

**In 2019 Rijeka City Library was titled Library of the Year. We are sure that it was a big honor not only for librarians but for all the Library community. How would you describe the significance of Rijeka City Library ? What does the Library mean to those who visit it?**

The title "Library of the year" is the only national award in Croatia concerning our profession, so it is a special honor and pleasure to receive such an award. After a significant effort invested by the entire Library team, it is great to see when the profession recognizes your work.

What does the Library represent to its users? I think that question should be a key issue for public libraries. Libraries are here precisely because of their users and they need to know how to satisfy all information and educational needs, as well as the need for quality leisure time. The library needs to become a reliable and desirable partner in the local community. I believe that the Rijeka City Library is exactly on this track and the number of members that has increased by 20% in the last 4 years is a clear indication of that.

**How did Rijeka City Library face the challenges of the situation caused by COVID-19? Knowing how creative our Croatian colleagues are, we are sure that you discovered new possibilities to reach out your readers?**

The time of COVID-19 was, and still is, very challenging and demanding for library organization, especially for public libraries, given the fact that most of their business is borrowing physical book materials. Everything concerning the lockdown was happening at lightning speed, so the demand to organize a new type of business quickly arose. I am pleased that our Library responded very quickly and according to priorities. We used the lockdown period for "back office" work: revision and equipping the fund with RFID technology. We also launched some new services such as the possibility of online membership, issuing a PIN number (which users have been able to obtain exclusively at the library before the COVID-19) via email, and also creating short video recommendations (like small "teasers"). We continued the abundant web activity on our Magazine and Brickzine, and we also designed our own library themed, intergenerational board game. E-book lending was the basic service of the Library during the lockdown period of COVID-19.

**Whats does Rijeka Library mean personally to you? Could you share with us any crazy, challenging idea which you would like to implement together with your creative staff and to even more surprise the citizens?**

Since I have been the director of the Rijeka City Library, and it has been 4 years now, my life is mostly revolved around the Library, meaning that I spend most of the day at work. A large segment, almost every business move, is related to the development of work, services and programs. Thoughts are as diverse as ideas, which sometimes manage to develop into services, and sometimes, due to various obstacles, remain at the idea level. Currently, all our ideas are focused on working in the new infrastructures we are building. These are the Children's House where our Children's Department *Stribor* is moving and the central new building of the Library. The plan is to move from the current space (approx. 1500 m<sup>2</sup>) to the new one (approx. 5000 m<sup>2</sup>). That will provide us with new work opportunities, new services and programs, and there we will be able to fully develop the potential of the library paradigm as a third space.

### **What makes you love a book?**

Like any other love, the love for books belongs to the irrational sphere, so there is no concrete answer. Quite simply, there are books I like and ones I don't like.

### **Most inspirational book you've ever read (fiction or non-fiction)?**

It is impossible to single out just one because it does not exist outside of the context of other books.

### **Favourite genre?**

I don't have it. I love music biographies and comics very much, but I don't have any particular genre that I especially like.

### **Favourite Croatian author?**

I don't have that either. Many are dear to me, but I get more attached to their works rather than to the authors.

### **What three books would come to your mind first, if we asked you to name three favourite ones?**

Orwell's *1984*, *Nigdje niotkuda* by Bekim Sejranović and *Mysterious world* by Arthur Clark. Each one is dear to me in its own way, and I recently talked about all three of them with dear people.

### **What is your favourite language to read in?**

Croatian.

### **How often do you agree with critics about a book?**

Mostly.

### **Favourite fictional character?**

It's certainly Corto Maltese whose author is Hugo Pratt. A wonderful antihero.

### **Some characters are best because of their flaws. Who is the most flawed, messed-up character that you've really liked (or at least found interesting)?**

Often, the negative characters are more interesting than the positive ones, and even more often they are the initiators of the action. Among all of them at this point I can think of Uriah Heep, who was excellently described by Dickens.

### **Have any places described in the book ever inspired you to visit them?**

Yes, they have. I would have many examples. The last place I visited because of a book was Gonars in Italy. In his novel *Put u Gonars*, Nikola Petković wrote about a refugee camp that was located in that place during the Second World War. If it weren't for Petković's novel, I would probably never have gone to Gonars.

### **What is your favourite book format (e.g. paperback, hardcover, ebook)?**

My favorite is the paperback format... and more and more every day.

**Do your friends come to you for recommendations?**

Very rarely because they know I'm reluctant to recommend books.

**What's been your favorite book-to-movie adaptation?**

I really like movies based on books. I will single out *The Name of the Rose*, by Umberto Eco because I made a beginner's mistake there: I watched the movie first, and then read the book.

**Have you ever gotten into an argument over a book?**

More into some constructive discussions because I allow everyone to have their own opinion, and about tastes, it should not be discussed either.

**What are the books you're most likely to bring on holiday?**

Depending on the mood, but mostly it's the books I want to read during the year, but I didn't get the chance... by experience, in most cases I don't read them all even during the holidays.

**Do you think that reading promotion still is the main mission of today's library? Or is it as important as... (please, insert here one or several aims/roles which today's public library follows and which, in your opinion, are as important as reading promotion, or probably even more important).**

Personally, I believe that the promotion of reading is one of the basic tasks of every library, but by no means the only one. Connecting with the local community and strengthening its potential is certainly a new mission that every public library should keep in mind and in fact should direct its activity towards that.