



THE ECOMUSEUM OF THE PISTOIESE MOUNTAIN



THE ECOMUSEUM OF THE PISTOIESE MOUNTAIN
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 Rivoreta



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HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM

The museum of Rivoreta originated in the 1970s when the inhabitants started collecting and displaying objects in the local school. These were items used in the past and kept in people's lofts. The idea was Franca Francioni Calissi's, a Florentine holiday maker with a strong affection for this little community in the Apennines. Intuitively she recognized the importance of conserving the memory of it's past. Around this idea the town gathered and was the protagonist in the birth of the museum. In 1994 when it became part of the Eco Museum of the Pistoiese mountains, a new museum layout was inaugurated led by Claudio Rosati. The Museum, briefly described below remains the same as then.

The town of Rivoreta was funded on a trajectory which crossed the Apennines at Serra delle Motte and hits Fiumalbo in the 'Modenese'. When the Ximeniana road was subsequently built by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo, this was the most important infrastructure undertaking in the Apennines in the 18th Century. From that moment Rivoreta was distanced from the main roads and communications maintaining as a result a more genuine connection with it's past.



A VILLAGE, A MUSEUM

Sixty inhabitants and six hundred objects. The ratio between Rivoreta and the Museum of the people of the Pistoian Apennines can be summed up like this. In reality the relationship is more complex and the numbers don't indicate that an aspect of the history brought to light in the 1970s is taking place even now. The main characteristic of the Museum is the really strong link with the village and in the dialogue between experts and the knowledge of the inhabitants. A dialogue manifested every year in a very open manner on the last Sunday of July is the 'Living Museum' day, in which the people in the square and streets repeat the practices and trades documented by the objects conserved in the Museum.

A MUSEUM OF IDEAS AND NOT THINGS

Only a small part of the items in the collection are on display because above all the Museum wants to be a Museum of Ideas and not things - A Museum that speaks to the heart and to the experience of the visitor. For this reason it doesn't give prevalence to words but uses more languages: Objects of work and of ordinary everyday life, images, stories, trying out, so that the visitor sees a mirrors himself or others.



The museum offers a journey through the lives of the people of the Pistoiese Apennine from modernity up to these days. It can be visited also by people with sight impairment through "Walk Assistant" technology.

The first issue we encounter is that of being born in the mountains. A cradle from Rivoreta and cots of other areas, up to a post-modern design emphasize the different ways to address the same condition.

The second theme is that of gathering and transport which to the people of the high lands is a kind of 'condemn of Sisyphus'. Filling, transporting and emptying again. Baskets, containers, images of transporting with the body and the possibility of the visitor to experience the physical constraints of living in this area, drawing attention to a human practice that also expresses cultural styles.

The space devoted to charcoal production shows the case of a complex technical knowledge which contrasts with the view that some have of pre-industrial methods consisting of simple and rudimentary techniques. Even in this case the visitor is encouraged to try their hand at a little-known dimension of a contemporary man.

Forest cutting and the evolution it has had over the last century is the theme of the next space. A large chestnut tree, which the visitor can enter evokes with strong illustrative examples the all-encompassing presence that the tree has had in the lives of the mountain people. The space that concludes this part of the route is dedicated to Festive times and the Sacred. Eventually the visitor finds space for a rest break. He sees the warehouse of the museum, but foremost he can see the exhibition that is set up every year. He can consult the descriptive cards of the objects that he saw going through the exhibition or see the 'hypertext' about the forest or watch a video of the museum collection. But it is only a pause. The museum exit coincides in fact with access to the village, the toy workshop and the 'Wool' section.

The Toy Workshop

Since 2003 the last room has housed the toy workshop. Here there are coloured toys on the walls made from reused materials. There are two large work tables where kids, supervised by the operators are invited to test their imagination, creativity and manual skills in the construction of traditional games like kites, parachutes, and 'schioccapalle'. At the end, everybody out onto the museum field to try out their creations.

'Wool' section

From August 2008 the Museum attached a new space which was the educational section on Wool and this visit is included in the ticket. It is in an old drying house for chestnuts a few dozen metres from EDI the main building. It has on display a monumental nineteenth century hand frame with its accessories including shuttles, spindles and bobbins which allowed the local population to independently produce linens such as sheets and tablecloths of flax and hemp, blankets and woollen carpets.

