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## Archives and New Technologies

**Ioana Vasiloiu**, PhD, Lecturer, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters,  
E-mail: con\_ioana@yahoo.com

**Niculina Vârgolici**, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Bucharest,  
Faculty of Letters, E-mail: ninavârgolici@yahoo.com

### *Abstract*

The article presents the way in which the digital and traditional archive of a unique museum in Europe is capitalized within the Permanent Exhibition.

The literary archive, part of the cultural memory of the Romanian people is exposed by traditional methods and techniques, but also by modern, digital interactive means that transform the museum's space into an extremely vivid, attractive place for any visitor, local or from any part of the world.

**Keywords:** exhibition, literary archive, digital archive, traditional archive, memory

The new information technologies have changed our lives...

The life of individuals and organization, whether public or private – is under the sign of the digital.

It is almost unthinkable today to walk through the collections of a museum of national importance without the “big” meeting with the new media technologies meant to interact with the visitor (specialist or not) in an active, attractive and accessible manner.

The permanent or temporary exhibition in a museum, the main way of capitalizing the funds and patrimonial collections, has been connected to the demands of the postmodern audience offering an image as representative as possible of the “the content” in both traditional and electronic formats.

The new Permanent Exhibition of the National Museum of Romanian Literature opened on 31 st of March 2017 and located on 8 Crețulescu Street, in an old chic building, that belonged to the famous Mavrocordat family (which promoted the Romanian culture in Moldavia and Wallachia) is without any doubt, a successful museum product both through the product in a narrow sense: COLLECTION and the notion of product in a broad sense: how the COLLECTION is presented to the public. (Aarts & Kiers, 2010)

The use of multimedia means, in an appropriate proportion to the space and to the documentary information presented “seduces” the visitor, regardless of age, education or professional training.

At the entrance of the Museum we encounter a holopixel (a holographic interface) that represents Ion Caramitru reciting from Eminescu and in the first room dedicated to the “Creators of Poetic Languages” a holodeck – privileged space for the manuscript of the poem “To the star” – one of the museum’s main exhibits.

Each exhibition hall is equipped with a Touchscreen display through which the user contacts the bibliographic information about the writers represented in the exhibitions space by the manuscripts or photographic documents, but also by memorial objects of inestimable value.

A simple push on different buttons displays features of Romanian avant - garde, of medieval literature or of the encyclopedic personalities of Romanian culture: Dimitrie Cantemir, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, Alexandru Odobescu, Vasile Pârvan, Nicolae Iorga, Mircea Eliade.

The Attic of the Museum is perhaps the most original space of the exhibition and, certainly, the favourite place of teenagers, as multiple video projections dedicated to Romanian dramaturgy encourage reading of literary works, but also the participation in theatrical performances that take place weekly.

Equally interesting and attractive for the young audience are the holograms of the three representatives of Generation 27: Mircea Eliade, Eugen Ionescu and Emil Cioran – located in the basement – interpreted by the actors Marius Bodochi, Tudorel Filimon and Dorin Andone.

Undoubtedly, the encounter between text, sound and audio plays a significant role in perceiving poetry, prose, theatre and film as parts of the same national and universal *creative spirit*.

The indestructible connection between literature and the seventh art is reflected in a circular room named “*From Book to Film. A Kaleidoscope of Characters*”.

The small circular room is a museum in museum: a museum of famous characters: Lefter Popescu, Vitoria Lipan, Lică Trubadurul, Ada Razu, Fred Vasilescu and Mrs. T., Otilia Mărculescu and Ioanide, Lică Sămădăul and Mara selected from the texts in prose written by I. L. Caragiale, Sadoveanu, Ioan Slavici, Camil Petrescu, Hortensia Papadat- Bengescu etc.

Each of the mobile stands located in the “niches” of the semicircle contains a mini-encyclopedia of the character: general information about it and about the work that contains it, a set of characteristic quotations gathered from the text, but also critical opinions about the respective character. On the same support we meet, in three hypostases, the figure of “the hero”, as it is conceived in our cinematography and, in the subtext, to rethink the character from two opposite directions, yet conjunct: from literary work to screening and vice versa.

The famous films, adaptations after the novels “*The Last Night of Love, the First Night of War*” or “*Moromeșii*” can be seen upstairs, in the Hall of the “*The Great Novelists*”, among manuscript fragments (of novels written by Marin Preda: *The Most Beloved Man on Earth* and *Moromeșii*; Max Blecher: *Scarred Hearts*; Duiliu Zamfirescu: *Tănase Scatiu*; Mihail Sadoveanu: *The Hatchet*; Cella Serghi: *Mirona*; Petru Dumitriu: *Nights in*

*June*; Liviu Rebreanu: *Adam and Eve*, *The Rebellion* and *The Hanged Men's Forest*; Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu: *The Foreigner*, *Ariadna's Novel*; Gheorghe Crăciun: *The Beautiful without body*, *The Freedom of Constraint*) the curious visitor may admire unique memorial objects: Camil's radio, typewriter and hearing device, Petru Creția's desk, Mihail Sadoveanu's golden porcelain cup, Al. Macedonski's brass fruit bowl, I. A. Bassarabescu's correspondence binding or Ion Vinea's blotting-paper and coupe-papier.

*Eliade*, *Cioran*, *Ionescu* Hall is a space for film, fine art, literary correspondence and renowned photos among which we signal the famous photography made in the '70s of the 20th century with the three Romanians gone to the West, talking on a street in Paris, in an early spring or late autumn day. The central showcase, dedicated to the historian of religions is distinguished by the original letters addressed by Eliade to Lucian Blaga (Bucharest, 16 th of June 1973) and to Barbu Brezianu (28 th of August 1972). A multimedia tablet set in the front of the showcase takes us into the fantastic universe of Mircea Eliade's prose through the famed screening made in 2007 by Francis Ford Coppola: *Youth without Youth* – adaptation made after the short story *Youth without Youth*. The new Permanent Exhibition of the Museum seduces the visitor not only through the relevant presence of the new technologies, but also by the original manner of organizing the national mobile cultural heritage.

The objects, manuscripts, photographs were not structured primarily on the chronological criterion (though it makes its discreet sense of presence), but on the criterion of literary genres: Ground Floor – Poetry, Upstairs – Prose, Attic – Theatre.

The first floor on the ground level attracts more visitors than the others, not because it is the first, but because it is the Hall of “The Creators of Poetic Languages”: Mihai Eminescu, Tudor Arghezi and Nichita Stănescu.

It is the place where visitors of all ages, specialists and non-specialists discuss, change opinions, ask questions, read “informational placards” extremely easy to read due to the character used, colour and the size of the letters.

The specialist or non-specialist visitor meets facsimiles (*Mortua Est*, *The Evening Star*, *Letter II*), volumes of poetry (*Mold Flowers* – 1931, *Poems* – 1889 – the fourth edition, *A Vision of Feelings* – 1964, *The Meaning of Love* – 1960), photos (Nichita Stănescu with Dora Stănescu, Nichita Stănescu – child, Tudor Arghezi with his wife, the building where Eminescu resided during the period 1859-1860, when he was a pupil in the primary classes in Cernăuți, photo with the building of the gymnasium in Cernăuți where Eminescu studied from 1860 to 1863 etc.), objects belonging to the three creators of poetic languages (Tudor Arghezi's Mont Blanc fountain pen, Arghezi's ceramic small saucer, Nichita Stănescu's metal cigarette case, Nichita's photo-camera, Arghezi's paper clip), letters through which we step into the intimate universe of the writers (November 1926 Arghezi's letter to O. Cisek, a leaf of Eminescu's letter to the poet Samson Bodnărescu, dated Iași, November 1876 or T. Maiorescu's letter to Eminescu, dated 17 th/ 29 th of January 1874, Bucharest) along with acts, requests, administrative documents (the request from 1865 sent by Eminescu to the prefect of Botoșani County in order to obtain the passport or the copy of the birth certificate of our “national poet”).

The first hall (like all the others) spotlights the Museum's highly valuable collection of fine art.

Thus, raising the eyes from books and manuscripts, the visitor admires Mircea Dumitrescu's paintings, illustrations of the volume *Desire. Love Poems (translated in five languages)* - poems by Mihai Eminescu (collection edited by Zoe Dumitrescu Buşulenga, Albatros Publishing House, 1983-1984), but also an unsigned painting (oil on wood) representing Veronica Micle.

The fugitive glance over the Hall 1 (for reasons of limited space we cannot present all the goods exhibited) shows to the reader or to the potential visitor the extremely rigorous manner in which the selection of pieces was made from the collections and archive funds, because – as the specialist in museology Ion Opreş argues: “the permanent Exhibition supports in the best way the value and representativeness of the heritage, the capacity of the staff to present to the public, in attractive forms, especially the new items that – either from deposits reserve, discoveries, acquisitions and recent donations or from collaborations with other institutions – are meant to keep the attention and interest, responding to requests and expectations”. (Opreş, 2008)

The hall suggestively called “What Do the Poets Write About?” (starting with the generation from 1848 to modernists) it is a journey into pre-modern and modern Romanian literature represented by poets such as: Al. Macedonski, Dimitrie Anghel, G. Coşbuc, Ion Minulescu, Şt. Petică, G. Bacovia, Ion Barbu, L. Blaga, so that in the showcases arranged in an interesting manner we'll find objects, manuscripts, letters, documents, volumes, photographs that belonged to them.

Let us mention some of the patrimonial assets exhibited, selecting the most significant ones: the Japanese slippers, the metal box engraved with hunting scenes, the wooden ink pot, the case with cover made of pearl, the golden wedding rings – they all belonged to Macedonski, the manuscripts of the poems *Night of May*, a page of the manuscript of the poem *The Flyer* by I. Heliade Rădulescu, handwritten notebook *Pastels*, the notebook *The Dogmatic Egg* by Ion Barbu, with the author's handwritten interventions, the manuscript of the poem *I do not crush the world's corolla of wonders* by L. Blaga, a Bacovia's manuscript letter to his wife Agatha Grigorescu (July 1950), an Ilarie Voronca's letter to Lucian Blaga (January 1933), Vasile Voiculescu's “vaccination certificate” from the age of 10 years old (July 1894), V. Voiculescu's doctoral degree in medicine and surgery, Macedonski's release note from Văcăreşti prison (7 th of June 1875), Şt. O. Iosif's and Natalia Negru's wedding invitation, the volume *At the shadoof of the waters* by Lucian Blaga (1933), the volume *Hidden Game* by Ion Barbu (The National Culture Publishing House, Bucharest 1930) – with the author's portrait drawn and engraved in wood by Marcel Iancu, group photo: Şt. O. Iosif, I. L. Caragiale and O. Goga, photo: Ion Pillat with Maria Pillat and Roxana Sotiriadis at the Acropolis (1927), photo: O. Goga on the ship, photo: Ion Barbu with Ion Marin Sadoveanu and Tudor Vianu, photo: D. Anghel and Natalia Negru etc.

The next room suggestively named *Avant-garde and other (postwar) – isms: dadaism, surrealism, onirism, neo-modernism, '80s-ism* bring together patrimonial assets of great

literary value, carefully preserved by the employees of this reference institution in the Romanian culture.

Of the unique value exhibits, some manuscripts – literary jewels, must be mentioned: *The Invective Poem* by Geo Bogza, prepared by the author for publication at *On(Unu)e* Publishing House, with Geo Bogza's "fingerprints", the manuscript of the poem *To Be Continued* by Sașa Pană, with the author's signature, dated 1932, the manuscript of the poem *Elegy for the Winter's Coming* by Tristan Tzara, with the author's signature, a manuscript note sent by Ion (Nino) Stratan to Traian T. Coșovei, dated 23 rd of August, 4 o'clock p.m., without mentioning the year, a letter with envelope sent by F. T. Marinetti to Ion Vinea, text in French (14 th of July 1930) etc.

Among manuscripts – real creation laboratories, there are the first editions („princeps” editions) belonging to the poets included in the *Isms* hall: the volume *The Invective Poem* by Geo Bogza, with the author's fingerprints, One (Unu) Publishing House, 1933, the volume *The Sadism of the Truth* by Sașa Pană with illustrations by Victor Brauner, Marcel Iancu, Alfred Jarry, S. Perahim, Picasso, Man Ray, Jacques Vache, One (Unu) Publishing House, Bucharest; the volume *Ulysse* by Benjamin Fondane (1933) with a dedication to Ion Vinea, the volume *Poems in Open Air* by Stephan Roll (drawings by Victor Brauner, the collection *Integral*, 1929, with dedication to Ion Vinea, the collective volume *Air with Diamonds* by Ion Stratan, Florin Iaru, Traian T. Coșovei, Mircea Cărtărescu, Litera Publishing House, 1982, with Ion Stratan's dedication to Traian T. Coșovei (the volume contains dedications from all the authors) etc. Also, in this wonderful hall there is a notebook with cuts from the press, filled by hand, notebook consciously realized by the famous literary critic and art curator Serge Fachereau when Tristan Tzara died. He made it by „placing together most of the cuts from the newspapers and journals collected between December 1963 and January 1964, articles speaking about his passing”. (Fauchereau, 2017)

Also, young researchers can consult in this room the scanned collection of avant-garde periodicals in the archive of The National Museum of Romanian Literature: *Algae*, *The Contemporary*, *Integral*, *One*, *Point*, *Urmuz*, *75 HP*.

It must be mentioned that the archive of The National Museum of the Romanian Literature owns „fourteen periodicals of the avant-garde, which are in incomplete collection – it is right to say it – but this does not diminish the importance they hold in the indisputable treasure of MNLR: *Algae*, *The Bell*, *The Contemporary*, *Integral*, *Meridian*, *Point*, *Radical*, *The Symbol*, *One*, *Urmuz*, *Immediate Life*, *Zodiac*, *75 HP*, *XX (20) – contemporary literature*” (Vasiloiu, 2016)

On the ground floor there are also a temporary micro-exhibition *Eminescu* and *Perpessicius* Hall where visitors can watch films about the history of the museum or about the Romanian literature and its European reverberations. In this room that bears the name of the founder of the cultural institution, Perpessicius, cultural events take place (book launches, commemorations, symposiums, colloquia), but also programmes for children (workshops and competitions) because the Museum has also an important educational function: „the Museum is the public cultural institution, in the service of the

society, which collects, preserves, researches, restores, communicates and exposes – for knowledge, education and recreation purposes”. (The law number 311/ 2003)

At the top floor of the sumptuous villa – the prose and the literary critique are grouped in seven halls.

We'll make a short tour through the seven halls, trying not to omit anything essential of the abundance of „pieces” exposed in an original manner, continuously combining the traditional with the modern.

Thus, in the circular room dedicated to the critique and literary history, the emphasis falls on what remained from the founders of the Romanian literary critique: Titu Maiorescu, E. Lovinescu and G. Călinescu, not forgetting to pay attention to the great critics and literary historians alive: Eugen Simion and Nicolae Manolescu (there are exposed manuscript pages from *Today's Romanian Writers*, the volumes *E. Lovinescu*, *The Redeemed Sceptic* and *Today's Romanian Writers* (volume I) or Nicolae Manolescu with the manuscript *Young Poets* and the volumes *Maiorescu's Contradiction* and *Noah's Ark. Essay on the Romanian Novel*, volume I.

The *Maiorescu Fund* is represented in the new permanent exhibition in the Mavrocordat House by three letters: two letters written by the founder of the literary Romanian criticism and addressed to Eminescu, both of them from 1874 and the third one addressed to the editor I. Socec, dated 17 th/ 29 th of December 1892, one copy of the complete edition of *Critical Works*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1915 while G. Călinescu is represented by manuscript pages from *The Optimist's Chronicle* and fragments from *I. Creangă's Life* or the chapter *Romantic Themes* from *Mihai Eminescu's Work*. From „The Great Storytellers” Hall we mention *Mihail Sadoveanu Fund* which is extremely well represented by objects (cup, wrist watch, chess board, mirror), but also by manuscripts (manuscript page from the novel *The Jderi Brothers*, manuscript page from the novel *Mariana Vidrașcu*) or letters (Sadoveanu's letter addressed to Al. Vlahuță in 1912) donated to the Museum by Valeria Sadoveanu, the writer's wife.

„The Fantastic Literature” Hall is a journey into the Romanian fantastic literature, a meeting with texts in prose belonging to I. L. Caragiale, Gala Galaction or Vasile Voiculescu, Urmuz, Ștefan Bănuțescu, Mihai Eminescu – different, it is fair to say it, by the type of fantastic they approached. In the world of the miraculous, unconscious and dream of the Romanian literature the visitor can enter as well by means of the new technologies, more exactly, by making a virtual tour of the museum. ( MNLR3/ virtual tour <https://mnlr.ro>mnlr3>) Certainly, it will be a real spiritual joy to discover the portrait of Urmuz, made by Marcel Iancu in 1924 and manuscript pages belonging to the writers mentioned above.

It is remarkable the idea of creating a hall dedicated to the Romanian exile – „Eliade, Cioran, Ionescu” Hall having a special importance in the current exhibition „landscape”.

Through the diversity of the cultural goods exhibited, the room dedicated to the three great Romanians gone to the West recreates the cultural context of the 1930s, the time when “the young” distinguished themselves. Looking around carefully, we remark in this

small – in size – room, but important in the value of the exhibits, the famous photo taken in the '70s of the last century by Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade and Eugen Ionescu, in Paris on an early spring or late autumn day; pages from the preface written by Nae Ionescu to the novel *Two Thousand Years...* by Mihail Sebastian, two letters by Mircea Eliade, one addressed to Barbu Brezianu (on 28 th of August 1972), the other to Lucian Blaga (Bucharest, 16 th of June 1937), a letter by Emil Cioran to Pompiliu Constantinescu (Sibiu, 10 th of January 1936) and a letter by Octav Șuluțiu to Petru Comarnescu (7 th of August 1944).

And because in the Romanian culture there are many encyclopedic personalities, beginning with Nicolaus Olahus – the humanist of the 16 th century and continuing with Dimitrie Cantemir, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, Alexandru Odobescu, Vasile Părvan, N. Iorga, Mircea Eliade, also on the first floor there is a very chic room dedicated to them and entitled „Encyclopedists, memorialists, diaries, travel writings”.

Although they had extremely rich and diverse concerns, literature occupied an important place in the creative activity, representing a fundamental hypostasis of their personality.

Their association with the memorialists is due to the fact that in the literary history was approved the opinion according to which the memoirs were, in the 19 th century the starting point of our fiction prose.

On place of honour is included in this hall the travel prose, too, represented by the volumes of the great travelers of the Romanian literature: Dinicu Golescu, D. Rallet, Ion Codru –Drăgușanu, N. Milescu Spătaru, G. Asachi etc.

The room „Great Novelists” (Nicolae Filimon, Duiliu Zamfirescu, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, Mateiu Caragiale, Camil Petrescu, Max Blecher, Anton Holban, Marin Preda and so on) offers, as we can deduce from its name, a synthesis (by means of the manuscript pages, volumes, photos, memorial items) of the evolution of the Romanian novel.

We will point out some of the literary jewelry samples carefully exhibited by the exhibition project team: manuscript fragments of the novel *The foreigner* by Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu (rigorously reconstructed by Gabriela Omăt, the publisher of the (complete) *Works* (Omăt, 2017), the manuscript of the novel *Scarred Hearts* by M. Blecher, fragments of the novel *Adela* by Garabet Ibrăileanu, manuscript and typed text with handwritten interventions from the novel *The Lunatics* by Ion Vinea, fragment of the novel *The Hatchet* by Mihail Sadoveanu, fragment of the manuscript of the novel *The Beautiful without Body* by Gheorghe Crăciun (1933). „The Great Novelists” Hall is also important by the point of view of the epistolary exchanges among great prose writers: a letter by M. Blecher to Lucia Demetrius, dated 29 th of January 1937, M. Blecher writes also to Ieronim Șerbu (22 nd of July 1937), two letters by Anton Holban – the first one addressed to Lucia Demetrius (dated 3 rd of May 1936) – the second one to Mihail Sebastian, a letter by Anișoara Odeanu to Cella Serghi and several letters by Henriette Yvonne Stahl to Ion Vinea and so on. The collection of memorial objects contain the hearing device, the typewriter and the radio belonging to Camil Petrescu, Petru Creția's

desk, Mihail Sadoveanu's golden porcelain cup, a pen and a coupe-papier belonging to Ion Vinea etc.

Regarding the collection of photography in „The Great Novelists” Hall we signal two photos of Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu with her husband N. N. Papadat, one in a gorgeous carriage and the other one on the seashore, in Constanța and several photos from Anton Holban's Fund belonging to the National Museum of the Romanian Literature: a photo of Anton Holban near Dania's flowers and two group photos made in Cernica, on the Pentecost day, in 1936 (in the first one appear Anton Holban, Vasile Demetrius, Lucia Demetrius and in the second one Anton Holban, Vasile Demetrius, Lucia Demetrius, George Dumitrescu and Vlaicu Bârna).

The splendid Mavrocordat House, today the permanent exhibition headquarters, contains the attic and a semi-basement, both spacious and welcoming. There are three spaces in the Attic: two interactive (I. L. Caragiale and Vasile Alecsandri) and an open space for film projections, as well as reading evenings, concerts, theatre shows, workshops, book launches etc.

The semi-basement, the old cellar of the heirs of the famous Mavrocordat family is today a space dedicated to the exhibitions of fine art, graphics, drawing, and photography.

It is to be admired that this exhibition succeeds in capitalizing in a new way the valuable art collection of the Museum, the two archives – literary and of fine art – forming a whole. Among the Great Presences that majestically decorate the high walls of the villa we select: Nicolae Tonitza – *The Little Tatar Girl* (drawing in India ink), Theodor Aman – *Alexandru Davila in infantry outfit* (oil on canvas), Theodor Aman – *Cezar Bolliac* (engraving), Tia Peltz – *Perpessicius* (black India ink and pen on paper), Alexandru Ciucurencu – *The Evening Star* (guache on paper), Camil Ressu – *The Blight* (watercolour on canvas), Camil Ressu – *Gala Galaction* (pencil), Gheorghe Petrașcu – *Seascape* (oil on wood), Marcel Iancu – *Ion Vinea* (oil on canvas), Marcel Iancu – *Ion Vinea* (charcoal on cardboard), Aurel Băeșu – *George Topârceanu* (oil on canvas, Constantin Piliuță – *Alexandru Vlahuță* (India ink and pen) etc.

The literary traditional and digital archive capitalized within the Crețulescu Street exhibition – keeps the spirit of the great people who have built the identity of this nation. Poets, writers, critics, literary historians, playwrights, painters meet in this Museum – house not only for literature, but also a space of Romanian and European identity.

Manuscripts, books, objects, photos are permanent traces on the background of our cultural history, they are incontestable testimonies of our presence on the great cultural scene of the world.

The cultural heritage of the National Museum of Romanian Literature - emblematic public institution in the cultural world – is part of the Universal Collective Memory.



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