EAST MEETS WEST IN WOOD DESIGN: A BOSNIAN EXPERIENCE

Review paper

DOI: 10.68216/3126-3992.2026.22.72.90

by Aida Abadžić Hodžić
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Sarajevo

Abstract

This paper explores the rich tradition of woodcarving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a particular focus on the Konjic region and the pioneering work of the Nikšić family. Woodcarving in Konjic dates back to the late 19th century, gaining international recognition at exhibitions in Budapest, Brussels, Vienna, and Paris. The craft has deep historical roots, influenced by medieval Bosnian styles, and later enriched during the Ottoman period with Islamic and geometric motifs. Austro-Hungarian administration facilitated systematic development, fostering a professional environment for skilled woodcarvers. The Nikšić family exemplifies the continuity and evolution of this tradition, transitioning from local craft workshops to internationally acclaimed design collaborations. Their contemporary brand, *Zanat*, merges centuries-old techniques with modern design, sustainability, and international aesthetics. Zanat's work demonstrates a dialogue between traditional Bosnian craftsmanship and contemporary design, preserving cultural heritage while innovating within global design discourse.

Keywords: woodcarving, Konjic, Nikšić family, Zanat, contemporary design

Woodcarving in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Historical Context and the „Bosnian Style"

As an artistic craft and a form of knowledge, woodcarving has a long and rich history in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has been a cornerstone of Bosnian cultural identity for centuries. The country's geographic position and challenging historical circumstances resulted in a wide variety of influences on artistic and handicraft products. Some researchers have therefore pointed out specific characteristics in the material culture of medieval Bosnia (Han, 1972; Radojković, 1973; Kovačević-Kojić, 1978) that resulted in a particular style, named the „Bosnian style" (Wenzel, 1965, 1999; Mušeta-Aščerić, 2002). The documents of the Dubrovnik archive also mention forms and decoration of gold and silver objects, including tableware, jewelry, weaponry, and clothing, as produced *ad modum bosnensis* (in the Bosnian way). Information about objects created in the Bosnian way is most often found in documents related to deposits, pledges, gifts, wills, and dowries, which provide direct insight into the daily life of Bosnian rulers and nobility and the mentality of the urban layer of medieval Bosnian society (Mušeta-Aščerić, 2002: 119).

SUSRET ISTOKA I ZAPADA U DIZAJNU DRVETA: BOSANSKO ISKUSTVO

Pregledni naučni rad

DOI: 10.68216/3126-3992.2026.22.72.90

Aida Abadžić Hodžić
Filozofski fakultet
Univerzitet u Sarajevu

Saželak

Ovaj rad istražuje bogatu tradiciju drvorezbarstva u Bosni i Hercegovini, s posebnim fokusom na područje Konjica i pionirski rad porodice Nikšić. Drvorezbarstvo u Konjicu razvija se od kraja 19. stoljeća, a međunarodno priznanje stječe na izložbama u Budimpešti, Briselu, Beču i Parizu. Ovaj zanat ima duboke historijske korijene, oblikovane srednjovjekovnim bosanskim stilskim naslijeđem, a potom obogaćene u osmanskom periodu islamskim i geometrijskim motivima. Austrougarska uprava doprinijela je njegovom sistematičnijem razvoju, stvarajući profesionalno okruženje za rad vještih drvorezbara. Porodica Nikšić predstavlja primjer kontinuiteta i razvoja ove tradicije, od lokalnih zanatskih radionica do međunarodno priznatih dizajnerskih saradnji. Njihov savremeni brend Zanat povezuje stoljetne tehnike sa savremenim dizajnom, održivošću i međunarodnom estetikom. Rad Zanata pokazuje dijalog između tradicionalnog bosanskog zanatstva i savremenog dizajna, čuvajući kulturno naslijeđe, ali istovremeno uvodeći inovacije u globalni dizajnerski diskurs.

Ključne riječi: drvorezbarstvo, Konjic, porodica Nikšić, Zanat, savremeni dizajn

Drvorezbarstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini: historijski kontekst i „bosanski stil"

Kao umjetnički zanat i oblik znanja, drvorezbarstvo ima dugu i bogatu historiju u Bosni i Hercegovini. Stoljećima je predstavljalo jedan od važnih elemenata bosanskog kulturnog identiteta. Geografski položaj zemlje i složene historijske okolnosti utjecali su na raznovrsnost umjetničkih i zanatskih proizvoda. Zbog toga su pojedini istraživači ukazivali na posebne karakteristike materijalne kulture srednjovjekovne Bosne (Han, 1972; Radojković, 1973; Kovačević-Kojić, 1978), koje su dovele do oblikovanja osobenog stila, nazvanog „bosanski stil" (Wenzel, 1965, 1999; Mušeta-Aščerić, 2002). Dokumenti Dubrovačkog arhiva također spominju oblike i dekoraciju predmeta od zlata i srebra, uključujući posuđe, nakit, oružje i odjeću, izrađene ad modum bosnensis — „na bosanski način". Podaci o predmetima izrađenim na bosanski način najčešće se nalaze u dokumentima koji se odnose na pologe, zaloge, darove, oporuke i miraze, a oni pružaju neposredan uvid u svakodnevni život bosanskih vladara i vlastele, kao i u mentalitet urbanog sloja srednjovjekovnog bosanskog društva (Mušeta-Aščerić, 2002: 119). U svojoj studiji o ukrasima na srednjovjekovnim

In her study on the decoration of medieval tombstones (stećaks) and metalworks, entitled *The Tradition of Artistic Metalwork in the Kingdom of Bosnia: Bosnian Style on Stećaks and Metalwork* (1999: 15), Marian Wenzel (1932–2002) highlighted the "*development of a specific Bosnian style that emerged in the 14th and 15th centuries, utilizing decorative elements from Hungary, France, Italy, Byzantium, and Islamic art of North Africa, assembled uniquely.*" Wenzel spent the early 1960s traveling throughout the country, documenting motifs on the stećaks, resulting in her 1965 publication *Ornamental Tombstones in Medieval Bosnia and Surrounding Regions*. Her research then shifted to metalworking, a craft from which she believed many of the recurring motifs on stećak tombstones were derived, coining the term 'Bosnian Style' for a style of metal ornamentation incorporating a mixture of Gothic, Mediterranean-Islamic, and Byzantine elements.

In various studies on medieval Bosnian craftsmanship, Dr. Desanka Kovačević Kojić noted examples such as belts made *ad modum bosnensis*, mentioned in the testament of Pribislav Vukotić from 1475, found in the Dubrovnik archive (Kovačević-Kojić, 1959: 293). She also referenced numerous Dubrovnik masters who resided in urban settlements and at the courts of Bosnian nobility. In the mid-15th century, the famous Flemish goldsmith Vacher Rambot from Bruges stayed at the court of the Kosača family, where he forged a golden belt (Kovačević-Kojić, 1970).

The development of arts and crafts in Bosnia was closely linked to mining and urbanization in the second half of the 14th and 15th centuries. Bosnia then became a well-known producer and exporter of silver on a large scale, and gold was extracted in Bosnian mines, which laid the basis not only for the development of cities but also for artistic metalwork and the import of precious stones. Written data related to the purchase of precious stones and their large consumption in Bosnia are „undoubted evidence of highly developed goldsmithing in medieval Bosnia" (Anđelić, 1984: 532). Economic and social changes among Bosnian nobility in the late 14th and 15th centuries led to the development of lifestyle patterns connecting Bosnian nobles to European culture (Ćirković, 1973: 37). During the 15th century, Dubrovnik merchants imported expensive fabrics from Florence, Mantua, Venice, and Verona to Bosnia. These luxurious goods were of exceptional importance for the development of Bosnian artistic crafts because expensive fabrics ornamented with exquisite decorative motifs, interwoven with gold and silver threads, influenced the goldsmithing, dish decoration, and even woodcarving (Mušeta, 2002: 133). A certain number of authors cite Bosnian masters who learn the craft in Dubrovnik and other Dalmatian cities (Split, Šibenik, Zadar), but also in Venice and other Italian cities where they live and work (Fisković, 1973: 147-199; Šunjić, 1996: 304-307).

Developed forms of stećaks, such as the famous stećak from Zgošća near Kakanj (discovered by Ćiro Truhelka in the early 20th century), reveal interconnections and stylistic influences among various master workshops. Rich ornamental, floral, and figural decorations, along with intricate iconography, demonstrate common stylistic elements found in Bosnian medieval woodcarvings and manuscript illuminations. This advanced craftsmanship influenced Bosnian woodcarving during the Ottoman era.

nadgrobnim spomenicima — stećcima — i metalnim predmetima, naslovljenoj *Tradicija umjetničke obrade metala u Kraljevstvu Bosni: bosanski stil na stećcima i metalu* (1999: 15), Marian Wenzel (1932–-2002) istaknula je „razvoj posebnog bosanskog stila koji se javlja u 14. i 15. stoljeću, koristeći dekorativne elemente iz Ugarske, Francuske, Italije, Bizanta i islamske umjetnosti Sjeverne Afrike, povezane na jedinstven način". Početkom šezdesetih godina 20. stoljeća Wenzel je putovala širom zemlje, dokumentirajući motive na stećcima, što je rezultiralo njenom publikacijom *Ukrasni motivi na stećcima / Ornamental Motifs on Tombstones from Medieval Bosnia and Surrounding Regions* iz 1965. godine. Njeno se istraživanje zatim usmjerilo prema obradi metala, zanatu iz kojeg su, prema njenom mišljenju, potekli mnogi ponavljajući motivi na stećcima. Upravo je za taj stil metalne ornamentike, koji objedinjuje gotičke, mediteransko-islamske i bizantske elemente, upotrijebila naziv „bosanski stil".

U različitim studijama o srednjovjekovnom bosanskom zanatstvu dr. Desanka Kovačević-Kojić navodila je primjere poput pojaseva izrađenih *ad modum bosnensis*, koji se spominju u testamentu Pribislava Vukotića iz 1475. godine, sačuvanom u Dubrovačkom arhivu (Kovačević-Kojić, 1959: 293). Također je ukazala na brojne dubrovačke majstore koji su boravili u gradskim naseljima i na dvorovima bosanske vlastele. Sredinom 15. stoljeća na dvoru porodice Kosača boravio je poznati flamanski zlatar Vacher Rambot iz Brugesa, gdje je izradio zlatni pojas (Kovačević-Kojić, 1970).

Razvoj umjetničkih zanata u Bosni bio je usko povezan s rudarstvom i urbanizacijom u drugoj polovini 14. i tokom 15. stoljeća. Bosna je tada postala poznat proizvođač i izvoznik srebra u velikim količinama, dok se u bosanskim rudnicima vadilo i zlato. Time su stvoreni temelji ne samo za razvoj gradova nego i za razvoj umjetničke obrade metala te uvoz dragog kamenja. Pisani podaci o kupovini dragog kamenja i njegovoj velikoj potrošnji u Bosni predstavljaju „nesumnjiv dokaz visoko razvijenog zlatarstva u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni" (Anđelić, 1984: 532). Ekonomske i društvene promjene među bosanskom vlastelom krajem 14. i u 15. stoljeću dovele su do oblikovanja životnih obrazaca koji su bosanske plemiće povezivali s evropskom kulturom (Ćirković, 1973: 37). Tokom 15. stoljeća dubrovački trgovci uvozili su u Bosnu skupocjene tkanine iz Firence, Mantove, Venecije i Verone. Ova luksuzna roba imala je izuzetan značaj za razvoj bosanskih umjetničkih zanata, jer su skupocjene tkanine, ukrašene profinjenim dekorativnim motivima i protkane zlatnim i srebrenim nitima, utjecale na zlatarstvo, dekoraciju posuđa, pa čak i na drvorezbarstvo (Mušeta, 2002: 133). Određeni broj autora navodi bosanske majstore koji su zanat učili u Dubrovniku i drugim dalmatinskim gradovima, poput Splita, Šibenika i Zadra, ali i u Veneciji i drugim italijanskim gradovima u kojima su živjeli i radili (Fisković, 1973: 147–199; Šunjić, 1996: 304–307).

Razvijeni oblici stećaka, poput poznatog stećka iz Zgošće kod Kaknja, koji je početkom 20. stoljeća otkrio Ćiro Truhelka, otkrivaju međusobne veze i stilske utjecaje različitih majstorskih radionica. Bogata ornamentalna, floralna i figuralna dekoracija, zajedno sa složenom ikonografijom, pokazuje zajedničke stilske elemente koji se mogu prepoznati i u bosanskom srednjovjekovnom drvorezbarstvu i u iluminaciji rukopisa. Ovaj razvijeni zanatski izraz utjecao je i na bosansko drvorezbarstvo tokom osmanskog perioda.

Woodcarving in Bosnia from the Ottoman Period to Early Modern Times

During the Ottoman period, woodcarving in Bosnia reached new heights, as demand for ornate furnishings and architectural elements grew. Woodcarvers incorporated Islamic designs, including calligraphy and geometric patterns, into their work, creating a unique blend of styles. This positioned Bosnian woodcarving at a crossroads of diverse cultural influences, often manifested in interior decoration and architecture.

A notable example of this fusion is the Beglerović House in the village of Repovci near Konjic, which features two different halvats (large, spacious rooms on the ground floor considered intimate family spaces) — one "colorful" and the other "oriental." The woodcarved, polychrome built-in wardrobe (musandra) in the colorful halvat depicts a hunting scene with dogs, motifs reminiscent of stećak tombstone art. The second wardrobe features decorations derived from Islamic-Oriental traditions of the Ottoman era. According to Alija Bejtić (1953: 283), the wardrobes were crafted in 1850/51 by two local masters, Nikola and Mustafa, demonstrating an early creative encounter of Bosnian cultural layers in woodcraft as well as the refined skill of local artisans.

However, the organized, systematic production and presentation of woodcarving in Bosnia began during the Austro-Hungarian administration. This development was closely associated with the activities of the newly established National Museum and Bosnia and Herzegovina's participation in international world exhibitions. The National Museum (*Landesmuseum*) was officially established in 1888, and it played a key role in the implementation of the cultural mission of the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Lipa, 2006). Dr. Ćiro Truhelka, the first curator and one of the founders of the National Museum in Sarajevo, played a pivotal role. In 1890, he started collecting folk costumes and other items of ethnographic value. From his journey through Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1890 and 1891, among other rare ethnographic items, he obtained richly carved wooden interiors (Lipa, 2006: 2) that are today parts of the Museum collection. He also actively designed traditional furniture, and even attempted to reconstruct a "typical Bosnian room". Today, Truhelka's memorial room is preserved at the Cantonal Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage in Sarajevo. Truhelka also organized the preparation of the Bosnian pavilion for exhibitions in Budapest (1896), Brussels (1897), Vienna (1898), and Paris (1900). Bosnian-Herzegovinian woodcarvers received recognition and awards at these exhibitions. For example, the newspaper Bošnjak (April 30, 1896) mentions Petar Vekić displaying a Bosnian smoking room in Budapest, including two tall round tables (*peškuni*), six seats, and a walnut sitting set (*minder*) crafted in the Oriental style. Later, Bošnjak (Nov 19, 1896) reported that brothers Petar and Lazar Vekić received the Great Millennium Medal at the Budapest exhibition.

The development of the wood industry during the Austro-Hungarian period also contributed to this artistic growth. In 1884, Leopold Herceg established the first sawmill on the Papratnica River near Zavidovići, from which the company Krivaja later emerged as a center of wood industry and innovation in former Yugoslavia. The sawmill and subsequent industrial developments, including the establishment of Bosansko šumska industrija

Drvorezbarstvo u Bosni od osmanskog perioda do ranog modernog doba

Tokom osmanskog perioda drvorezbarstvo u Bosni dostiglo je nove domete, jer je rasla potreba za bogato ukrašenim namještajem i arhitektonskim elementima. Drvorezbari su u svoje radove uključivali islamske dekorativne oblike, među kojima kaligrafiju i geometrijske ornamente, stvarajući osoben spoj različitih stilskih tradicija. Na taj se način bosansko drvorezbarstvo oblikovalo na sjecištu različitih kulturnih utjecaja, što je posebno dolazilo do izražaja u uređenju enterijera i arhitekturi.

Značajan primjer takvog prožimanja jeste Beglerovića kuća u selu Repovci kod Konjica, u kojoj se nalaze dva različita halvata, odnosno velike i prostrane sobe u prizemlju koje su imale karakter intimnog porodičnog prostora — jedan „šareni" i drugi „orijentalni". Drvorezbarena i polihromirana ugrađena sehara, odnosno musandra, u šarenom halvatu prikazuje scenu lova sa psima, s motivima koji podsjećaju na umjetnost stećaka. Druga musandra ukrašena je dekoracijom koja proizlazi iz islamsko-orijentalne tradicije osmanskog perioda. Prema Aliji Bejtiću (1953: 283), ove musandre izradila su 1850/51. godine dvojica domaćih majstora, Nikola i Mustafa, što svjedoči o ranom kreativnom susretu bosanskih kulturnih slojeva u drvorezbarstvu, ali i o visokoj vještini lokalnih zanatlija.

Organizirana, sistematska proizvodnja i predstavljanje drvorezbarstva u Bosni započinju, međutim, u vrijeme austrougarske uprave. Taj razvoj bio je usko povezan s djelovanjem novoosnovanog Zemaljskog muzeja i učešćem Bosne i Hercegovine na međunarodnim svjetskim izložbama. Zemaljski muzej (Landesmuseum) zvanično je osnovan 1888. godine i imao je važnu ulogu u provođenju kulturne misije austrougarske uprave u Bosni i Hercegovini (Lipa, 2006). Posebno značajnu ulogu imao je dr. Ćiro Truhelka, prvi kustos i jedan od osnivača Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu. On je 1890. godine započeo prikupljanje narodnih nošnji i drugih predmeta etnografske vrijednosti. Tokom svojih putovanja po Bosni i Hercegovini 1890. i 1891. godine, među drugim rijetkim etnografskim predmetima, prikupio je i bogato rezbarene drvene enterijere (Lipa, 2006: 2), koji se danas nalaze u muzejskim zbirkama. Truhelka je aktivno oblikovao i tradicionalni namještaj, a pokušao je rekonstruirati i „tipičnu bosansku sobu". Njegova spomen-soba danas se čuva u Kantonalnom zavodu za zaštitu kulturno-historijskog i prirodnog nasljeđa Sarajeva.

Truhelka je također organizirao pripremu bosanskog paviljona za izložbe u Budimpešti 1896, Briselu 1897, Beču 1898. i Parizu 1900. godine. Bosanskohercegovački drvorezbari na tim su izložbama dobili priznanja i nagrade. Tako, naprimjer, list Bošnjak od 30. aprila 1896. godine spominje Petra Vekića, koji je u Budimpešti izložio bosansku pušionicu, uključujući dva visoka okrugla stola, odnosno peškune, šest sjedišta i sećiju od orahovine izrađenu u orijentalnom stilu. Kasnije je Bošnjak, 19. novembra 1896. godine, izvijestio da su braća Petar i Lazar Vekić na budimpeštanskoj izložbi dobili Veliku milenijsku medalju.

Razvoj drvne industrije u austrougarskom periodu također je doprinio ovom umjetničkom usponu. Leopold Herceg je 1884. godine osnovao prvu pilanu na rijeci Papratnici kod Zavidovića, iz koje će kasnije izrasti preduzeće Krivaja, jedno od središta drvne industrije i inovacija u bivšoj Jugoslaviji. Pilana i kasniji industrijski razvoj, uključujući osnivanje Bosanske šumske industrije Eissler i Ortlieb 1900. godine, imali su važnu ulogu u modernizaciji proizvodnje i arhitektonskog oblikovanja. U tom smislu posebno

Eissler and Ortlieb in 1900, played a critical role in modernizing both production and architectural design. Notably, the administrative building of Krivaja, designed in an eclectic "Swiss folk" style, demonstrates the integration of local and Alpine-inspired architectural vocabulary, particularly through decorative woodwork.

The Konjic Woodcarvers

Woodcarving has been especially developed in the Konjic area, where it has been an integral part of local culture for centuries. Austro-Hungarian officials recognized the extraordinary skill of local woodcarvers, particularly in the upper Neretva valley (from Bijela to Grušča). Travel writer Heinrich Renner, who visited Konjic in 1885 and 1895, noted:

> *It is worth recommending a direct trip from Konjic to the valley of Bijela. Beautiful wooden carvings and devices are made here, especially the crates (sehare), in which the peasants store their clothes and valuables* (p. 285).

The first woodcarving school was opened in Konjic in 1889 (Nikšić, 2009: 9). In 1906, the first woodcarving course started in Konjic, and by 1911, a woodcarving training workshop was officially established. Educated carpenters often opened their own workshops. Two famous woodcarver families emerged: the Nikšić and Vila families.

The Nikšić family history spans over four generations. Gano Nikšić, the current owners' great-grandfather, acquired advanced carving techniques and received educational support from the Austro-Hungarian government. Partnerships with established Sarajevo manufacturers, such as Buttazoni-Venturini, allowed the family to showcase hand-carved furniture internationally, including Milan, Budapest, Brussels, Vienna, and Paris. Gano's sons — Salih, Meho, Adem, and Asim — continued the craft. Salih established the first Nikšić woodcarving workshop in 1919, and Adem, grandfather of the current owners, expanded it in 1927. Two years later, in 1929, he presented his first collection at the Belgrade Furniture Fair (Nikšić, 2009: 9). The Nikšić family inspired roughly 30 other furniture workshops in the Konjic area between the world wars (Nikšić, 2021: 17), supplying salons, museums, and institutions across the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

During socialist Yugoslavia, private businesses faced major challenges, but Adem's sons, Mukerem and Besim, revived the workshop in the 1970s (Fig. 1). After the breakup of Yugoslavia, Besim continued the family tradition under the name "Rukotvorine".



Fig. 1. Brothers Mukerem and Besim Niksic in their workshop, late 1970s, Copyright: Zanat, Konjic

Sl. 1. Braća Mukerem i Besim Nikšić u svojoj radionici, kraj 1970-ih godina. Copyright: Zanat, Konjic.

je značajna upravna zgrada Krivaje, projektirana u eklektičkom „švicarskom narodnom" stilu, koja pokazuje povezivanje lokalnog i alpski nadahnutog arhitektonskog izraza, naročito kroz dekorativnu obradu drveta.

Konjički drvorezbari

Drvorezbarstvo se naročito razvilo na području Konjica, gdje stoljećima predstavlja sastavni dio lokalne kulture. Austrougarski službenici prepoznali su izuzetnu vještinu domaćih drvorezbara, posebno u gornjoj dolini Neretve, od Bijele do Grušče. Putopisac Heinrich Renner, koji je Konjic posjetio 1885. i 1895. godine, zabilježio je:

> *Vrijedno je preporučiti izlet iz Konjica u dolinu Bijele. Ovdje se izrađuju lijepi drveni rezbareni predmeti, naročito sanduci — sehare — u kojima seljaci čuvaju svoju odjeću i dragocjenosti* (str. 285).

Prva drvorezbarska škola otvorena je u Konjicu 1889. godine (Nikšić, 2009: 9). Godine 1906. započeo je prvi drvorezbarski kurs u Konjicu, a do 1911. godine zvanično je osnovana i školska radionica za obuku drvorezbara. Obrazovani stolari često su otvarali vlastite radionice. U tom periodu posebno se izdvajaju dvije poznate drvorezbarske porodice: porodice Nikšić i Vila.

Historija porodice Nikšić obuhvata više od četiri generacije. Gano Nikšić, pradjed današnjih vlasnika, usavršio je napredne tehnike rezbarenja i dobio obrazovnu podršku austrougarske vlasti. Saradnja s uglednim sarajevskim proizvođačima, poput firme Buttazoni-Venturini, omogućila je porodici predstavljanje ručno rezbarenog namještaja na međunarodnim izložbama, između ostalog u Milanu, Budimpešti, Briselu, Beču i Parizu. Ganini sinovi — Salih, Meho, Adem i Asim — nastavili su zanat. Salih je 1919. godine osnovao prvu drvorezbarsku radionicu porodice Nikšić, a Adem, djed današnjih vlasnika, proširio ju je 1927. godine. Dvije godine kasnije, 1929, predstavio je svoju prvu kolekciju na Beogradskom sajmu namještaja (Nikšić, 2009: 9). Porodica Nikšić potaknula je razvoj približno trideset drugih radionica namještaja na području Konjica između dva svjetska rata (Nikšić, 2021: 17), opskrbljujući salone, muzeje i institucije širom tadašnje Kraljevine Jugoslavije.

Tokom socijalističke Jugoslavije privatna preduzeća suočavala su se s brojnim izazovima, ali su Ademovi sinovi, Mukerem i Besim, obnovili rad radionice pedesetih godina 20. stoljeća (Sl. 1). Nakon raspada Jugoslavije Besim je od 1995. godine nastavio porodičnu tradiciju pod nazivom „Rukotvorine".

Savremeni iskoraci: brend Zanat

Nova era započela je osnivanjem brenda *Zanat*, koji su pokrenuli Besimovi sinovi, Adem i Orhan. Time je otvorena nova, prema budućnosti usmjerena i dizajnerski osviještena vizija. Orhan Nikšić, direktor *Zanata*, opisao je tu inspiraciju kao „promoviranje novog pristupa dizajnu namještaja koji naglašava zanatsku vještinu i pokazuje kako tradicionalne tehnike ručnog rezbarenja mogu obogatiti dizajn, istovremeno podržavajući održivi društveno-ekonomski razvoj" (Nikšić, 2021: 19). Kada su osnivači *Zanata* odlučili modernizirati porodični posao star četiri generacije, stručnjaci su im savjetovali da napuste tradicionalne procese drvorezbarstva, kako u dizajnu tako i u proizvodnji. Ipak, oni su hrabro i uporno odlučili sačuvati ručno rezbarene detalje kao ključni element dizajnerskog identiteta *Zanata*, znajući da „vješto zanatstvo može dodati vrijednost koju ni najbolja mašina ne može postići" (Nikšić, 2021: 29). Kako je Orhan Nikšić jednom istakao, „u saradnji sa stranim dizajnerima uvijek uključuje-

em and Besim, revived the workshop in the 1950s (Fig. 1). Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Besim continued the family tradition under the name „Rukotvorine" (Handicrafts) since 1995.

Contemporary Endeavors: The Zanat Brand

A new era began with the foundation of the *Zanat* brand by Besim's sons, Adem and Orhan. This marked a forward-looking, design-oriented vision. Orhan Nikšić, CEO of *Zanat*, described the inspiration as „promoting a new approach to furniture design that emphasizes craftsmanship and demonstrates how traditional hand-carving techniques can enrich design while supporting sustainable socio-economic development" (Nikšić, 2021: 19). When the founders of *Zanat* decided to modernize the four-generation-old family business, they were advised by experts to abandon traditional woodcarving processes, both in design and in production. However, they bravely and stubbornly decided to protect hand-carved details as a core element of *Zanat's* design identity, knowing that „skilled craftsmanship can add value that even the finest machine cannot match" (Nikšić, 2021: 29). As Orhan Niksic once pointed out, „in our cooperation with foreign designers we always include a sentence asking to ensure that carvings are not a decoration on a finished design but its essence" (Ferrarini, 2020). *Zanat* quickly gained international recognition, collaborating with designers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sweden, Finland, Italy, France, and Germany.

Zanat's co-founders and owners, Orhan and Adem Nikšić, emphasized the brand's commitment to universal sustainability, led by the ideals of protect (handicrafts as a key element of humanity's cultural heritage), develop (environmentally sustainable products and processes), and promote (Nikšić, 2021: 24, 28). In cooperation with internationally renowned designers, such as Monica Förster, Studioilse and Wingardhs (Sweden), Sebastian Herkner (Germany), Harri Koskinen (Finland), Michele de Lucchi, Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba (Italy), Jean-Marie Massaud (France) and leading B&H designers Jasna Mujkić and Salih Teskeredžić, *Zanat* launched a whole range of products – from dining tables, cofee and side-tables, chairs, lounge chairs, benches and stools to accessories and mirrors – that were recognized as „heroic" (Michele de Lucchi) and „completely different from everyone else" (Palomba). Jasna Mujkić is the first professional designer who collaborated with the Nikšić family on the modernization of the hand-carved motifs and their application to products of modern design, even before *Zanat* was officially launched (*Quite chair and stool*). Her beautiful *Ombra coffee table* has been made by using small pieces of wood likely to end up as production waste. In this complex design work, following a „Penrose Prototiles" concept (named after a famous British mathematician, Sir Roger Penrose), Jasna examined „the structural value of the ornament, (by) changing the character of the form (through) texture" (Đelilović, 2025). It was awarded the Interior Innovation Award in 2012 (Fig. 2, 3).

What all of these authors have in common with the *Zanat* founders is an unwavering enthusiasm for old crafts combined with an exquisite intuition for new technology, real materials and textures, a strong sense of pure, elegant, light, and sculptural form, and a desire to experience diverse cultures. Thus, the so-called *„Igman chairs"* designed by Harri Koskinen were described as „an excellent example of integration of Finnish and Bosnian

mo rečenicu kojom tražimo da rezbarija ne bude dekoracija na već završenom dizajnu, nego njegova suština" (Ferrarini, 2020). *Zanat* je brzo stekao međunarodno priznanje, sarađujući s dizajnerima iz Bosne i Hercegovine, Švedske, Finske, Italije, Francuske i Njemačke.

Suosnivači i vlasnici *Zanata*, Orhan i Adem Nikšić, naglasili su predanost brenda univerzalnoj održivosti, vođenoj idealima zaštite, razvoja i promocije: zaštite rukotvorina kao ključnog elementa kulturnog naslijeđa čovječanstva, razvoja ekološki održivih proizvoda i procesa te njihove promocije (Nikšić, 2021: 24, 28). U saradnji s međunarodno priznatim dizajnerima, poput Monice Förster, studija Studioilse i Wingardhs iz Švedske, Sebastiana Herknera iz Njemačke, Harrija Koskinena iz Finske, Michelea de Lucchija, Ludovice Serafini i Roberta Palombe iz Italije, Jean-Marieja Massauda iz Francuske, kao i s vodećim bosanskohercegovačkim dizajnerima Jasnom Mujkić i Salihom Teskeredžićem, *Zanat* je pokrenuo čitav niz proizvoda — od trpezarijskih stolova, klub-stolova i pomoćnih stolova, stolica, lounge fotelja, klupa i taburea do dodataka za enterijer i ogledala. Ti proizvodi prepoznati su kao „herojski" prema riječima Michelea de Lucchija i kao „potpuno drugačiji od svih drugih" prema riječima Palombe.

Jasna Mujkić bila je prva profesionalna dizajnerica koja je s porodicom Nikšić sarađivala na modernizaciji ručno rezbarenih motiva i njihovoj primjeni na proizvodima savremenog dizajna, još prije zvaničnog pokretanja brenda *Zanat*, kroz stolicu i tabure *Quiet*. Njen izuzetni klub-stol *Ombra* izrađen je korištenjem malih komada drveta koji bi inače vjerovatno završili kao proizvodni otpad. U ovom složenom dizajnerskom radu, slijedeći koncept „Penrose Prototiles", nazvan po poznatom britanskom matematičaru sir Rogeru Penroseu, Jasna Mujkić istraživala je „strukturnu vrijednost ornamenta", mijenjajući karakter forme kroz teksturu (Đelilović, 2025). Stol *Ombra* nagrađen je nagradom Interior Innovation Award 2012. godine (Sl. 2, 3).

Ono što je svim ovim autorima zajedničko s osnivačima *Zanata* jeste postojana posvećenost starim zanatima, spojena s istančanom intuicijom za nove tehnologije, prirodne materijale i teksture, snažnim osjećajem za čistu, elegantnu, laganu i skulpturalnu formu, kao i željom za susretom s različitim kulturama. Tako su takozvane „Igman stolice", koje



Fig. 2. *Ombra* Table, designed by Jasna Mujkić, © Zanat, Konjic

Sl. 2. Stol Ombra, dizajn Jasna Mujkić, © Zanat, Konjic.

craftsmanship traditions through brilliant design" (Nikšić, 2021: 223).

The cooperation with renowned designers initiated even fundamental questions about the purpose of design. The „*touch collection*" designed by Studioilse for *Zanat* is about the use of carvings to enhance tactility and create a strong physical connection between humans and objects in an increasingly digital world (Nikšić, 2021: 226). Many interesting and refined details in the conceptual and production process provide proof of a multidimensional and sophisticated approach. The



Fig. 3. *Ombra* Table, designed by Jasna Mujkić, © Zanat, Konjic

Sl. 3. Stol Ombra, dizajn Jasna Mujkić, © Zanat, Konjic.

hand-carved texture of *Mati table* legs, designed by Sebastian Herkner, was inspired by the cellular structure of wood, which is not only a visually attractive detail but a reminder that wood was once a living organism (Nikšić, 2021: 44). Even the name of the chair collection *Mati* (meaning „mother" in the Bosnian language) was chosen to symbolize the chair's motherly seating comfort (Nikšić, 2021: 96). Twisted hand-carved edges of the *Wave-table*, designed by Salih Teskeredžić, were imaginatively inspired by the flow of the Neretva river after an autumn torrent in the *Zanat's* hometown of Konjic (Nikšić, 2021: 60), and thus the *genius loci* of an authentic geographical and historical setting was engraved in a refined manner in the final product. Some of the products, such as *Branco boxes* designed by Monica Förster, pay homage to the great names of art history. As one of the most important sculptors of modernism, Brancusi was also a woodcarver. A production of *Dama-T lounge chair*, designed by Ludovica and Roberto Palomba, required the development of new carving tools for the *Zanat* workshop due to the refined curved surfaces of the seat and backrest.

The hallmark of *Zanat* products is their soft, light, sculptural, minimalist, and humanistic expression, with hand-carved techniques that preserve traditional Konjic craftsmanship. These qualities have earned numerous awards, including the Interior Innovation Award, the Golden Chair Award, and recognition by Swedish and German design councils. For instance, *Unna Chair* by Monica Förster, who has been the brand's art director since the brand's inauguration, was the winner of the Interior Innovation Award 2015 presented by the German Design Council and the Golden Chair Award by the Swedish Architect Association. Some of the

je dizajnirao Harri Koskinen, opisane kao „izvrstan primjer integracije finske i bosanske zanatske tradicije kroz izvanredan dizajn" (Nikšić, 2021: 223).

Saradnja s priznatim dizajnerima otvorila je i temeljna pitanja o svrsi dizajna. Kolekcija *Touch*, koju je za *Zanat* dizajnirao Studioilse, zasniva se na upotrebi rezbarije radi naglašavanja taktilnosti i stvaranja snažne fizičke veze između čovjeka i predmeta u sve digitaliziranijem svijetu (Nikšić, 2021: 226). Brojni zanimljivi i profinjeni detalji u konceptualnom i proizvodnom procesu svjedoče o višedimenzionalnom i sofisticiranom pristupu. Ručno rezbarena tekstura nogara stola *Mati*, koji je dizajnirao Sebastian Herkner, nadahnuta je ćelijskom strukturom drveta, što nije samo vizualno privlačan detalj nego i podsjetnik da je drvo nekada bilo živi organizam (Nikšić, 2021: 44). Čak je i naziv kolekcije stolica *Mati*, u značenju „majka" na bosanskom jeziku, izabran kako bi simbolizirao majčinski osjećaj udobnosti pri sjedenju (Nikšić, 2021: 96).

Uvijeni, ručno rezbareni rubovi stola *Wave*, koji je dizajnirao Salih Teskeredžić, maštovito su nadahnuti tokom rijeke Neretve nakon jesenjih bujica u Konjicu, rodnom gradu Zanata (Nikšić, 2021: 60). Time je *genius loci* autentičnog geografskog i historijskog ambijenta na profinjen način utisnut u konačni proizvod. Neki proizvodi, poput kutija *Branco* koje je dizajnirala Monica Förster, odaju počast velikim imenima historije umjetnosti. Brâncuși, jedan od najvažnijih kipara modernizma, bio je i drvorezbar. Izrada lounge fotelje *Dama-T,* koju su dizajnirali Ludovica i Roberto Palomba, zahtijevala je razvoj novih rezbarskih alata u radionici *Zanata* zbog profinjenih zakrivljenih površina sjedišta i naslona.

Obilježje *Zanatovih* proizvoda jeste njihov mek, lagan, skulpturalan, minimalistički i humanistički izraz, uz primjenu ručnih rezbarskih tehnika



Fig. 4. Certificate of the Inscription of the Konjic woodcarving on the List of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage 2018, Photo: Aida Abadžić Hodžić, Konjic, 2022.

Sl. 4. Certifikat o upisu konjičkog drvorezbarstva na UNESCO-vu Listu nematerijalne kulturne baštine čovječanstva 2018. godine. Foto: Aida Abadžić Hodžić, Konjic, 2022.

koje čuvaju tradicionalno konjičko zanatstvo. Ove kvalitete donijele su im brojne nagrade, uključujući *Interior Innovation Award*, *Golden Chair Award*, kao i priznanja švedskih i njemačkih dizajnerskih vijeća. Tako je, naprimjer, stolica *Unna Monice Förster*, koja je umjetnička direktorica brenda od njegovog osnivanja, osvojila Interior Innovation Award 2015. godine, koju dodjeljuje German Design Council, te nagradu *Golden Chair Award* Švedskog udruženja arhitekata. Neki proizvodi, poput ogledala *Nur* iste autorice, uvršteni su u stalnu zbirku Nacionalnog muzeja Švedske. *Zanatovi* proizvodi korišteni su u uređenju enterijera brojnih poznatih kompanija, vrhunskih hotela, restorana, muzeja i nagrađivanih rezidencija.

Dana 6. decembra 2018. godine konjičko drvorezbarstvo upisano je na UNESCO-vu Reprezentativnu listu nematerijalne kulturne baštine čovječans-

products, such as the *Nur mirror* by the same author, were added to the permanent collection of the Swedish National Museum. *Zanat* products assisted in the interior design of many renowned companies, premium hotels, restaurants, museums, and award-winning residences.

On December 6, 2018, Konjic woodcarving was added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list (Fig. 4). On June 12, 2019, *Zanat* opened a museum in Konjic dedicated to this heritage, integrating a showroom and museum shop. The interior, designed by Emir Salkic and Normal Arhitektura, features parametric architecture creating the illusion of time travel through centuries, and a striking installation wall of 200 tattooed stools honors four generations of Konjic woodcarvers (Fig. 5).

Concluding remarks

From its medieval foundations and the formation of a distinct „Bosnian style", through the layered influences of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian periods, woodcarving in Bosnia and Herzegovina has persisted as a culturally embedded practice characterized by continuity and innovation. This artistic craft has been specially developed in the Konjic region since the end of the 19th century, and the Niksic family played a central role in this process.

The originality of the approach to this rich tradition has been proven in the contemporary history of the Niksic family. With the foundation of the *Zanat* brand and intention to modernize the four-generation-old family business, in cooperation with internationally renowned designers, *Zanat's* founders and owners have been contributing to the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

By integrating traditional skills into economically viable and internationally recognized production models, the *Zanat* brand strengthens the position of woodcarving within contemporary cultural and creative industries, ensuring its continuity beyond purely ethnographic or nostalgic frameworks, demonstrating how traditional knowledge can serve as a critical resource for innovation and development.

Today, woodcarving in Konjic is economically successful, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable, practiced across ethnic and confessional groups, serving as a platform for dialogue and cooperation. •

Fig. 5. 200 tattooed stools honoring four generations of Konjic woodcarvers, Detail of the interior of the Zanat Museum in Konjic, Photo: Aida Abadžić Hodžić, Konjic, 2022.

Sl. 5. Dvjesto „tetoviranih" taburea u čast četirima generacijama konjičkih drvorezbara. Detalj enterijera Muzeja Zanat u Konjicu. Foto: Aida Abadžić Hodžić, Konjic, 2022.

tva (Sl. 4). Zanat je 12. juna 2019. godine u Konjicu otvorio muzej posvećen ovoj baštini, objedinjujući izložbeni prostor, prodajni salon i muzejsku prodavnicu. Enterijer muzeja, koji potpisuju Emir Salkić i Normal Arhitektura, oblikovan je kroz parametarsku arhitekturu koja stvara iluziju putovanja kroz stoljeća, dok upečatljiv instalacijski zid od 200 „tetoviranih" taburea odaje počast četirima generacijama konjičkih drvorezbara (Sl. 5).



Zaključna razmatranja

Od srednjovjekovnih temelja i oblikovanja osobenog „bosanskog stila", preko slojevitih utjecaja osmanskog i austrougarskog perioda, drvorezbarstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini opstalo je kao kulturno ukorijenjena praksa obilježena kontinuitetom i inovacijom. Ovaj umjetnički zanat posebno se razvijao na području Konjica od kraja 19. stoljeća, a porodica Nikšić imala je središnju ulogu u tom procesu.

Originalnost pristupa ovoj bogatoj tradiciji potvrđena je u savremenoj historiji porodice Nikšić. Osnivanjem brenda *Zanat* i namjerom da moderniziraju porodični posao star četiri generacije, njegovi osnivači i vlasnici, u saradnji s međunarodno priznatim dizajnerima, doprinose očuvanju i prenošenju nematerijalne kulturne baštine.

Integriranjem tradicionalnih vještina u ekonomski održive i međunarodno priznate modele proizvodnje, brend *Zanat* jača položaj drvorezbarstva unutar savremenih kulturnih i kreativnih industrija. Time se osigurava njegov kontinuitet izvan isključivo etnografskih ili nostalgičnih okvira, pokazujući kako tradicionalno znanje može biti važan resurs za inovaciju i razvoj.

Danas je drvorezbarstvo u Konjicu ekonomski uspješno, društveno uključivo i ekološki održivo. Ono se prakticira među različitim etničkim i konfesionalnim zajednicama, služeći kao platforma za dijalog i saradnju. •

Literature/Literatura:

Abadžić Hodžić, A. (2016). Visual art circumstances in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian period and the question of visual art modernity: The role and importance of the Nada magazine. U: *Contemporary Perception of the Austro-Hungarian Cultural Heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 116–125. ICOMOS National Committee in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.

Anđelić, P. (1984). *Kulturna istorija Bosne i Hercegovin*e. Sarajevo.

Bejtić, A. (1953). *Spomenici osmanlijske arhitekture u Bosni i Hercegovini*. Orijentalni institut, Sarajevo.

Đelilović, A. (2025). *Museum in Exile*. https://museuminexile.com/index.php/designers/jasna-mujkic (1.4.2026)

Ferrarini, P. (2020). F*actory Visit: Zanat, Traditional Woodcarving in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. COOL HUNTING®. https://coolhunting.com/design/factory-visit-zanat-traditional-woodcarving-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina/ (2.12.2025)

Fisković, C. (1973). Dalmatinski majstori u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni. *Radovi Muzeja grada Zenic*a, Zenica.

Han, V. (1972). *La culture matérielle des Balkans au Moyen Âge à travers la documentation des Archives de Dubrovnik*. Balcanica III, Beograd, 157–193.

Kovačević-Kojić, D. (1959). Prilog proučavanju zanatstva u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni. *Godišnjak Društva istoričara BiH* X, 279–296.

Kovačević-Kojić, D. (1970). Trgovina u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni. *Djela Naučnog društva BiH* VIII, 257–263.

Lipa, A. (2006). The Austro-Hungarian Period in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cultural Politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Creation of the Western Type of Art. *Kakanien* Revisited. https://www.kakanien-revisited.at/beitr/fallstudie/ALipa1.pdf (1.12.2025)

Mušeta-Aščerić, V. (2002). Bosanski stil – jedna od osobenosti bosanskog srednjovjekovlja. *Znakovi vremen*a 17, 116–135.

Nikšić, O. (2021). Zanat – Knock on Wood. *Zanat Catalogue* 4. Zanat, Konjic.

Radojković, B. (1973). Zapadni uticaji na primijenjenu umetnost Bosne u XIV i XV veku. *Radovi sa simpozijuma „Srednjovjekovna Bosna i evropska kultura"*. Muzej grada Zenice, Zenica.

Renner, H. (2013). *Bosnom i Hercegovinom uzduž i poprijeko* (1896). Dobra knjiga, Sarajevo.

Šunjić, M. (1996). *Venecija i Bosna. Odnosi u XIV. i XV. stoljeću.* HKD Napredak, Sarajevo.

Visit B&H. (2019). *Konjičko drvorezbarstvo: Namještaj „Braće Nikšić" prepoznao je i UNESC*O. https://visitbih.ba/konjicko-drvorezbarstvo-namjestaj-brace-niksic-prepoznao-je-i-unesco (4.11.2025)

Wenzel, M. (1965). *Ukrasni motivi na stećcima / Ornamental Motifs on Tombstones from Medieval Bosnia and Surrounding Regions*. Prijevod: Nada Miletić. Crteži: Marian Wenzel. Geografske karte: Đuro Basler. Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo.

Wenzel, M. (1999). *Bosanski stil na stećcima i metalu*. Sarajevo Publishing, Sarajevo.