet these photographs, similarly to the ones capturing children with toys, could be used together with other photographs to play a museum “game” with the aim of recognising the pieces of urban structure in a given town and comparing their photographic depictions with their current forms.

9. “Recreation” is the common denominator of the next 19 photo-

graphs. These photographs depict picnics, work breaks, summer games by the water and women's meetings dedicated to needlework. The photographs were taken between 1890 and 1936, and constitute a review of various groups' activities related to entertainment and recovering strength. The majority shows outdoor games played in warmer seasons. A few are staged shots taken during social gatherings, mostly depicting dressed up ladies in elegant interiors. But there are also well-thought-out photographs with deliberate composition of groups having picnics in the woods.

Today, viewing some past photographs can give a completely different, fuller image of the past locals' everyday joy of life. Those include photographs in which children play in the river, 1930s photographs depicting children playing in a small, but sturdy paddling pool during a summer camp (photograph no. 9 below), and children dressed in "old-fashioned" costumes and playing in bathing resorts.

Recreational activities captured in old photographs can also contribute to a discussion with the museum audience on the condition of the environment, a subject which is currently very relevant. Currently, an unpolluted natural environment is a very sought after setting for both relaxation and active methods of spending free time. The old photographs show that bathing in rivers used to be popular in the past, but nowadays – due to water pollution – it is not always advisable.

10. A broadly-understood category of culturally-determined models of ludic behaviours also encompasses sport and tourist activities. During the preliminary research, 38 photographs in this category were obtained, taken between 1890 and 1955. These shots are mostly mementos from ski trips, hikes, sports competitions, team games or gymnastic exercises done on school sports fields. They depict people identified by name and surname, smaller or larger groups on tourist trails or during hikes. The locations marked in their descriptions indicate that most such trips took place on the trails of Silesian Beskids.

An interesting element of museum classes based on these photographs would be, for instance, the comparison of the past outfits and sports accessories in the shots and the present ones used by the museum audience. Contemporary youth will probably be shocked at seeing women in long dresses and hats on tourist trails or skiers in sports outfits that largely differ from the current ones. Such a juxtaposition creates an opportunity to talk to modern sportsmen and various types of tourists about the increase in specialisations, comfort and safety, but also prices of sports equipment and clothes. Other notions discussed during this museum class and based on the photographs collected may also concern the elitism and niche-like quality of some sports or the sports that used to be frequently practiced in Cieszyn Silesia, but are now out of fashion (e.g. cricket).

According to teachers' statements, the youth, especially older members, are not fond of physical education. These historical local photographic sources may be used to remind the audience that the introduction of physical education and other recreational conveniences in public schools was a major achievement,<sup>34</sup> enabling all social groups to practice sports for free. In lockdown, many PE teachers taught the history of sports. The question is whether museums which have access to the history of local sports would be able to prepare online classes on the basis of both the sources discussed in this article and other sources. They would provide an opportunity for children and youth to get acquainted with the regional sports he-

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<sup>34</sup> See, e.g.: LIPONSKI, Wojciech. *Encyklopedia sportów świata*. Poznań: Oficyna Wydawnicza Atena, 2001, pp. 331–332.



**Photograph no. 10:** *Tourists on Lysá hora.* MC/F/6164B, photograph by: L. Bilowitzky, circa 1899.

roles of the past in an interesting, interactive form. Upon deliberation on the possibility of preparing both offline and online museum classes aimed at popularising the knowledge on the Cieszyn Silesian tourism and sports at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, lesson scripts were prepared together with students. Those scripts emphasised not only the factual material – player names, team names, victory dates etc. – although such knowledge is undoubtedly valuable, but suggested activities that require the audience’s participation. The collection of photographs provides an opportunity to pass on knowledge on the summits conquered by subsequent generations of the locals, summit names, their elevations and trails leading to them. It also encourages to tell, especially the children and youth in the times of online education brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, about the history of sports and tourism, but taking into account the usually omitted

regional perspective. The period of the pandemic forced PE teachers to come up with various forms of credits for physical exercises, adapted to the current circumstances. In this case, the cooperation between schools and the museum, which has interesting, less-known sources on the history of sports in the region, could result in preparing interesting undertakings. One of the student projects suggested that the museum organise a photography competition for school children to take a selfie-style photograph upon conquering a selected summit of the Beskid Mountains. Aside from getting a pass for the PE lesson, the participants’ photographs would be evaluated in terms of the resemblance of the composition between their photo and a selected photograph from the virtual storage of the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia, for example the below shot of two men who conquered the summit of Lysá hora in 1899 (photograph no. 10).

The above is merely one proposal suggesting an online, but in this case also healthy, activation of the museum audience. Such competition would make it possible for the museum to collect material for a post-competition exhibition displaying past photographs and their modern equivalents, but would also encourage the next generations of the locals to get acquainted with the local history of tourism in the form of a game.

## Discussion

The research has shown that the photographs taken at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that document the past ludic Cieszyn Silesian culture are available and can be used to develop museum tools facilitating the reintroduction of toys, games and sports once popular in the region. In the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia and other similar institutions they frequently constitute the “material” for educational museum projects either online or prepared in accordance with the concept of the participatory museum. The review of the current cul-

tural offer of selected museum venues in Cieszyn Silesia indicates a potential usefulness of old digitalised photographs for conducting both online and offline museum activities dedicated to various subjects. During the pandemic, people have had the chance to learn about the friendly nature of such cultural institutions as museums. Therefore, the audience may expect them to expand their offer after the pandemic dies down. The digital archival photographs and other museum resources can constitute a foundation for both such an expansion and the preparation of a new museum offer.

Despite the trivialisation of photography in modern culture, people are still fond of taking and viewing photos. Old photographs can be used to prepare workshops and tasks which would activate the audience, introduce the secrets of taking black and white photographs and prepare for amateur studies using the virtual storage of the museum, all to increase knowledge and raise interest in local culture. The museum narrative on the past forms of entertainment and recreation, presented on the basis of the photographs, can pass on knowledge that would help modern people improve their understanding of the customs and everyday life of the locals from decades ago. Engrossing museum (e-)classes, which would give clues on how to play old games, could attract the youngest visitors and encourage them to put electronic forms of entertainment aside for a while. The archival photographs used in manners described in the article could constitute the "material" for many museum educational projects that would supplement the school programme not only during the lockdown. Activating actions conducted during museum e-classes, or when visiting the exhibitions either in venues or virtually in a ludic, participatory and creative way may convince the audience that learning about the local cultural heritage may be fun and engaging, for instance, through direct participation in forms of ludic activities organised by the museum. It may also encourage the audience to search for the resources of the local cultural heritage, share them and refer to them, which, thanks to participation in various museum educational projects, would make them more understandable and appreciated.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the employees of the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia for their help in the realisation of this project: the museum director – Mr Marian Dembiniok, for making it possible to conduct the research; and Mrs Katarzyna Jarmul–Niemczyk, for her assistance in the preliminary research conducted.<sup>35</sup> I would also like to thank the museologists from other Cieszyn Silesian facilities who shared their observations on the functioning of their museums in the pandemic. I am also grateful to the students of the Cieszyn Faculty of Arts and Educational Science, who participated in my courses on museology and displayed creativity in preparing scripts for museum lessons and other educational activities described in the article.

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<sup>35</sup> The author has spoken and written to the employees of the Museum of Cieszyn Silesia. They consider the ideas presented in the article as enriching their works (e-mail correspondence in the author's archives).



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