

CALL FOR PAPERS

Bulgarian Folklore Journal – a scholarly periodical in folkloristics, ethnology, anthropology and arts, published by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – invites submissions for a special issue entitled:

Museological Transformations: From Passive Preservation to Active Collections

The emergence of the so-called “new museology” has triggered a significant shift in traditional museum paradigms, rethinking the role of collections as the sole and primary justification for a museum’s existence. This conceptual evolution, though necessary, has created a paradox. Contemporary research indicates that rich museum holdings often remain an underutilised resource – a critique aimed at institutions that, caught up in the integration of new media and interactive technologies, sometimes marginalise the artefacts themselves. This process generates a tangible imbalance and a rift between acquisition policies and contemporary exhibition practices.

Globally, museums are actively reassessing their collections and access policies. The contemporary academic and public consensus dictates that passive preservation and conservation are no longer sufficient. The true imperative facing today’s institutions is ensuring broad, democratised access for a diverse public, including through large-scale digitisation. This trend crystallises in the concept of “active collections” – a model that stands in opposition to closed storage repositories that are inaccessible to the public. Parallel to this, a critical reassessment of existing collections is underway, initiatives for the restitution and repatriation of cultural property to their communities of origin are intensifying, and increasingly stringent ethical standards are being established.

Fundamental Questions

This dynamic environment provokes several fundamental questions of a methodological, legal, and practical nature:

- **Selection and Legitimation:** Through what mechanisms do museums supplement their holdings, and what criteria do they apply when filtering objects and conferring upon them the status of a “museum object”?
- **Interpretation:** How is material memory constructed and communicated through narratives based on objects from the museum collection?
- **Policy and Legislation (Regulatory Conflicts):** Who are the agents carrying out the selection in collecting activities, and how do their decisions correspond to the national regulatory framework and the specific mission of the museum institution? Is there a collision

between ossified legislative frameworks and innovative museum practices? Does a need arise for a broad debate on sector reform?

- **Public Attitudes:** How is research and public curiosity toward material evidence evolving, and do specific fashions or trends exist in collecting certain categories of cultural property?

Main Thematic Directions

It is precisely to this complex of topical issues that the upcoming issue of the *Bulgarian Folklore Journal* is dedicated. The publication invites researchers and specialists to share their experience, analyses, and theoretical developments in the following main thematic directions:

- **Legislative challenges** in the formulation and implementation of a collection policy.
- **Historical development** and evolution of collections within the museum institution.
- **Methodology and processes** of critical reassessment of existing museum collections.
- **Museum narrative:** constructing a story and meaning behind the objects in museum collections.

Key Information & Deadlines

Deadline for submitting proposals (title and abstract): July 15, 2026

Deadline for submitting completed articles: December 15, 2026

Submission Email Addresses: bulfolk@abv.bg; iglika.mishkova@gmail.com; iglika.mishkova@iefem.bas.bg

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Bulgarian Folklore Journal accepts manuscripts in **Bulgarian or English**. Submitted articles must present original scholarly research that is neither under consideration elsewhere nor has been previously published. All submissions undergo double-blind peer review by two independent reviewers.

Further information is available at: http://bulgarianfolklorejournal.net/Home_en.