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Mistična vizualizacija hrane

U radu je predstavljena ideja vizualizacije hrane u muzejima, inspirirana drevnom kineskom vještinom feng shui. Zbog egzotične i mistične note koju u sebi nosi ovakva zamisao, ona će se vjerojatno mnogima učiniti neozbiljnom, no smatram je dovoljno intrigantnom da privuče pažnju muzeologa i etnologa.

Misao, koju iznosim, ukratko glasi da drevna kineska vještina feng shui može poslužiti kao svojevrsan vodič pri osmišljavanju dizajna prostora pa tako i muzejskog postava. Slijedom njezinih postavki, uspješna bi primjena u organiziranju i dekoriranju izložbenog prostora trebala pridonijeti općem pozitivnom dojmu kod publike pa tako i zapaženosti same izložbe.

Ključne riječi: hrana, muzej, feng shui, dizajn interijera

Globalno tržište kulture oblikovano u eri masovnih medija (uz ključnu ulogu interneta) približilo nam je druge kulture i svjetonazore nadahnivši naš «svijet» novim zamislima. Osobito popularne i rado prihvaćene, istočnjačke su ideje proteklih desetljeća preplavile planetu i infiltrirale se u gotovo sva područja življenja. Utjecaj njihovih spiritualnih i mističnih tendencija očituje se danas u raznim sferama života, od medicine, umjetnosti i religije, preko stanovanja, sve do načina provođenja slobodnog vremena. Jedan segment tog trenda zauzima i feng shui, tradicionalno kinesko umijeće kojem je prvotna svrha bilo pronalaženje lokacija na kojima je koncentrirana vitalna energija zemlje i neba kao najpovoljnijih mjesta za podizanje grobova, kuća i gradova (Enciklopedija živih religija 1981:200); danas se popularno definira kao vještina odabira povoljnoga životnog okruženja i njegova uređenja.

Mada se feng shui asocijativno povezuje ponajprije s uređenjem interijera i eksterijera, vidljiva je njegova infiltracija u mnoga druga područja života, a jedan se vid njegove primjene tiče hrane.¹

¹ Simon Brown, stručnjak za feng shui, i kuhar Steven Saunders zajedno su osmislili knjigu posvećenu feng shui hrani. Između ostaloga, u njoj se nalaze i savjeti kako se servira prava hrana za različite prigode: od romantičnih večera ili obiteljskih okupljanja do poslovnih ručaka, napuci za vjenčanja, dječje zabave, ljetne piknike itd. (Brown, Simon & Saunders, Steven: *Feng Shui Food*, The Lyon Press, 2000.)

Osim što je moguće tumačiti vrijednost same hrane iz aspekta feng shuija, možemo o njemu govoriti i u kontekstu uzgoja, obrade i pripreme namirnica za jelo, smještanja i dekoriranja prostorija u kojima se priprema hrana (kuhinje) i jede (blagovaonice) i, na kraju, u kontekstu muzejske prezentacije hrane, što i jest tema ovog rada. Možemo tako govoriti o osmišljavanju postava, organizaciji i dekoriranju izložbenog prostora ili o detaljima poput aranžiranja stola i dekoriranja hrane na tanjuru.

Poticaaj za promišljanje ideje vizualizacije hrane u muzejima sagledane kroz prizmu feng shuija dala mi je zadana tema stručno-znanstvenog skupa održanoga u Etnografskom muzeju u Zagrebu 2007. godine, u okviru izložbe "Svijet hrane u Hrvatskoj". No, sama se prezentacija ovakve egzotično-mistične zamisli temelji, zapravo, na rezultatima višegodišnjeg praćenja i proučavanja trenda popularizacije feng shuija u svijetu kao i njegove percepcije i recepcije u hrvatskoj javnosti.² U ovome radu namjera mi je predstaviti jednu novu i drugačiju dimenziju u promišljanju muzejskog postava, koja bi, eventualno, kustosima mogla poslužiti kao inspirativna nit vodilja pri osmišljavanju izložbe te pri odabiru i aranžiranju izložbenih predmeta. No, prije nego li se upustim u daljnje promišljanje ove teme (ali bez opterećivanja teksta kritičkim rasuđivanjima!), radi njezina boljeg razumijevanja nužno je navesti neka odabrana suštinska načela feng shuija koja će pojasniti njegovu praktičnu svrhu.

Feng shui u nekoliko crtica

Može se reći da je feng shui svojevršno umijeće usklađivanja čovjekova života sa silama kozmosa i zakonima prirode. U njegovim temeljnim postavkama čuči vjerovanje da je Zemlja živo biće. *Ch'i (qi)*, grubo prevedeno kao energija, nevidljiva je životna sila od koje se sve sastoji i koja sve pokreće te je vrlo važno da postoji skladan protok te energije. Ujedno je sve nabijeno dvjema suprotnim, ali komplementarnim silama, *yinom* i *yangom*, čijim se uravnoteženjem postiže harmonija (Tonante 2002:13). Prisutnost potonjih zamjetljiva je u svemu što nas okružuje. Yin predstavlja ono sjenovito, tamno, prijemčivo, pasivno, a yang osunčano, svijetlo, silovito i aktivno stanje (usp. Dragičević 2002:55, Feuchtwang 1974:36, Chuen 1997:18). Iz njihova odnosa nastaje pet vrsta energije (tzv. pet elemenata), koje su simbolizirane u pojavama drva, vatre, zemlje, metala i vode. Svaka se od njih povezuje uz smjerove svijeta, boje, oblike, materijale, ali i mnogo šire. U određenim međusobnim relacijama ti elementi mogu jedan drugoga stvarati (odnosno, podržavati) ili pak uništavati (slabiti) te na taj način utječu na cijelu prirodu i vladaju njome (Eitel 2000:39). Mijene tih pet energija odvijaju se prema točno utvrđenim ciklusima promjene (Slika 1). Jedan je stvaralački (kreativni) ciklus slijedom kojega se pet energija pretvaraju jedna u drugu (drvo stvara vatru, vatra zemlju, zemlja metal, metal vodu, a voda hrani drvo). Drugi je kontrolni ciklus u kojem one međusobno nadziru svoju jačinu i utjecaj (metal reže drvo, drvo crpi zemlju, zemlja

² To je istraživanje rezultiralo izradom magistarskog rada naslovljenog *Feng shui: antropološka analiza društveno-kulturnog fenomena*, Filozofski fakultet, 2006.

crpi vodu, voda gasi vatru, vatra topi metal) (vidi npr. Chuen 1997:34, Eitel 2000:39). «Pet elemenata i njihovi međusobni odnosi pružaju nam model razumijevanja svemira i interakcije različitih vrsta chi energije» (Brown 2002:28). Poznavajući te cikluse, čovjek ih može koristiti u svrhu balansiranja *ch'ija*. Budući da feng shui pretpostavlja da stanje okruženja utječe na čovjekovo unutarnje stanje, važno je poznavanje načina na koji se ta energija kreće nekim prostorom i okolišem te na koji način preinake u životnom i radnom prostoru mogu utjecati na promjene u životu.

Dakle, shema ovih pet energija koristi se za ispitivanje kako materijali i predmeti djeluju jedan na drugoga i na ljude. Ovisno o cilju koji se želi ostvariti, kombinacijom elemenata u skladu s pravilima feng shuija može se jedna vrsta energije pojačati, a druga ublažiti ili naprosto održavati ravnoteža (Brown 2002:28). Tu energiju moguće je regulirati bojama, oblicima, materijalima i uzorcima. Primjerice, energetsku kvalitetu vatre ima trokutasti oblik i crvena boja, drva uspravni četvrtasti oblik i zelena boja, zemlje vodoravni pravokutni oblik i žuta/smeđa boja, metala okrugao oblik i bijela/srebrna boja, a vode nepavilni oblici i plava boja (Brown 2002:26). Iskombiniraju li se boja, materijal i uzorak koji su nositelji istog elementa/energije, posebno će se osnažiti njegov učinak. Inače, idealno je da su odnosi elemenata uravnoteženi i razvrstani prema odgovarajućim stranama svijeta, kao i da su izjednačene sile yina i yanga. Naime, ukoliko se pre naglasi energija metala (osobito ako se metal postavi na istok, stranu svijeta kojoj je inače asociran element drva), ona će potisnuti energiju drva te narušiti ravnotežu, isto kao što će pre naglašen element drva iscrpiti energiju zemlje i tako dalje. No, želimo li pak ublažiti određenu vrstu *ch'ija* u nekom prostoru – uzmi-mo za primjer da se radi o energiji vatre na jugu – pojačat ćemo *ch'i* energiju elementa koji iscrpljuje vatru, a to je zemlja. Prema postavkama feng shuija, primjenom takvih osnovnih pravila moguće je predvidjeti ili otkriti uzroke eventualnog neuspjeha pa ih zatim ukloniti (usp. Taylor & Tann 2001). Poboľšanjem kvalitete prostora nastoji se ostvariti svojevrsna simbioza čovjeka i njegove okoline, kreirati idealna sredina u kojoj će se čovjek osjećati ugodno i koja će mu osigurati maksimalnu podršku kozmičkih sila.

Igra yina i yanga

Kineska je civilizacija oduvijek osobitu pažnju posvećivala hrani te se ona ponekad naziva post-natalnim *chi'jem*, odnosno onim ključnim elementom koji nas od rođenja «snabdijeva univerzalnom vitalnom energijom» (Chuen 1997:120). Moguće je tipizirati hranu kao više yin ili yang, a isto tako i metode kuhanja, arome, boje i ostalo. Yin hrana opisuje se kao pasivnija, koja potiče refleksiju, opuštanje i kreativnost, a čine je tekućine, šećer, voće i povrće. Yang hrana snažnija je i stimulira napredak i aktivnost – takvu hranu čine meso, jaja i tvrdi sir (Brown & Saunders, prema Wellington 2005). Premda se ljudima pri pripremi objeda ponajprije sugerira da vode računa o uspostavljanju ravnoteže boja, okusa i mirisa (Jelling 18.11.2004), moguća je i manipulacija odabirom hrane u slučaju kada se želi postići određeno raspoloženje ili pridonijeti

ozdravljenju. Primjerice, bundevina juha preporučuje se u slučaju napetosti jer pridonosi osjećaju topline i opuštanja (Brown & Saunders, prema Wellington 2005).

Ch'i energija prisutna je kako u samoj hrani, tako i na mjestima gdje se ona priprema i jede. Uzevši u obzir da na *ch'i* hranu utječe i *ch'i* okolina, bitno je osigurati blagotvornu energiju u kuhinji i blagovaonici. U suprotnom se narušava i energetska komponenta hrane pa ona loše djeluje i na one koji je jedu (usp. Chuen 1997:120). S takva energetskegledišta, pri uređenju prostora nije bitan stil uređenja (tradicionalno ili moderno), već strukturalni aspekti, tj. raspored ključnih komada namještaja te boje, kakvoća i oblici (Chuen 1997:122). Pažnja se posvećuje slobodnom kretanju *ch'ija* te uravnoteženosti *yina* i *yanga* što se postiže pravilnim rasporedom pet elemenata (u vidu materijala, boja, oblika i dr.).

Inače, ovisno o tome kakav se ugođaj želi stvoriti, u prostoru se može više naglasiti *yin* ili *yang* energija. Za predodžbu o razlici između *yin* i *yang* ozračja, prikladnim mi se primjerom čini usporedba dvaju tipova restorana. Jedan tip predstavljaju *fast food* restorani, poput McDonald'sa. Oni su nositelji izrazitog *yang* ozračja koje potiče brz protok energije i tu se ljudi ne zadržavaju dugo. Obično su uređeni u mramoru, kamenu i staklu, dakle, odabiru se tvrdi, glatki i sjajni materijali, a u prostoru često dominiraju vesele i žarke boje koje ublažavaju dojam hladnoće kojim zrače ovi materijali. U *yin* restoranima, poput kineskog, ljudi se dulje zadržavaju jer tu vlada smirenije ozračje i intimnija atmosfera. Dizajn ovih restorana odlikuje se uglavnom drvenim namještajem, stolovima prekrivenim platnenim stolnjacima, prozorima zastrtim zavjesama, a prostor je nerijetko oplemenjen zelenim biljem i diskretnom ambijentalnom glazbom. U kineskim se restoranima u pravilu pojavljuje i akvarij ili jezerce s ribicama, koji pridodaju još jednu relaksirajuću notu restoranu.

Mogućnost poigravanja raznim elementima i pojmovima *yina* i *yanga* može se ilustrirati i primjerom aranžiranja stolova (Slika 2 i 3). Naime, već sam oblik stola i materijal od kojega je načinjen utječu na gibanje energije oko njega pa tako i na cjelokupno ozračje u prostoru. Isto tako, i izborom stolnjaka, ubrusa, tanjura i ostalog pribora može se pridonijeti željenoj atmosferi. *Yang* stol karakteriziraju čiste linije, jake boje i tvrde površine (mramor, staklo ili tvrdo drvo) koje ubrzavaju protok energije te stvaraju poticajno i uzbuđljivije ozračje. Na takvom će stolu biti postavljene čaše od stakla i metala, a za dekoraciju će se odabrati svijeće i ubrusi crvene boje. Poslužena će biti, dakako, *yang* hrana poput kruha od integralnih žitarica, dimljene hrane, mesa itd. (Brown 2002:91). *Yin* stol je ovalan, od mekanog drva poput borovine i brijesta. Koriste se blage boje koje stvaraju pasivniji protok *ch'ija* i opuštenije ozračje. Prirodne presvlake stolaca i neutralne boje stolnjaka, podmetači od pluta, bambusa, pribor s drvenim drškama, drvene zdjele, tanjuri od keramike te hrana s mnogo vode (salate, voće) (Brown 2002:90), elementi su koji pridonose relaksirajućoj *yin* atmosferi oko stola.

Feng shui u muzeju

Teorijske i praktične postavke feng shuija moguće je primijeniti i na muzejski ambijent. Ovaj tekst, međutim, nije zamišljen kao konkretna uputa za uređenje izložbenog prostora. Za pravilnu i potpunu primjenu feng shuija, ukoliko bi netko to doista naučio tako pedantno provesti, bilo bi potrebno mnogo studioznije i ozbiljnije poznavanje istog ili angažiranje profesionalnog feng shui stručnjaka. Naime, njegova se primjena temelji na nizu kompleksnih kozmoloških, astroloških i numeroloških elemenata i kalkulacija. Za pravilne bi proračune bilo bitno i vrijeme kada je muzejska zgrada izgrađena, njezina orijentacija prema stranama svijeta, iščitavanje simbolike vanjskog okruženja, analiza tlocrta, materijala od kojih je ustanova sagrađena i tako dalje, sve do najsitnijih detalja. Ovdje ću ponuditi tek jednu transparentnu viziju uređenja muzejskog prostora kroz splet feng shui natuknica, povodeći se onim najbanalnijim, općim postavkama te vještine.

U načelu, govorimo li o prostoru koji će nam poslužiti kao mjesto za izlaganje hrane, on ponajprije treba djelovati prozračno i uredno te stvarati opuštenu ozračje. Treba osigurati skladan protok energije, pri čemu je važno da prostor nije pretrpan, a osobito da središnji prostor bude prazan. U ovom pravilu feng shuija pronalazimo i posve praktičnu svrhu koja se očituje u stvaranju uvjeta za neometano kretanje ljudi tim prostorom. Preferiraju se zaobljeni rubovi namještaja (vitrina za izlaganje) kako bi se izbjegao *ch'i* koji reže usmjeren prema posjetiteljima. Radi se, naime, o vjerovanju u tajne strijele, pravocrtnu i štetnu chi energiju koju isijavaju oštri rubovi.³

U ovakvom gastronomsko-muzejskom ambijentu o kojem govorimo, poželjno je osigurati blagu dominaciju yina nad yangom, pazeći da se pritom ne pretjera jer pre naglašeni yin može isuviše usporiti kretanje energije. Pozivajući se na postavke feng shuija, moguće je zaključiti da će muzejski postav u kojem je dominantna yang energija poticati posjetitelje na ubrzanije kretanje i brži odlazak, dok će ih smirenije yin okruženje dulje zadržati. Bitno je poznavati značajke materijala, boja i oblika kako bi se njihovom pravilnom kombinacijom ostvarila harmonija izložbenog postava i optimizirala energija cjelokupnog prostora. Idealnom se podlogom za hranu smatra drveni namještaj jer ne ubrzava *ch'i* energiju, no bitna je i vrsta drveta koju odabiremo (mahagonij je, recimo, više yang nego mekano drvo). Stoga se preporučuju i drveni podovi (Brown 2002: 89, 104). Tvrdi, glatki i sjajni materijali, bili oni na podovima, zidovima ili namještaju, kao nositelji yang značajki, ubrzavaju protok *ch'ija* (Brown 2002:108) što je poželjno djelovanje na mjestima u kojima postoji opasnost od zastoja energije. No, treba imati u vidu da će se, ukoliko se postave glatki i blještavi elementi u prostoriji bijelih zidova i sivih pločica na podu, dobiti previše hladna kombinacija elemenata i boja koja neće pružati harmoničan ugođaj (vidi Chuen 1997:122). Inače, pri odabiru boja kao temeljni vodič može poslužiti precizno određen raspored boja

³ Slično je vjerovanje prisutno u našoj sredini u izreci: «Nemoj sjediti nasuprot kutu stola, nećeš se oženiti!» Protumačimo li ga kroz prizmu feng shuija, oštar *ch'i* tog kuta udara prema reproduktivnim organima ugrožavajući njihovo funkcioniranje.

asociranih uz odgovarajuće strane svijeta (Slika 4) – svijetlozelena na istoku, plava i tamnozeleno na jugoistoku itd. ili ih se može naprosto odabrati u skladu s time kakav ugođaj želimo stvoriti.⁴ Tako, recimo, Brown preporučuje crvenu boju za romantične, a sivu za službene prigode, plavu za poticanje komunikacije, narančastu za topli ugođaj itd. (2002:91). Pored boja i materijala, i različiti uzorci nositelji su značajki različitih energija/elemenata (kvadratni predstavljaju energiju zemlje, zvjezdice ili trokuti vatre itd.) pa se i njihovim kombiniranjem ostvaruje ta igra postizanja željene atmosfere. Prigušenim osvjetljenjem možemo se poslužiti želimo li postići romantičan ugođaj, no inače je bolje postaviti jače svjetlo. Osobito je važno pojačati svjetlost u inače tamnim kutovima u kojima prijeti zastoj energije, primjerice, reflektorima uperenim u te dijelove.

Slijedom zamisli feng shuija, pravilnim balansiranjem energija izložene hrane i cjelokupnog prostora trebao bi se ostvariti pozitivan i poticajan dojam kod posjetitelja. Razumijevanje strujanja i djelovanja energije koja je posvuda oko nas pa tako i u samim predmetima te poznavanje načina na koji se njome može manipulirati, može pomoći u ostvarivanju ciljeva izložbe. Igrajući se energetskim načelima feng shuija, odnosno protokom *chi*ja, načelima izmjene yina i yanga, kombinacijom oblika, boja, uzoraka i materijala – kao i svih ostalih elemenata ključnih za neki izložbeni postav (osvjetljenje, mirisi, zvukovi itd.) – moguće je manipulirati atmosferom prostora te time pridonijeti željenom učinku na muzejsku publiku i uspjehu same izložbe. Želi li se, ovisno o nakani autora izložbe, postići umirujući dojam ili možda ipak poticajni, moguće je pravilnim odabirom boja, oblika i materijala postići yin ili yang ugođaj. Harmoničnim se protokom energije može postići bolji prijem kod publike i veći protok ljudi – naprosto, postiže se veća uspješnost izložbe. S druge strane, dođe li do zastoja u protoku energije izložbenim prostorom, on će se isto tako odraziti i kao zastoj u komunikaciji s publikom, posjetiteljima. Vrsta i kvaliteta *chi* energije koju će osjetiti posjetitelj utjecat će na njegovo raspoloženje, emocije i, naposljetku, na sam doživljaj izložbe. Ono što se po izlasku iz muzeja pamti, upravo je utisak koji na posjetitelja ostavi kontekst izložbe. Predmeti sami za sebe najčešće ne kazuju puno i ne utiskuju upečatljiv i trajniji trag na posjetitelja.

Tomislav Šola je u jednom od svojih eseja ustvrdio kako kustos mora imati određene spoznaje iz psihologije i sociologije pri orijentaciji u određivanju potreba posjetitelja i učinka muzeja na njih, zatim iz arhitekture itd. (2003:221). Feng shui, na svoj osebujan i mističan način, vodi računa o svim tim elementima: o simbiozi arhitekture i zakona prirode te o psihološkim i sociološkim čimbenicima upletenima u odnos čovjeka i okolnog prostora. Feng shui vjerovanje temeljeno je na pretpostavci da svi elementi i oblici u prirodi, uključujući i sagrađene i prirodne, imaju simbolično značenje koje se manifestira na određene načine na ljude. Yoji Aoki (1999) tvrdi da mi, doista, i reagiramo na suptilan i nedovoljno razumljiv način na te oblike u okolišu. Njihova forma, struktura i prostorno uređenje imaju vizualno-psihološki utjecaj na naše

⁴ Podršku ovakvom «intuitivnom» odabiru boja daje tzv. psihologija boja, psihološko tumačenje o djelovanju određenih boja na čovjekovo raspoloženje, čiji se zaključci podudaraju s napucima feng shuija.

ponašanje. Neki prostori izazivaju osjećaj dosade, dok su drugi stimulativni i uzbudljivi (usp. Teather, Kenworthy, Chow 2000). Čak su i neke suvremene psihološke studije ustvrdile kako tople boje i prirodno osvjetljenje (što su bitne stavke u feng shuiju) podižu čovjekovo raspoloženje (www.kitchensource.com/kitchen-remodelnig/fengshui.htm, 09.01.2007.). Arhitekti, graditelji i dizajneri svjesni su povezanosti čovjeka i arhitekture (njihove simbioze), i psiholoških čimbenika upletenih u njihov međudodnos.⁵ Činjenica je da uravnoteženost prostora djeluje na psihiu kao i da ljudi koji se nađu u prostoru uređenom prema feng shuiju uglavnom reagiraju vrlo pozitivno i ističu osjećaj ugone i topline u tom okruženju (uvjerila sam se u to kroz razgovore s brojnim praktikantima feng shuija). Dubljom analizom teorije i primjene feng shuija naviru brojni takvi momenti upleteni u cijelu priču, međutim, daljnje bavljenje tom problematikom ostavit ću za neku drugu prigodu.

Šolina (2003:221) usporedba muzeja s teatrom u kojem kustosi preuzimaju ulogu režisera pri prezentaciji baštine aludira, između ostaloga, i na važnost kustosove uloge u osvajanju pažnje javnosti. Umješnost, kreativnost i inspiracija kustosa ključni su čimbenici njegova uspjeha u poslu kao i atraktivnosti izložbe koju postavlja. Svježje i drugačije ideje, praćenje trendova i slično svakako će namamiti ljude u muzeje i ostaviti dobar utisak na njih. Upravo stoga smatram da bi muzealci mogli izvući korist od velike pozornosti koju feng shui trenutno izaziva, implementiranjem nekih njegovih elemenata u svoju djelatnost.

Ali, pored te trendovske popularnosti kojom je obilježen u našoj sredini, ne treba zaboraviti da je feng shui sukus tradicijskih znanja jedne drevne kulture, umijeće temeljeno na spoznajama stečenim proučavanjem interakcije prirode i čovjeka kroz više tisuća godina. U njegovim temeljima počivaju brojne drevne spoznaje i mudrosti, od kojih su mnoge racionalne i praktične naravi, a neke je od njih potvrdila i suvremena znanost. K tome, znakovito je da zapadna znanost nerijetko nanovo «otkriva» činjenice koje su poznavale drevne civilizacije poput kineske pa ću slijedom toga tekst privesti kraju provocirajući pitanje o (i)racionalnosti prezentirane ideje.

⁵ Ljubomir Mišćević na Arhitektonskom fakultetu u Zagrebu drži kolegij "Energetska i ekološka arhitektura", gdje govori o nevidljivim utjecajima okoline. Vidi i Neidhardt 1997 i Dellale 1988.

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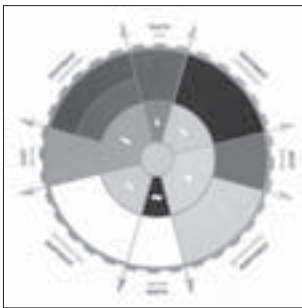
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Mystical Visualization of Food

This article presents the idea of food visualization in museums, inspired by the ancient Chinese knowledge of feng shui. Since this idea appears somewhat exotic and mystical, to many it may seem frivolous, but I consider it intriguing enough to draw the attention of museum scientists and ethnologists.

The idea that I am presenting here is that the ancient Chinese knowledge of feng shui can serve as a guide in interior decorating, and this could be applied to museum exhibitions as well. Following the guidelines of feng shui and their successful application to organizing and decorating exhibitions, could make a positive impression on the audience and make exhibitions more noted and better-received.

Key words: Food, museum, feng shui, interior design

The global market of cultures formed in the age of mass media (internet having the key role) has brought other cultures and worldviews closer to our own and has 'infested' our 'world' with new ideas. Very popular and broadly accepted are the great teachings of the Far East, which have been introduced to all the corners of the world and have affected many areas of everyday life. The influence of their spiritual and mystical tendencies can today be observed in all walks of life, from medicine, art and religion, through housing, to pass time. One of these trends is unmistakably *feng shui*, traditional Chinese knowledge the primary purpose of which is finding locations where the vital energy of earth and heaven is concentrated and which, therefore, are the most suitable places for erecting graves, building houses and cities (Encyclopedia of Living Religions 1981:200). Today it is popularly defined as the art of choosing and decorating the appropriate living surroundings.

Even though *feng shui* is primarily perceived as the art of interior and exterior decoration, it has affected many aspects of everyday life, food being one of them.¹

We can interpret the quality of food in terms of *feng shui*, but, using knowledge of *feng shui*, we can also discuss its production, preparation of meals, location and decoration of places where food is prepared (kitchen) or eaten (dinning room) and, finally, we can talk about *feng shui* in the context of museum presentation of food, which is the topic of this article. Here we can talk about the design of the exhibition, organization and decoration of exhibition rooms or we can discuss specific details such as arranging tables and decoration of food on the plates.

The topic of the scientific conference held at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb in 2007, which accompanied the exhibition 'The World of Food in Croatia', gave me the incentive to think about the visualization of food in museums in terms of *feng shui*. However, my presentation of this somewhat exotic and mystical idea was actually based on the results of my previous research, which lasted for several years, on the popularity of *feng shui* throughout the world and on its perception and reception in contemporary Croatia.² My intention in this article was to present a new, different approach to designing museum exhibitions, which could, eventually, provide curators with an inspiring set of guidelines in designing exhibitions and in selection and arrangement of the exhibits. But before I continue with the analysis of this topic (but without burdening the text with critical judgments!), for its better understanding it is important to list some basic principles of *feng shui* which will outline the possibilities of its practical application.

A few notes on Feng shui

Feng shui could be shortly defined as an art of harmonization of a person's life with the forces of the universe and the laws of nature. Behind its basic philosophy is the belief that the Earth is a living organism. *Ch'i (qi)*, roughly translated as 'energy', is an invisible life force, which constitutes everything and sets everything in motion, and a harmonious flow of this energy is very important. Furthermore, everything is comprised of the two opposing, but complementary forces, *yin* and *yang*, and harmony is achieved when they are in balance (Tonante 2002:13). The existence of these forces is observable in everything that surrounds us. *Yin* represents the shadowy, dark, receptive, passive, and *yang* sunny, light, forceful and active state (comp. Dragičević 2002:55, Feuchtwang 1974:36, Chuen 1997:18). Five forms of energy are created out

¹ Simon Brown, an expert on *feng shui*, and a chef, Steven Saunders have written a book together dedicated to *feng shui* food. It contains advice on how to properly serve food for various occasions: from romantic dinners and family gatherings to business lunches, with special guidelines for weddings, children's parties, summer picnics, etc. (Brown, Simon & Saunders, Steven: *Feng Shui Food*, The Lyon Press, 2000).

² This research resulted in my Master thesis entitled *Feng shui: anthropological analysis of the socio-cultural phenomenon*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2006.

of their interrelatedness (the so-called five elements), which are symbolized in the materializations of wood, fire, earth, metal and water. Each of them is linked to different corners of the world, different colors, shapes, materials, and to a wider reality. These elements can sustain each other (support) or destroy (weaken) each other and in this way they affect the whole nature and govern it (Eitel 2000:39). These energies are modified according to the firmly established cycles (Picture 1). One is a creative cycle during which the five energies are transformed into each other (wood creates fire, fire creates soil, soil metal, metal water, and water wood). The other one is the control cycle, during which they monitor and check each other (metal cuts wood, wood drains soil, soil drains water, water puts out fire, fire melts metal) (see for example Chuen 1997:34, Eitel 2000:39). ‘These five elements and their interrelations provide us with the model of understanding of the universe and of the interactions of different forms of chi energy’ (Brown 2002:28). Knowledge of these cycles can help a person balance the *chi*. Since *feng shui* presupposes that the outer living conditions affect a person’s inner state, it is important to know how energy flows through a certain space and surroundings and which modifications in living and working space can change your life.

Hence, the scheme of these five energies shows us how materials and objects affect people and each other. Depending on the aim we want to achieve, by combining elements in terms of *feng shui*, we can enhance one form of energy and weaken the other, or we can simply sustain balance (Brown 2002:28). This energy can be regulated through colors, shapes, materials and patterns. For example, triangular shape and red color have the energetic quality of fire, vertical quadrangular shape and green color the energetic quality of wood, horizontal quadrangular shape and yellow/brown color of soil, round shape and white/silver color of metal, while irregular shapes and blue color have the energetic quality of water (Brown 2002:26). By combining color, material and pattern which are the carriers of the same element/energy, its effect will be enhanced. Otherwise, it is optimal that the relations between elements are balanced, that they are positioned according to the four points of the compass and that the forces of *yin* and *yang* are harmonized. Namely, if the energy of the metal is dominant (especially if metal is placed on the east, which is usually associated with the element of wood), then it will suppress the energy of wood and disturb the balance, the same way the dominant element of wood would drain the energy of the soil and so on. However, if we want to soften the specific form of *chi* in a given space – for example the energy of fire on the south – we have to increase the *chi* energy of the element which drains fire and that is soil. According to the provisions of *feng shui*, by applying these basic principles, it is possible to predict or discover the causes of a possible failure and to remove them (comp. Taylor & Tann 2001). The increased quality of the living space might ensure a kind of symbiosis of a person and his/her surrounding, and create an ideal environment where a person would feel comfortable and which would ensure him/her the maximum support of the forces of the universe.

Game of yin and yang

Chinese civilization has been paying special attention to food from the earliest times, and the food is sometimes called the post-natal *chi'i*, this key element which, from our birth, 'supplies us with the universal vital energy' (Chuen 1997:120). Food can be typified as yin or yang, and so can be the cooking methods, aromas, colors, etc. Yin food is described as more passive, the one which prompts reflection, relaxation and creativity, and is made up of fluids, sugar, fruit and vegetables. Yang food is stronger and stimulates progress and activity – this type of food is meat, eggs and hard cheese (Brown & Saunders in Wellington 2005). Even though the primary idea of *feng shui* cooking is to balance different colors, tastes and aromas (Jelling 18.11.2004), food can also be used as an instrument for achieving a special mood or for improving health. For example, pumpkin soup is recommended in case of anxiety because it makes us feel warm and relaxed (Brown & Saunders in Wellington 2005).

Chi'i energy is present not only in food, but also in the places where the food is being prepared and eaten. Taking into account that the *chi'i* of food is influenced by the *chi'i* of the surrounding space, it is important to insure the positive energy in the kitchen and in the dining room. Otherwise, the energetic quality of the food will be compromised and the food will have a bad effect on those eating it (comp. Chuen 1997:120). From this energy aspect, the style of interior decoration is much less important (traditional or modern), than the structure, i.e. the arrangement of the key pieces of furniture and their colors, quality and forms (Chuen 1997:122). Special attention is given to the free movement of *chi'i* and the balance of yin and yang, which is achieved through the correct arrangement of the five elements (in terms of material, colors, shapes, etc.)

Otherwise, depending on the atmosphere we want to create in a given space, we can make either yin or yang energy dominant. To give an example of the difference between yin and yang atmosphere, I will compare two types of restaurants. One type are the *fast food* restaurants, like Mc Donald's. They are the representatives of the dominantly yang atmosphere which stimulates a fast flow of energy and a space in which people are not staying for too long. They are usually decorated in marble, stone and glass, in other words, hard, smooth and shiny materials are used and the place is dominated by bright and shiny colors which soften the cold image created by those materials. In yin restaurants, like Chinese, people tend to stay longer, because the atmosphere is more intimate and more relaxed. The furniture is usually made of wood and the tables are covered with table clothes made of natural fabric, windows are covered with curtains and the atmosphere is usually improved by green plants and discrete ambiental music. In Chinese restaurants there is also usually an aquarium or a fish pond, which contributes to the relaxing atmosphere of the restaurant.

The possibility of playing with different elements and concepts of yin and yang can be illustrated by the example of arranging tables (Picture 2 and 3). Namely, the shape of the table and the material it is made of influence the energy flow around the ta-

ble and the general atmosphere of the room. Furthermore, the choice of tablecloths, napkins, plates and tableware can also contribute to the creation of a specific atmosphere. Yang table is characterized by straight lines, bright colors and hard surfaces (marble, glass or hard wood) which speed up the energy flow and create a stimulating and exciting atmosphere. Yang table will be set with glasses made of metal or glass and decorated with red candles and napkins. The served yang food will consist of whole-wheat bread, smoked food, meat, etc. (Brown 2002:91). Yin table is round and made of soft wood such as pine-wood or elm wood. Mild colors are used which create a more passive flow of *chi'i* and a more relaxed atmosphere. Seat-covers made of natural fabric, neutral colors of tablecloths, cork or bamboo coasters, tableware with wooden handles, wooden bowls, ceramic plates and food with large quantities of water (salads, fruits) (Brown 2002:90), are the elements which contribute to the relaxing yin atmosphere around the table.

Feng shui in museums

Theoretical and practical provisions of *feng shui* can be applied in a museum context. This aim of this article, however, is not to provide some concrete guidelines for the decoration of museum exhibitions. For correct and complete application of *feng shui*, if there would be such an initiative, a more detailed and more serious knowledge of *feng shui* would be necessary, or maybe even hiring a professional *feng shui* expert. Namely, its application is based on a series of complex cosmological, astrological and numerological elements and calculations. For exact calculations we would need to know the time when the museum building was built, its geographical position, correct reading of the symbolism of its immediate surroundings, analysis of the ground-plan and the analysis of all the materials the building was made of, etc., up to the smallest details. Here I am presenting a very simple idea of decorating museum space through a number of *feng shui* guidelines, and I am governed by the most basic, general provision of the art of *feng shui*.

Basically, if we are talking about a space where we will exhibit food objects, firstly it has to appear airy and tidy and create a relaxed atmosphere. We should enable a harmonious flow of energy and make sure that the space is not too crowded, and especially that the central area is empty. This rule of *feng shui* reveals its very practical purpose – we create conditions for the free movement of people through the space. Round edges of the furniture (exhibition showcases) are preferred, so as to avoid the sharp, cutting quality of *chi'i* directed towards the visitors. This refers to the belief in the secret arrows, straight and damaging *chi'i* energy radiated by the sharp edges.³

³ A similar belief can be found in our own culture in the well-known proverb: 'Don't sit at the edge of the table, because you'll never get married!' If we interpret this from the standpoint of *feng shui*, the sharp *chi'i* of the corner strikes directly at the reproductive organs and jeopardizes their normal functioning.

In such a gastro-museum ambient, it is desirable to ensure a mild domination of yin over yang, but we have to be careful not to exaggerate, because an over-dominant yin can significantly slow down the energy flow. If we take into account the basic premises of *feng shui*, we can conclude that the museum exhibition with dominant yang energy will entice the visitors to move faster and to leave earlier, while the relaxing yin atmosphere will encourage them to stay longer. It is important to know the basic features of materials, colors and forms so that we could, through their correct combination, achieve the harmony in the exhibition rooms and optimize the energy of the surrounding space. Wooden furniture is considered to be the best for exhibiting food, because wood does not speed up the *chi'i* energy, but the type of the wood we use is also very important (mahogany is, for example, more yang than the soft wood). Therefore wooden floors are also recommended (Brown 2002:89, 104). Firm, smooth and shiny materials, whether on floors, walls or furniture, as the carriers of yang characteristics, speed up the flow of *chi'i* (Brown 2002:108), which is a desirable effect on the places where there is a danger of energy blockage. However, we also have to bear in mind that if we place smooth and shiny materials in the room with white walls and with grey tiles on the floor we will achieve a cold combination of elements and colors which will not result in a harmonious atmosphere (see Chuen 1997:122). Generally in the choice of colors we can be guided by the precisely defined link between colors and the four points of the compass (Picture 4) – light green on the northeast, blue and dark green on the southeast, etc., or we can simply choose colors in accordance with the atmosphere we are trying to create.⁴ So, for example, Brown recommends red color for the romantic ones and grey for business occasions, blue for instigating communication, orange for warm atmosphere, etc. (2002:91). Besides colors and materials, different patterns are also the carriers of different energies and elements (square patterns represent the energy of soil, stars or triangles of fire, etc.) and hence we can also create a wanted atmosphere by playing with different patterns and combinations. We can dim the lights if we want to achieve a romantic atmosphere, otherwise it is better to use stronger lights. It is especially important to use bright lights in the dark corners where we can expect energy blockages and direct a reflector towards such corners.

According to the basic premises of *feng shui*, if we manage to achieve the correct balance between the energies of the exhibited food and the surrounding space, we will be able to make a positive and stimulating impression on our visitors. Understanding of the flow and the effects of energy which is all around us (as well as in the objects themselves), and understanding of the ways in which we can manipulate that energy, can help us achieve the desired goals of exhibition. Through playing with the energy principles of *feng shui*, or, in other words, with the flow of *chi'i* and the principles of exchange of yin and yang, through combination of forms, colors, patterns and materials – as well as all other elements which are crucial for setting an exhibition (light, scents, sounds, etc.) – we can manipulate the atmosphere of the space and thus contribute to

⁴ 'Psychology of colors', a discipline which provides psychological explanation on the effects of different colors to a person's emotional state, also confirms this idea of the 'intuitive' choice of colors and its conclusions are similar to the conclusions of *feng shui*.

achieving the desired effect on the museum audience and to the success of the exhibition itself. If we are trying to achieve a soothing effect or, maybe, a simulative one, depending on the author's wishes, we can create yin or yang atmosphere through the correct choice of colors, forms and materials. The harmonious flow of energy leads to better reception of the exhibition and to the greater number of the visitors – to put it simply, the exhibition is more successful. On the other hand, an energy blockage in the exhibition rooms will cause a break up in communication with the audience, the visitors. The type and the quality of the *chi* energy the visitor will experience will affect his/her mood, emotions and, finally, the impression of the exhibition itself. The impression which the whole context of the exhibition made on us is what we remember after leaving the museum building. The objects itself usually do not tell a story and do not leave a marked and prolonged impression on the visitor.

In one of his essays Tomislav Šola claimed that a museum curator has to have some basic knowledge of psychology and sociology in order to be able to determine the visitors' expectations and understand the effect museum has on them, together with some knowledge of architecture, etc. (2003:221). *Feng shui*, in its specific and mystical way, unites all these elements: clarifies the symbiosis between architecture and natural laws and deals with the psychological and sociological factors affecting the relationship between man and his surroundings. *Feng shui* is based on the assumption that all the elements and forms in nature, both artificial and natural ones, have symbolic meanings which affect people in different ways. Yoji Aoki (1999) claims that we actually react to all these forms in our surroundings, however, in a subtle and inadequately explained way. Their shape, structure and spatial orientation have a visual-psychological effect on our behavior. Some spaces incite feelings of monotony, while others are simulative and exciting (comp. Teather, Kenworthy, Chow 2000). Some recent psychological studies have established that warm colors and natural light (which are important elements in *feng shui*) improve our mood (www.kitchensource.com/kitchen-remodeling/fengshui.htm, 09/01/2007). Architects, builders and designers are aware of the connection between man and architecture (their symbiosis) and the psychological factors which influence that connection.⁵ The fact is that the harmony of a space affects a person's psychological state and that people who find themselves in the space arranged according to *feng shui* mostly react positively emphasizing the feelings of coziness and warmth (as I found out while conducting interviews with numerous practitioners of *feng shui*). A more detailed analysis of the theory and application of *feng shui* brings out numerous such examples, but I will leave this discussion for some other occasion.

⁵ At the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb Ljubomir Miščević teaches a course titled 'Energy and ecology architecture' where he speaks of the invisible influences of the surroundings. See also Neidhardt 1997 and Dellale 1988.

Šola's comparison of museum and theater in which the curators assume the roles of directors in the presentation of heritage points to, among other things, the curators' role in attracting the visitors' attention. The curator's artistry, creativity and inspiration are the key factors for the success of his/her work and the success of the exhibition he/she is setting. Fresh and new ideas, following the current trends, etc. will definitely attract people to the museum and make a good impression on them. This is why I think museum workers could draw some benefits from *feng shui* and from the attention it is currently receiving, by implementing some of its elements into their activities.

However, next to the popularity by which it is marked in our surroundings, *feng shui* also presents a sum of traditional knowledge of an ancient culture, a knowledge based on detailed study of the interaction between man and nature for thousands of years. Many ancient findings and fragments of wisdom form the basis of *feng shui*, many of them of rational and practical nature, and some of them confirmed by modern science. Furthermore, it is quite telling that the Western science frequently re-'discovers' facts known by ancient civilizations, (Chinese, for example), and therefore I will conclude my paper by asking a provocative question on the (i)rationality of the presented idea.

Translated by Tanja Bukovčan