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**14th OF MAY 2005, FIRST EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN
PROGRAMME „NIGHT OF THE MUSEUMS”,
AT “GRIGORE ANTIPA” NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL
HISTORY FROM BUCHAREST**

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Abstract: „Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History from Bucharest responded to the invitation made by the Ministry of Culture from France in order to participate to the first edition of the European programme *The Night of the Museums*, organized in the night of 14th of May 2005. On this occasion, “Grigore Antipa” Museum organized a series of cultural and entertainment activities for the public, between interval 6.30 p.m. – 1.00 a.m., which completed the offer of the free visitation of the permanent exhibition of the museum.

Résumé. Le Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle „Grigore Antipa“ de Bucarest a répondu à l'invitation faite par le Ministère de la Culture de France pour participer à la première édition du programme européen *La nuit des muséums*, organisée durant la nuit de 14 mai 2005. À cette occasion, le Muséum „Grigore Antipa“ a organisé pour le public une série d'activités culturelles et de divertissement, dans l'intervalle horaire 18,30 – 01,00; pendant ce temps la visite de l'exposition permanente du muséum a été gratuite.

Key words: *The Night of the Museums*, „Grigore Antipa” Museum, activities, participants.

At the beginning of 2005, the Ministry of Culture from France launched a special invitation to all European museums: organization of some cultural activities which has to carry on between 7.30 p.m. to 1.00 a.m., in the night of 14th of May, which became *The Night of the Museums* since this year. As Mrs Yara Dujardin, coordinator of the programme, pointed out that the declared purpose is that “of permitting the visitors to discover the richness of the museums, they benefiting not only by an original visit but also the gratuitousness of the entrance tickets in the museums implied in this programme”.

Beside other institutions of the same type from Romania, “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History participated to this special project, included in the well-known European annual programme *The Spring of the Museums*, by a generous offer of activities which filled the halls of the museum for five hours: the halls dedicated to the temporary exhibitions, the conference hall and the garden of the museum, transformed in a public garden for a night where educational activities and performances took places. The purpose of these activities was to draw the public by original events, atypical to our museum, not only by the hour they were carried on but also by their type, most of them being interactive.

The programme *The Night of the Museums*, carried on by our institution, included other 6 categories of activities beside the usual visit of the museum.

- 1) Temporary exhibition entitled *Faunamoda*, presented organic materials of animal origin used along the time by designers (Figs 1, 2, 3). The opening of the exhibition was at 6.30 p.m., a numerous public being present. It could admire



Fig. 1 – *Faunamoda*, silk butterflies section.



Fig. 2 – *Faunamoda*, molluscs section.



Fig. 3 – *Faunamoda*, entomological section.

numerous clothing objects made of natural silk, fur, feathers and leather, accessories made of corals and pearls. Within the same exhibition, the visitors could inform on some animal species which are protected by European and international laws, now, because of the long exploitation made by the designers along the last 80–100 years. The exhibition, organized by Mrs Mihaela Stănescu – chief of the Department of Museology, enjoyed a large interest from the general public, remaining opened for a month. This exhibition was made in collaboration with the Museum of the Romanian Country Man, National Museum of Romanian History and several private companies.

- 2) Folk music and poetry performance made by Ada Milea and Dorina Chiriac took place in the amphitheatre of the museum, between 7.00–8.00 p.m. The audience reached about 200 spectators: children, young and old people, adults (Fig. 4). The show performed by the two young actresses was inspired by Gellu Naum's poems, the author of "Apolodor's Book". This book, dedicated to Apolodor, an itinerant penguin, is very much appreciated by the critics, being considered a real stylistic performance in one of the most difficult genres, the poetry for children. In fact, the book addresses to the large public of all ages, conquering the Romanian readers since the very beginning. The show was organized by Mădălina Ivan, PR specialist of the museum.
- 3) The public conference *Three variations of the European museum of natural history: Vienna, Amsterdam, London* took place also in the amphitheatre of the museum, beginning at 8.00 p.m. (Fig. 5). The conference presented by Dr. Iorgu



Fig. 4 – Dorina Chiriac (left) and Ada Milea (right) during the show performed in the museum amphitheatre.

Petrescu, scientist of „Grigore Antipa” Museum, drew a large audience, about 120 persons of all ages. It was a real travelling commentary, supported by photos made just by the lecturer, implied in different collaborations with different museums of the world during the last years. The conference was followed by a dialog between the lecturer and the audience.



Fig. 5 – The audience attending the conference *Three variations of the European museum of natural history: Vienna, Amsterdam, London.*

- 4) To the contest of animal shaped fairy lights 7–10 – aged children were invited to participate. This activity carried on in opened air (Fig. 6), in the garden of the museum, between 8.45–21.25 p.m., and included a parade of the fairy lights made by the children themselves. The prizes were given according to the aesthetics of the lights, their utility degree and to the authors’ knowledge in zoology. In front of the jury, they presented the biological and ecological preferences of the species which were their source of inspiration. In the contest, 22 participants who presented 41 fairy lights entered. Their individual or team works were awarded, but the jury decided only 5 winners. Timing the public’s applauses, the jury had to give the sixth prize to a work which gained the popularity prize.
- 5) The contest of zoological education and orientation within the museum garden, named *Look for me and name me* had as a target group the teen-agers of 14–18 years old. The participants were organized in teams of 12 individuals who had to find the notes (Figs 7, 8) in which they discovered the name of a crepuscular or nocturnal species which lived in the Bucharest area, and also animal-toys in vegetation, under stones, in tree hollows, among branches. The species which



Fig. 6 – Participant to the contest of fairy lights presenting her work.



Fig. 7 – Young participants to the contest *Look for me and name me*.



Fig. 8 – Participants to the contest *Look for me and name me* completing their contest notes.



Fig. 9 – A moment during the prize award.

were the subject of the contest belonged to several groups: spiders, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. The members of the three teams were awarded with zoological encyclopedias, books and sweets. The organizers of the contest were Dr. Aurora Stănescu and Mr. Dorel Ruști, scientists of the museum.

- 6) Entomological night collecting, organized in the garden of the museum was a public demonstration where the voluntary visitors were implied. The purpose was to present the materials and the techniques used by entomologists during night collecting campaigns. Children, teen-agers, adults participated even if the “prey” was poor because of the low temperature of the air, between 11.00 p.m. – 1.00 a.m. Night collecting (Fig. 10) was organized by Dr. Mihai Stănescu. On this occasion, the necessary equipment for night collecting was presented, the participant also being informed on the biology of the moth species of Romanian fauna (Fig. 11).

The sponsors of this programme were: *National Geographic Junior* Publishing House, *Nestle* Romania, *Șapte Seri* Magazine.



Fig. 10 – Night collecting.



Fig. 11 – Dialog on the moth species.

The promotion of this programme was complex and intense, being supported by an advertising campaign made by Leo Burnett Agency, one of the sponsors of “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History.

Advertising campaign *The Night of the Museums* included the distribution of posters (Fig. 12) in schools, high-schools and university campuses from Bucharest, of leaf-lets which announced the activities and the hour when they were carried on, as well as a radio spot, distributed by *Radio Delta RFI*, 10 times a day, for 10 days (the 4th of May – 14th of May). The poster of this programme was published in the magazines *Şapte Seri* and *B 24 Fun*, dedicated to a weekly information on the cultural events and entertainment in Bucharest.

Media impact was extremely strong, because both the active promotion campaign and the diverse



Fig. 12 – Poster of the programme *The Night of the Museums*.

activities, attractive for all age categories and carried on within an hour interval which permitted to the people of Bucharest to choose “Grigore Antipa” Museum for spending their spare time.

The museum visitation, as well the events carried on in the night of 14th of May were presented by most of the important Romanian broadcastings: *Antena 1; Realitatea TV, Național TV, Prima TV, Televiziunea Română* and *TVR Cultural, Radio Delta RFI; Radio România Actualități, Radio 21*. Also, numerous newspapers presented the activities and later wrote about the success of the cultural programme, *The Night of the Museum*. From them we mention *România Liberă, Adevărul, Evenimentul Zilei, Libertatea*, etc.

Public impact was unexpected. At the event of the night of 14th of May, between 6.30 p.m. – 1.00 a.m., over 1,200 visitors participated, being a real record. Because of the success recorded at the edition from 2005, *The Night of the Museums* will become a traditional activity of our museum.

14 MAI 2005, PRIMA EDIȚIE A PROGRAMULUI EUROPEAN
„NOAPTEA MUZEELOR” LA MUZEUL NAȚIONAL DE ISTORIE NATURALĂ
„GRIGORE ANTIPA” DIN BUCUREȘTI

REZUMAT

La începutul acestui an, Ministerul Culturii din Franța a lansat muzeelor europene o invitație deosebită: organizarea unor activități culturale, în intervalul orar cuprins între 18,30-01,00, în seara de 14 mai, devenită din acest an, „Noaptea Muzeelor”. Scopul declarat al programului, a fost, așa după cum preciza în prezentarea proiectului doamna Yara Dujardin - coordonatoarea programului, acela de a „permite vizitatorilor să descopere bogățiile muzeelor, aceștia beneficiind nu doar de o vizită cu totul inedită ci și de gratuitatea biletelor de intrare în muzeele participante la program. Cu această ocazie, Muzeul „Grigore Antipa” a lansat publicului bucureștean o ofertă generoasă de activități: vernisarea expoziției temporare *Faunamoda* organizată de către doamna Mihaela Stănescu, participarea la spectacolul de muzică folk și poezie susținut de către Ada Milea și Dorina Chiriac, audierea conferinței „*Trei variațiuni europene ale muzeelor de istorie naturală: Viena, Amsterdam, Londra*” susținută de către domnul dr. Iorgu Petrescu, concursuri pentru copii și tineri ca și o colectare demonstrativă de insecte nocturne, cu participarea publicului voluntar, condusă de către domnul dr. Mihai Stănescu. Scopul acestor activități a fost acela de a atrage publicul prin activități inedite, atipice Muzeului, nu numai ca orar de desfășurare ci și ca tipuri de evenimente, în majoritatea lor interactive. La aceste activități s-a adăugat și posibilitatea de a vizita gratuit muzeul, în intervalul orar 18,30-01,00. Toate aceste activități organizate în seara de 14 mai, în cadrul programului european „Noaptea Muzeelor” au atras peste 1200 de participanți, bucurându-se în același timp și de atenția și aprecierile mass-mediei.

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