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Development strategy of the museum methodical fund of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving

Abstract. The article presents a strategy for developing the museum methodological fund of Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving aimed at transforming it into a modern museum space. The author proposes a three-component development model encompassing the following directions: storage (modernization of depository facilities, introduction of accounting systems); research (creation of a scientific laboratory for collection studies); and popularization (organization of interactive workshops and contemporary exhibitions, development of educational programs). Special attention is paid to the development of digital technologies, creation of an accessible environment and strengthening the role of the museum as a center of cultural identity and regional tourist attraction.

Keywords: Bogorodskoye artistic wood carving, development concept, museum space, preservation of cultural heritage, interactive technologies, educational programs, scientific research and popularization of traditional crafts.

In the era of globalization and cultural homogenization, where traditional crafts often face extinction, there arises a pressing need to preserve and promote unique phenomena of national culture. Bogorodskoye wood carving, as a vivid example of indigenous Russian art, confronts contemporary challenges: declining youth interest in traditional crafts, insufficient state and societal support and the necessity to adapt to new forms of cultural consumption. Modernization and expansion of the museum-methodological fund dedicated to Bogorodskoye woodcarving as a center for preservation and promotion of this craft is a timely and necessary measure ensuring its further development, transmission of experience and traditions to future generations.

It is important to consider that, according to I.V. Kuznetsova's apt observation, a modern museum is "not merely a custodian of heritage, but an active participant in shaping cultural and civic identity, inevitably embedding itself within the ideological and political context of the epoch" [5, p. 47]. In this light, the development of the Bogorodskoye woodcarving museum is seen as a project aimed at consolidating national cultural codes and positioning traditional art as a significant element of contemporary Russian cultural space.

Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving traces its origins back to 1913 when the educational demonstration workshop with a carving class officially opened. Over time, the institution evolved: from a zemstvo school to a vocational-

technical school (1922), then to an art and industrial technical school (1990). In 2009, the college became a federal state educational institution of secondary vocational education known as "Bogorodskoye art and industry technical school". Since 2011, it operates as a branch of the Higher school of folk arts.

By 2025, 112 years had passed since 1913, and currently, the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving is a branch of the federal state budgetary educational institution of higher education, the Russian university of traditional art crafts (formerly the Higher school of folk arts). Throughout this period, the educational institution has accumulated invaluable creative legacy – a comprehensive methodological fund consisting of the best student and faculty works collected over many decades.

The experience of establishing museums within art schools in Russia follows a long-standing tradition. A notable example is the art and pedagogical museum of toy named after N.D. Bartram, described by authors of a commemorative publication as a "unique center integrating the functions of conservation, research, education and promotion of folk art, serving as a model for numerous subsequent initiatives" [6, p. 5]. Developing the Bogorodskoye museum aligns naturally with this domestic tradition, emphasizing the vital connection between pedagogical practices and museum activities.

This tradition, originating in the early 20th century, remained uninterrupted even during the difficult 1930s and 1940s, persisting and evolving right up to the present day. Thanks to meticulous selection, a unique collection has been formed, comprising over 1,300 exhibits (Fig. 1⁶¹).



Fig. 1. Space of the museum methodological fund of Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving

These works demonstrate the diversity of Bogorodskoye wood-carving techniques – from traditional flat-relief and sculptural carving to complex multi-figured compositions. The sizes of the pieces vary from delicate miniatures and tiny toys to monumental garden sculptures that create cohesive artistic spaces. Particular emphasis is placed on thematic and narrative compositions reflecting traditional folk motifs. As noted, "the collection preserves the historical memory of the development of Bogorodskoye wood carving and professional education in the 20th–21st centuries and actively contributes to the professional training of students" [2, p. 329].

⁶¹ Figs. 1-6, 8-9. Photos by the author of the article.

We carefully safeguard every artifact, recognizing its importance not only as an instructional sample but also as part of the living history of the artistic craft. These unique artifacts are housed in a specially equipped museum repository where appropriate conditions ensure their preservation.

The fund is actively utilized for educational and outreach purposes: visitors become familiarized with it during tours and students use samples as visual records of the evolution of the Bogorodskoye craft. Learners refer to the collection for inspiration, replicating examples and learning technical skills, as well as exploring themes and narratives for final qualification projects. Consequently, the methodological fund remains a vibrant educational instrument and source of inspiration for generations of woodcarvers.

However, at this stage, its potential is not fully realized due to the lack of comprehensive systematization and profound scholarly analysis. Currently, the fund exists primarily as a collection of works, rather than a structured and studied heritage. The primary objective is to transform the museum-methodological resource into a full-fledged museum space and eventually into a proper museum. This entails undertaking extensive efforts across several key areas (Fig. 2).

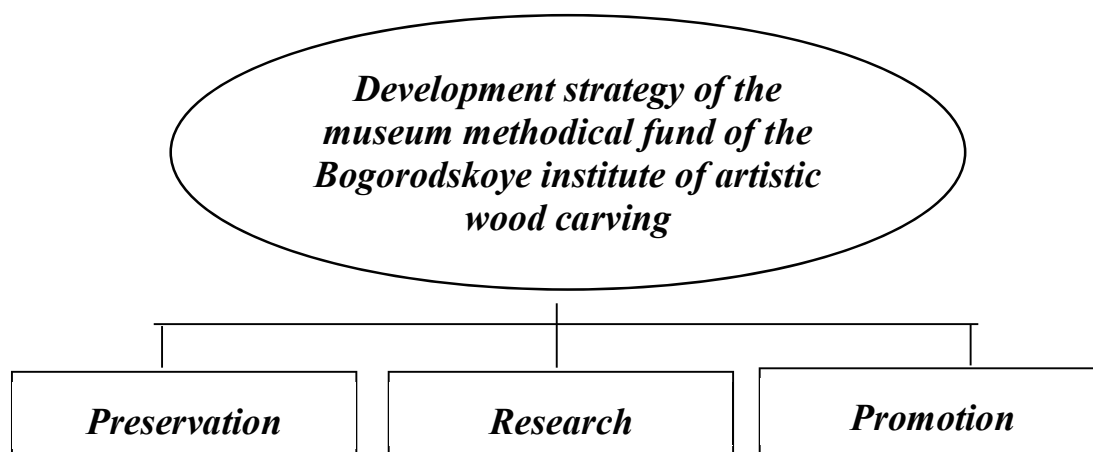


Fig. 2. Main directions of transformation of the museum methodological fund of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving into a museum space.

Preservation:

- a modern storage facility equipped with necessary equipment to ensure the preservation of the museum's unique collection;
- implementation of an inventory management system using modern technology (barcoding, RFID tags);
- regular enrichment of the museum collections through graduation and coursework projects by students, as well as works by institute professors;
- upgrading museum equipment, purchasing modern display cases with adjustable microclimate control, lighting systems and mobile partitions;
- optimization of museum staff workflow using modern computer hardware and software solutions;
- ensuring convenient and safe access to the museum building, creating an inclusive environment for persons with disabilities;

- repairing the staircase connecting the museum building to the central campus building;
- establishment of pedestrian paths and rest zones;
- providing adequate illumination of the museum grounds.

Research:

- establishment of a scientific laboratory for researching and substantiating the unique museum collection;
- creation of an art-creativity studio for conducting scientific investigations by students and instructors regarding the history, technology and artistic features of Bogorodskoye woodcarving.

Promotion:

- conducting workshops in the art-creativity studio to introduce traditional Bogorodskoye woodcarving techniques;
- creating an interactive zone where visitors can try their hand at producing wooden items using traditional Bogorodskoye woodcarving methods;
- development of educational programs for different age groups;
- organization of a modern exhibition showcasing the history and evolution of the Bogorodskoye craft, along with presenting the finest examples of Bogorodskoye woodcarving;
- employing modern exhibit technologies (interactive displays, multimedia installations, 3D models) to attract visitor attention is not simply a trend but a necessity for today's museums. As highlighted by A.P. Ivanov, "digital transformation radically alters the museum paradigm – shifting from the concept of 'art temple' towards the idea of 'open cultural hub'" [3, p. 55]. This entirely corresponds to our aim of creating a dynamic cultural center open to dialogue with society;
- establishing outdoor exposition of park sculptures carved in traditional Bogorodskoye style from wood.

New space – new opportunities

In recent years, there has been increased interest in the role of museums (museum spaces) in society, their transformation and adaptation to current conditions. Museums are increasingly viewed not only as repositories of artifacts but also as active social institutions capable of influencing the formation of identity and cultural space [7].

The relocation of the museum-methodological fund to another building offers broad prospects for its development and modernization. The layout of the building allows for rational organization of space, allocating separate zones:

1. Storage repository.

Establishing a modern storage repository equipped with essential infrastructure to ensure the preservation of the museum's unique collection will provide optimal conditions for storing exhibits, prevent damage and facilitate accessibility for research purposes. Essential components include climate-control systems (temperature and humidity monitoring devices, thermometers, hygrometers, dehumidifiers, humidifiers, air conditioning units, ventilation systems with air filtration and monitoring and alarm systems).

Optimal temperature and humidity values for storing wooden museum exhibits are critically important for their longevity. Biochemical processes in wooden artifacts do not cease completely but slow down considerably. Improper conditions can lead to deformation, cracking, rotting, mold growth (Fig. 3) and ultimately result in irreversible loss of valuable collection specimens.

Recommended parameters for storing wooden museum exhibits:

- temperature: optimal: 18-20°C (64-68°F); allowable fluctuations: no more than $\pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($\pm 3.6^{\circ}\text{F}$) per day and no more than $\pm 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($\pm 9^{\circ}\text{F}$) annually. Sudden temperature changes are unacceptable.

- humidity: optimal: 50-55% relative humidity (RH); allowable fluctuations: no more than $\pm 3\%$ RH daily and no more than $\pm 5\%$ RH annually. It's critical to avoid: high humidity (above 65% RH), which promotes mold growth, and low humidity (below 40% RH), which can cause wood cracking.

Using modern storage equipment will enable proper tracking of exhibits, their entry into the museum fund, ongoing preservation and participation in exhibitions.

Modern equipment will guarantee maximum safety for the collection: integrated fire protection systems, including automatic fire suppression systems (water-based, gas or powder), smoke detectors and heat sensors for early detection of fires; advanced security systems: motion sensors, CCTV cameras for round-the-clock surveillance; multi-level access control systems: electronic locks with code panels or biometric scanners, visitation tracking systems granting access exclusively to authorized personnel.

Inventory and cataloguing equipment (barcode and RFID tagging systems, specialized software for managing collections, barcode scanners, RFID readers, portable inventory-taking devices) will simplify locating exhibits and lay the groundwork for students and teachers to conduct scientific research on the history, technology and artistic characteristics of Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving.

Within the museum-methodological fund, plans include equipping a "*Restoration classroom*" furnished with restoration tables and fitted out with necessary tools and lighting equipment. Students here will acquire valuable knowledge and skills in restoring Bogorodskoye woodcarved items. During regular classes or practical training periods, students will delve into the subtleties of this demanding and responsible discipline. Opening such a classroom will contribute to preserving the museum's unique exhibits, extending their lifespan, preparing qualified specialists in Bogorodskoye woodcarving restoration, raising awareness



Fig. 3. Mold growth on a wooden exhibit. Collection of JSC "Bogorodskoye factory of artistic wood carving"

among younger generations about the issue of cultural heritage preservation and making the restoration process more transparent to museum visitors.

A logical extension of the exhibition would be the establishment of an *outdoor park sculpture exposition* composed of wooden statues executed in traditional Bogorodskoye plastic artistry (Figs. 4–7⁶²). This will allow the museum to blend harmoniously into its surroundings, create a cultural leisure area and draw attention to the Bogorodskoye woodcarving craft.

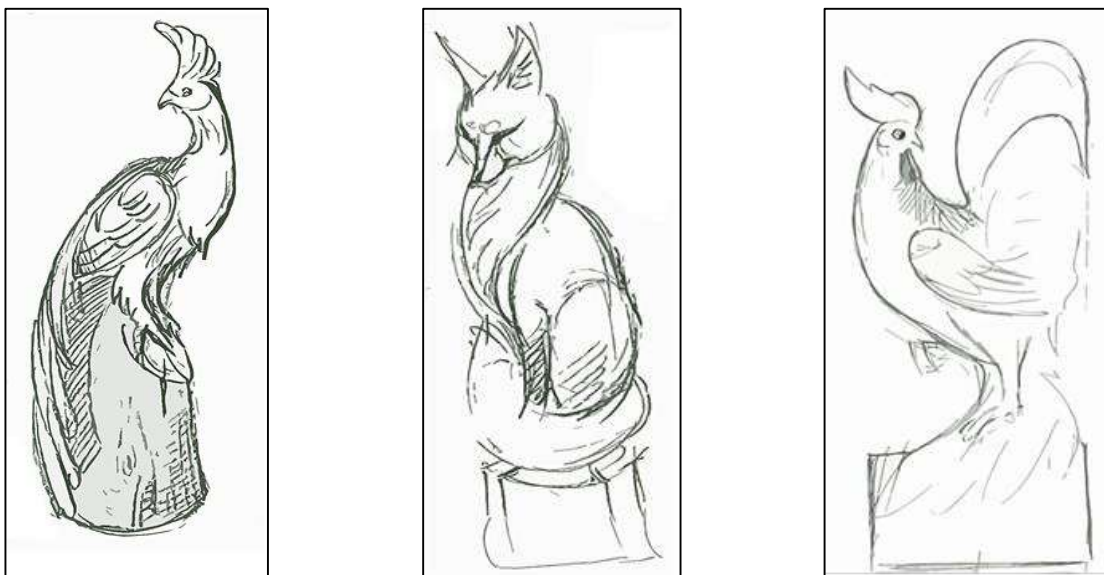


Fig. 4-6. Sketches of park sculpture. Museum methodological fund of Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving

An outdoor park sculpture exposition executed in the traditions of Bogorodskoye woodcarving represents a unique synthesis of traditional applied art and contemporary public space. This initiative is not only a means of promoting the Bogorodskoye craft but also creates a new cultural landmark that visually embodies tradition, engages in dialogue with nature, establishes place identity and becomes a point of attraction symbolizing the territory's link to its historic art craft.

A crucial aspect of developing the museum space is the consistent augmentation of its collections. The exhibition is annually enriched, first and foremost, through graduates' qualifying works from higher education programs (Fig. 8) and intermediate vocational education programs (Fig. 9), as well as top-rated semester projects illustrating talent and skill of future master carvers.

Teachers play a particularly important role in enriching the funds by contributing two production samples of their own works annually. This practice highlights the continuity of traditions and demonstrates exceptional skill levels, while continuously expanding the collection with new exhibits reflecting contemporary trends in Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving.

To implement the development strategy for the museum-methodological fund, it is necessary to *update the museum equipment*, which is currently outdated. This will enable to:

⁶² Fig. 7. Photo by E.S. Ptitsyn, the sculpture's author.



Fig. 7. E.S. Ptitsyn. Park sculpture "Tea party"

- ensure the preservation of exhibits (modern display cases with adjustable microclimate);
- create an exhibition that is more mobile and easier to view (modern lighting systems, movable partitions);
- optimize the work of museum employees (computer equipment, software).

2. *Research activity space.*

Transforming the museum-methodological fund into a museum space provides a unique opportunity to establish a modern interdisciplinary research center on its premises, devoted to the study of the Bogorodskoye craft.

Setting up a scientific laboratory equipped with modern resources for investigating the museum's unique collection (over 1,300 exhibits spanning from late 19th century to present-day, unique tools belonging to renowned woodcarvers A.Ya. Chushkin and M.V. Lomakina, photo and video documentation, archives of scientific literature), conducting expert assessments and carrying out research on the history and techniques of woodworking throughout different historical periods.

Creating such a space will transform the museum-methodological fund from a mere repository of artifacts into a generator of knowledge. It will enable the exploration of artistic heritage, becoming a powerful educational tool that prepares a new generation of thinking artist-researchers capable of analyzing, preserving and advancing tradition based on a deep understanding of its history and technology.

The art-creativity studio constitutes a pivotal component of the research cluster within the museum space, functioning as a live bridge linking theoretical exploration of heritage with its practical application. This workspace is where traditional Bogorodskoye carving techniques are not only demonstrated but also analyzed, experimentally developed and transmitted through direct hands-on work with materials. The studio serves as a platform for experimentation, where students, researchers and practicing masters can study, reproduce and reinterpret historical techniques within the context of contemporary artistic practices.

The art-creativity studio of the institute acts as the primary venue for executing commissioned projects – park sculptures. This space accommodates students and educators collaborating on projects intended for integration into urban and natural environments.

The art-creativity studio, acting as a production center, exemplifies the capacity of the Bogorodskoye craft to transcend the boundaries of intimate artworks and scale up to park sculptures. This direction not only expands the professional horizons of students but also facilitates the integration of traditional art into contemporary cultural contexts, ensuring its relevance and sustainable development.



Fig. 8. P.A. Zub. Wooden sculpture "Peace". Graduation qualifying work. 2025.

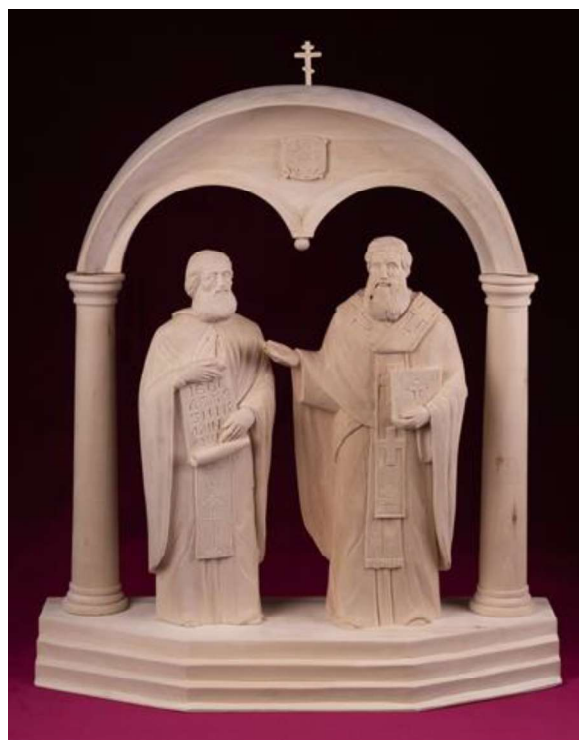


Fig. 9. I.S. Temnik. Wooden sculpture "Creation of cyrillic alphabet". Graduation qualifying work. 2025.

The museum-methodological fund
of the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving

The art-creativity studio:

- builds a knowledge base on Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving;
- provides conditions for nurturing a new generation of researchers capable of in-depth analysis and creative advancement of the heritage;
- strengthens the status of the museum space as a center not only for preservation but also for the vibrant development of the art craft.

3. Space for promotion of Bogorodskoye woodcarving art.

Conducting workshops in the art-creativity studio implies creating an interactive zone where visitors can become acquainted with the techniques of traditional Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving, participate in workshops and attempt to create their own Bogorodskoye-style toys. This will make visiting the museum more engaging and informative, attracting new audiences and generating additional funding sources.

Developing multilevel educational programs is a cornerstone of the promotion strategy for Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving. Based on the principle of creating an "exhibition dialogic space", as noted by researchers, this approach allows visitors "to not only perceive information visually but also become involved through interactive activities, immersion in learning and communication" [4, p. 6]. Programs can be categorized as follows:

Programs for children aged 10-14 years old.

Objective: to introduce children to the Bogorodskoye woodcarving art craft in a playful manner, enhancing fine motor skills and creative thinking.

Possible formats – interactive fairy tale excursions: introducing characters from traditional Bogorodskoye toys (bears, blacksmiths, etc.); play-based activities: using stories and riddles to immerse participants in the world of Bogorodskoye craftsmanship.

Programs for teenagers (aged 15-17).

Objective: deep immersion into the history and technology of Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving, fostering practical skills and career orientation.

Possible formats – systematic workshops: studying the basics of carving (from simple exercises to creating one's own toy), gaining familiarity with tools and materials; interactive guided tours.

Outcome: conscious interest in the Bogorodskoye art craft, potential decision-making regarding further education at the Bogorodskoye institute of artistic wood carving.

Programs for young adults and older individuals (18+).

Objective: acquiring professional skills, deepening understanding of the tradition, achieving creative self-realization.

Possible formats – multilevel courses ranging from introductory ("Fundamentals of Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving") to specialized programs (creating articulated toys, sculptures).

Programs for people with limited mobility:

Objective: promoting social and creative activity, ensuring access to cultural heritage.

Possible formats – adapted workshops: activities like drawing, wood painting, working with pre-prepared item forms that don't demand substantial physical effort; meetings with prominent artists of the Bogorodskoye art craft (discussions, sessions stimulating intergenerational dialogue and exchange of personal histories).

The museum-methodological fund aims to evolve beyond being merely a repository of artifacts into an active educational center. As O.A. Sharkova notes, effective museum exhibitions represent "spaces where individuals not only absorb new 'cultural texts' but also create their own" [8, p. 11], which encapsulates the ultimate goal of the educational endeavor.

Exhibition halls.

Organizing a modern exhibition reflecting the history and development of the Bogorodskoye art craft, displaying the finest examples of Bogorodskoye artistic woodcarving. As researchers V.G. Bondarenko and S.M. Kozyrenko note, "well-organized interior space influences human psychology and participates in his/her development" and a contemporary museum should deliver knowledge in "engaging, playful, aesthetic and interactive forms" [1, p. 1]. Therefore, we propose employing modern technologies for organizing the exhibition space: interactive screens, multimedia installations and 3D models, making the exhibition appealing and information-rich.

For the successful operation of the renovated museum-methodological space and the creation of a comfortable and inviting environment, priority must be given to the *comprehensive improvement of the surrounding area*. The immediate challenge is to ensure easy and secure access to the building: repairing road surfaces,

arranging parking spots, creating an accessible environment for people with limited mobility, installing ramps and special signage. Constructing pedestrian walkways and relaxation zones will allow visitors to enjoy the beauty of the surrounding nature and relax after viewing the exhibition. Walkways should be constructed from quality and durable materials, while resting areas should be equipped with comfortable benches (which could be produced in-house in the art-creativity studio) and shelters protecting against sunlight and rain. Lighting the area with modern fixtures will create a special atmosphere and highlight the uniqueness of Bogorodskoye artworks.

Implementing the proposed development strategy for the Bogorodskoye museum-methodological fund of artistic wood carving will create a modern and attractive cultural center capable of not only preserving and promoting the unique heritage of the Bogorodskoye art craft but also becoming a significant factor in tourism and cultural development in the region.

The developed strategy introduces a fresh perspective on organizing museum spaces and exhibition activities within the context of conserving and popularizing traditional crafts. It is grounded in contemporary approaches to museum operations, considering the imperative of maintaining authenticity, promoting craftsmanship among broader audiences and integrating the museum into the contemporary cultural landscape. This strategy can serve as a theoretical foundation for research in museology, addressing issues of preserving and developing traditional art crafts, adapting museums to modern sociocultural conditions and enhancing their role in shaping regional cultural identity.

The strategy goes beyond the conventional perception of a museum as a mere repository, proposing instead to envision it as a dynamic cultural center capable of actively engaging with society, shaping cultural identity and boosting tourism. Specific emphasis is placed on preserving the authenticity of Bogorodskoye woodcarving as a unique manifestation of Russian culture and promoting it within society.

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