

COMMS AWARDS 2026 • BEST BRAND IDENTITY OR REBRANDING PROJECT

# REIMAGINING TRAKOŠĆAN

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*From historic landmark to contemporary museum brand*

Dvor Trakošćan • Croatia

Project period: 2024 – ongoing



# A famous castle. A museum ready for a new chapter.

In 2024, Dvor Trakošćan began a broader transformation of its communication. At the centre was a new brand identity, developed collaboratively by the museum team and Studio Rašić + Vrabec and launched in January 2025.

The project deliberately moved beyond a logo redesign. It examined the museum’s heritage, personality, values and relationship with its audiences, then translated those findings into a coherent visual and communication system spanning the website, social media, exhibitions, events, PR, digital advertising and printed materials.

The new logo, at the heart of the identity, received **a Bronze Award at the A' Design Award** in the Graphics, Illustration and Visual Communication category.

The first full year after launch brought measurable change across the communication ecosystem: Instagram reach increased by more than 1,000%, Facebook reach by more than 130%, website clicks exceeded 100,000, and total annual museum visitation increased by 46%, from 76,003 visitors in 2024 to 110,928 in 2025.

The result is not simply a new visual identity, but a more consistent, contemporary and audience-oriented way for the museum to communicate its heritage.

|                                      |                                      |                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2024</b><br>Transformation begins | <b>2025</b><br>New identity launched | <b>ONGOING</b><br>Brand rolled out across channels |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|

## The core shift:

***From a place people recognise → to a museum people want to discover.***

## The castle has already been well-known in Croatia but the museum needed to become more visible.

Trakošćan has had a strong heritage asset and high recognition as a cultural sight, but its communication potential was larger than its existing image. For many audiences, the destination was primarily understood through its architecture and picturesque setting. The museum needed a clearer contemporary identity that could communicate the institution's cultural value, stories and experiences without losing the emotional power of the historic place.

Before the transformation, digital presence was limited. In 2024, the museum began building a more continuous and targeted social media presence: Instagram was newly established, TikTok content became more active, and Facebook communication was strengthened. This development was supported by the introduction of dedicated staff responsible for communication and the systematic development of the museum's marketing and PR activities. The rebrand was developed in parallel with a new, optimised website and a more structured approach to media communication

### We identified four connected challenges:

- Strengthen the identity of Trakošćan as a museum and cultural institution, not only as a landmark.
- Create a recognisable visual and verbal system that could work consistently across physical and digital touchpoints.
- Make heritage communication relevant to contemporary audiences, including younger and international visitors.
- Build a foundation that could support exhibitions, campaigns, digital content, partnerships and future audience development.

### The strategic question

***How can a historic institution become more contemporary without becoming less authentic?***

This question was addressed through a collaborative workshop process, bringing together the museum team, communication professionals and designers to examine Trakošćan's heritage, identity, values and relationship with its audiences. The process focused on identifying what

should remain at the heart of the institution while exploring how its stories and cultural value could be communicated in a more contemporary and relevant way.

The answer was not to modernise the heritage itself, but to modernise the way it is framed, communicated and experienced.

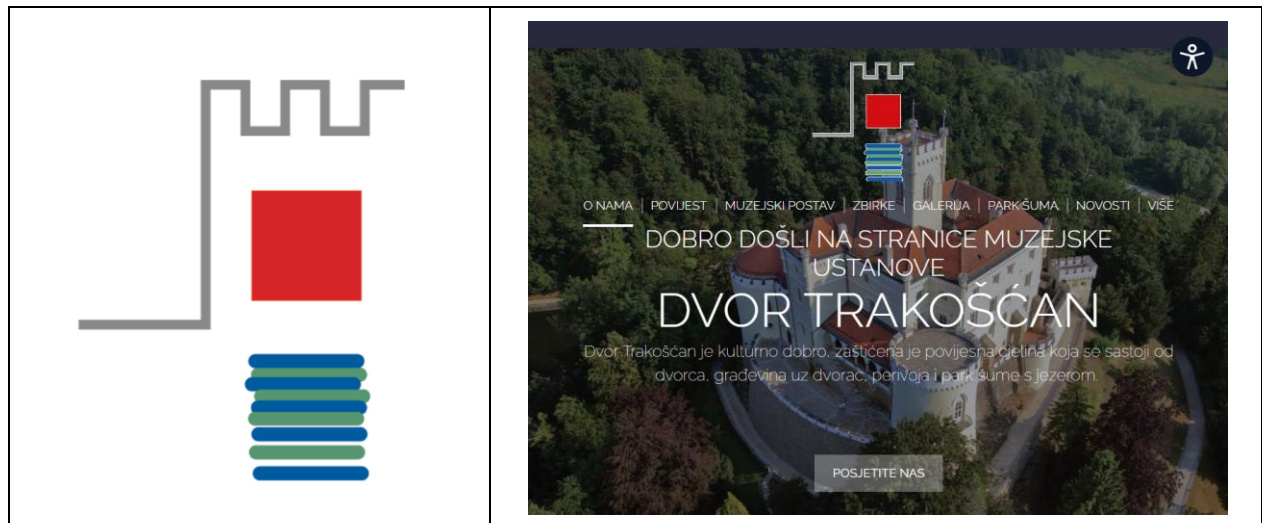
## The identity was already there. It needed to be translated.

Trakošćan has an unusually strong combination of elements: a castle, a lake, a protected landscape, centuries of history, collections and stories, and the mythology surrounding Drachenstein. Instead of treating these as separate communication topics, the rebranding brought them together into one coherent idea.

### Three defining elements:

| CASTLE                            | NATURE                 | STORY                         |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Architecture &amp; history</i> | Lake, park & landscape | Legends, people & collections |

### Getting rid of the old ways (logo and web):

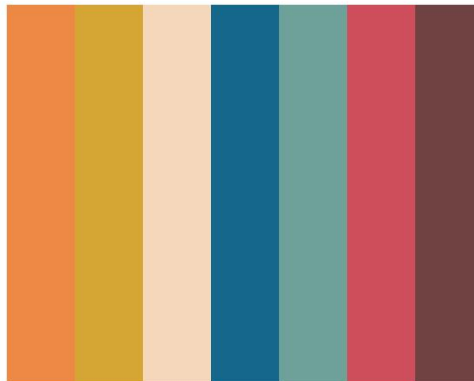


The new identity uses the legend of the Drachenstein dragon and knights as a distinctive bridge between heritage and contemporary storytelling. This gives the museum a recognisable narrative territory while leaving room for exhibitions, educational content, events and digital experiences.

## BOJE COLOURS

Inspiracija za boje pronađena je u prikazu složenog grofovskog grba na grbovnici iz 1631. Godine.

The colour palette was inspired by the colours found in the historic coat of arms depicted in the 1631 version.



## ZNAK GENEZA SIGN GENESIS

Znak je inspiriran principom skrivene simbolike i legendom o zmaju i vitezovima Drachenstein koj isu gospodarili tim krajevima.  
DRACHE+STEIN = ZMAJ+KAMEN (DVORAC)

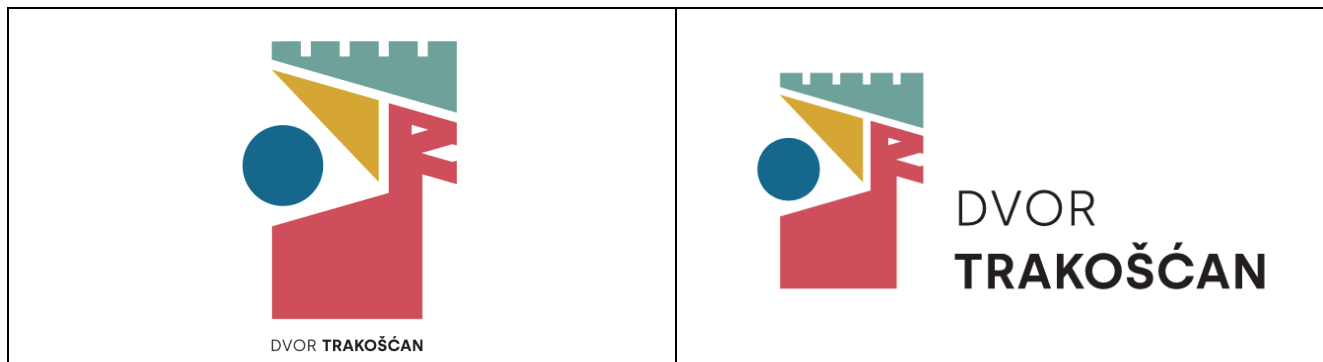
The symbol is inspired by the principle of hidden symbolism and the legend of the Drachenstein dragon and knights who ruled these lands.

DRACHE + STEIN = DRAGON + STONE (CASTLE)





## FINAL PRODUCT (LOGO AND APPLICATIONS):



FROHE WEIHNACHTEN UND EIN GLÜCKLICHES NEUES JAHR  
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR  
BUON NATALE E FELICE ANNO NUOVO  
ČESTIT BOŽIĆ I SRETNNA NOVA GODINA!

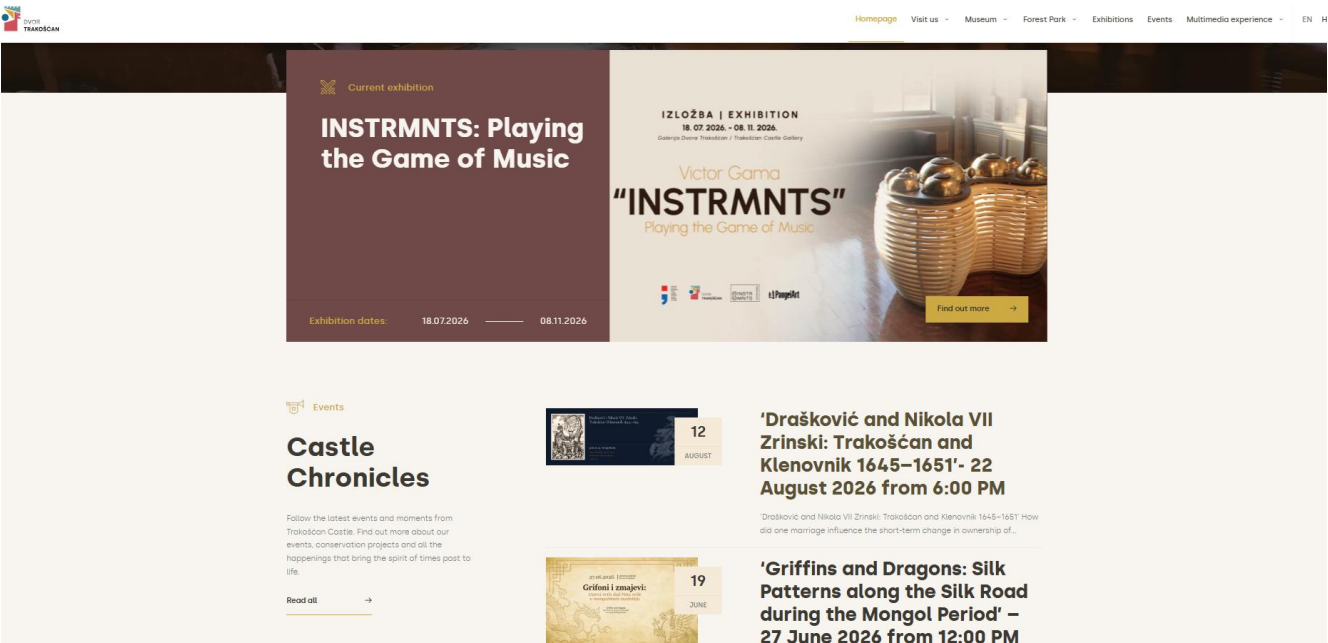
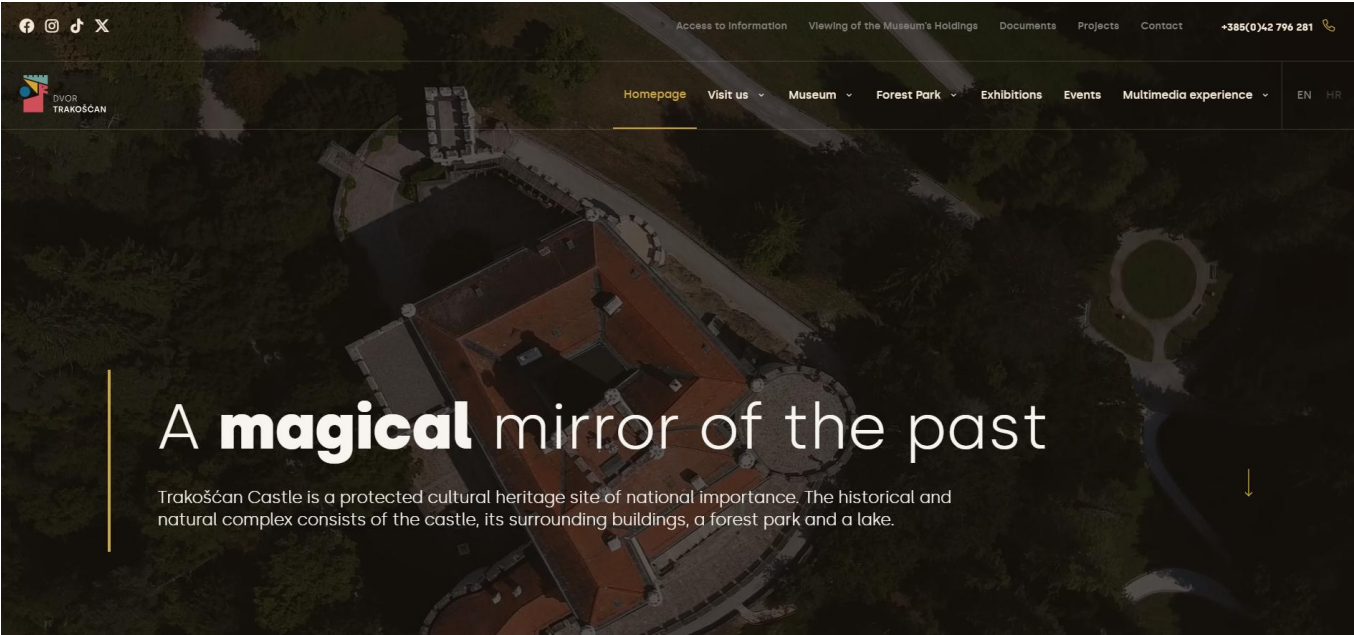
DVOR TRAKOŠĆAN



DVOR TRAKOŠĆAN



FINAL PRODUCT (WEB):





## NEW VISUAL IDENTITY LAUNCH AND THE AWARD:



The identity had to work in two worlds: HERITAGE - respectful, recognisable, authentic and CONTEMPORARY -flexible, clear, digital-ready.

This balance was critical. The aim was never to make Trakošćan look like a generic contemporary brand. The aim was to make its existing character easier to recognise, use and remember.

## A brand, not a logo.

The rebranding was conceived as a communication system rather than an isolated visual exercise. The new identity was intended to become the common layer connecting the museum's physical and digital presence.

### Our transformation model:

|                       |                       |                         |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>01</b><br>HERITAGE | <b>02</b><br>IDENTITY | <b>03</b><br>EXPERIENCE | <b>04</b><br>AUDIENCE |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|

Heritage provided the substance. Identity provided a contemporary language. Experience translated that language into the visitor journey. Audience became the measure of whether the transformation was working.

### What changed:

- A new visual identity and logo system.
- A new website, fully aligned with the new visual identity and colour palette, creating a consistent digital brand experience.
- The [website](#) was launched in English for the first time, opening the museum's digital communication to international audiences.
- More consistent [visual storytelling across social media](#), with posts and campaigns aligned with the new colour palette and visual language.
- Event invitations and other promotional materials were redesigned to follow the same visual system, creating consistency across digital and print communication.
- A stronger role for short-form video, digital content and audience-first storytelling.
- Closer integration between exhibitions, events, PR, digital communication and campaigns.
- A stronger platform for international visibility and partnerships.

## A rebrand only matters when people encounter it.

The launch of the new identity was the beginning, not the end, of the project. The museum team used the new system as a framework for changing how Trakošćan communicates every day.

### The brand moved across the visitor journey:

- DISCOVER - social media, PR, digital advertising and online storytelling.
- PLAN - a clearer website experience and practical visitor information.
- ARRIVE - physical communication and a stronger sense of place.
- EXPERIENCE - exhibitions, interpretation, events and interactive elements.
- REMEMBER - shareable content, stories and reasons to return.

The identity was carried across museum and visitor communication, website and digital interfaces, social media templates and content, exhibition and programme communication, printed promotional materials, PR and media communication, digital advertising, and partnership and international communication.

The transformation also opened space for new forms of interpretation and engagement, including multimedia and interactive experiences. This allowed the museum to connect the physical heritage experience with the habits of audiences who increasingly discover culture online.

## One identity. Many ways in.

The rebrand provided a common foundation for a more integrated communications ecosystem. Instead of treating each channel as a separate activity, the museum increasingly connected content, campaigns, exhibitions and PR around the same identity.

| <b>BRAND</b>                 | <b>WEB</b>       | <b>SOCIAL</b> | <b>PR</b>                   | <b>EXPERIENCE</b>  |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| A single recognisable system | The digital home | Storytelling  | Reach beyond owned channels | The physical proof |

This approach also enabled the museum to communicate individual exhibitions and programmes as part of a larger institutional story, rather than as disconnected announcements.

### Examples of the new storytelling environment:

- Exhibition communication and campaign content
- Short-form social video and platform-native storytelling
- Digital and multimedia interpretation
- International media relations and tourism partnerships
- Content built around people, objects, stories and experiences

# The transformation is measurable and still unfolding.

The rebrand is an ongoing institutional transformation, so its impact is visible across brand consistency, digital visibility, audience engagement and visitor growth.

| Metric                  | 2024                         | 2025            |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Facebook reach          | +40% organic growth vs. 2023 | +130%+ vs. 2024 |
| Facebook profile visits | 49K+                         | 90K+            |
| Facebook interactions   | 9.6K                         | 22K             |
| Facebook followers      | 12.4K+                       | 14.5K+          |
| Instagram reach         | 10K+                         | 125K+           |
| Instagram interactions  | 563                          | 2K+             |
| TikTok views            | 142 230                      | 247K            |
| Website clicks          | 71 500                       | 100K+           |
| Website CTR             | 10.7%                        | 13.7%           |
| Museum visitors         | 76 003                       | 110 928         |

## Digital growth highlights:

- Facebook content views exceeded 5 million in 2025.
- Facebook profile visits exceeded 90 000, an 88% increase year-on-year.
- Facebook audience interactions reached 22 000, a 130% increase.
- Facebook followers exceeded 14 500, a 215% increase.
- Instagram reach exceeded 125 000, more than 1000% above the 2024 baseline.
- TikTok generated 247 000 views, more than 80% above the previous year.
- The new website generated more than 100 000 clicks, compared with 71 500 in 2024.

## The website became the digital centre of the rebrand:

The new website was designed as a clearer, more contemporary digital home for the museum and was aligned with the new visual identity and colour palette. It also introduced an English-language version, creating a stronger entry point for international visitors and partners.

The website was optimised for SEO and SEM. In 2025 it generated more than 100 000 clicks from more than 600 000 impressions, with an average CTR of 13.7%, compared with 10.7% in 2024.



### **From occasional posting to continuous communication:**

The year 2024 was the beginning of continuous, targeted communication across social media and media relations. By 2025, the new identity was paired with regular, structured content across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Google platforms.

This changed the rhythm and purpose of communication: heritage stories, exhibitions, programmes and visitor experiences could now be developed as a continuous narrative.

### **Digital advertising:**

In 2025, the museum introduced digital advertising for the first time, enabling more targeted promotion of cultural content, events and heritage interpretation.

### **Younger audiences:**

TikTok became an important route to younger audiences. The largest audience segment on the museum's TikTok profile was 18-24, while Facebook also showed growth in the 25-34 and 45-54 age groups.

## A brand built to travel

The new identity was designed to support communication beyond the immediate destination. International positioning was strengthened through tourism fairs, cultural partnerships, media communication and exhibitions travelling abroad.

- Vakantiebeurs, Utrecht - January 2025, presenting Trakošćan's cultural heritage, architecture, landscape and tourism offer to the Dutch market.
- FITUR, Madrid - January 2025, promoting Trakošćan as a cultural and historical tourism destination and developing international contacts.
- International exhibition partnerships with institutions in Portugal, Hungary, Bulgaria, China, Czechia and other Central European countries.
- "Trakošćan Castle - A Story of Medieval Time" opened at Yangzhou Museum in China in December 2025.
- "Who is marrying whom?" was presented at Art Ichol in India in 2026, where it was highlighted as an example of good practice during the Curators' Forum and generated interest for a potential presentation in Kolkata.
- Museum + Heritage Show, London - Trakošćan presented its museum work and international profile at the Museum + Heritage Show in London, strengthening professional visibility and connections within the international museum sector.

The result is a visual and communication system that can remain recognisable when Trakošćan is presented outside the castle itself; in tourism markets, partner institutions, international exhibitions and digital spaces.



## The strongest proof of the rebrand is not the new logo. It is the behavior the new identity made possible.

The museum's communication increasingly connects digital discovery with physical experience. Contemporary formats help audiences encounter the museum before arrival, while exhibitions, events, interpretation and interactive experiences continue the story on site.

### Institutional impact:

- A clearer and more contemporary positioning of Trakošćan as a museum, not only a landmark.
- One recognisable visual system across website, social media, exhibitions, events, PR and printed communication.
- A stronger foundation for digital communication and content creation.
- A framework that can accommodate exhibitions, programmes and partnerships without losing brand coherence.
- A more audience-oriented approach to heritage storytelling.

### Audience impact:

- Heritage is presented in formats designed for contemporary media habits.
- The museum can communicate with different audience segments while retaining one recognisable identity.
- Digital discovery and physical visitation are increasingly connected.
- The institution has a stronger platform for reaching younger and international audiences.
- Total annual visitation increased by 46%, from 76 003 in 2024 to 110 928 in 2025.

## A flexible identity for a living museum.

The value of the new system is visible in the range of programmes it can carry. During 2025, the museum communicated exhibitions, family programmes, performances, educational activities and new visitor experiences through the same visual and narrative framework.

- "100 Years of Croatian Hunting" - a major anniversary exhibition realised with the Croatian Hunting Association and the Hunting Museum in Zagreb and in Trakošćan.
- "Hunting for Stories at the Castle" - a family programme connecting the hunting exhibition with storytelling, falconry, education and children's activities.
- "Baroque Day" - guided tours, costume-based educational interpretation, traditional skills and creative workshops.
- "Trakošćan – Castle of Lights" - light sculptures and audience programmes extending the museum experience into the park. It received the "Simply the Best 2026" award for innovation, creativity and quality in the tourism offer.
- "INSTRMNTS: An Interactive Music Experience by Victor Gama" opened at Trakošćan in July 2026, demonstrating the identity's ability to frame and communicate a contemporary, international exhibition within a historic museum setting.
- International and travelling exhibitions - allowing the Trakošćan story to move between institutions and countries.
- Escape Room "Guardians of the Dragon Castle" - Trakošćan introduced an escape-room experience directly within the museum context, combining heritage interpretation, storytelling, problem-solving and audience participation. The project positioned the museum as a place for active participation rather than passive observation and was the first such museum-based escape room introduced in Croatia.

The identity therefore functions as an adaptable platform: it can become formal, playful, educational, atmospheric or international without losing recognition.

The transformation was accompanied by a significant increase in international media visibility, with Dvor Trakošćan featured by National Geographic Traveller, The Times (UK) and Vogue Adria. These appearances helped position the museum not simply as a Croatian heritage destination, but as a culturally relevant institution with an international profile.



THE SUNDAY TIMES

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### Dvor Trakoscan, Croatia

Set within the rolling landscape of northern Croatia, Dvor Trakoscan (Trakoscan Castle) offers a glimpse into the country's historical and cultural heritage.

Located just over an hour from Zagreb, the 13th-century castle rises above a lake and its surroundings, creating a setting that feels elegantly removed from the pace of the country's capital.

Now operating as a museum, the castle preserves a series of historic interiors that reflect the life of the Draskovic family who once resided there. Furnishings, artefacts and architectural details provide insight into centuries of regional history, while the surrounding protected landscape offers the opportunity for exploration on foot.

## What changed beyond the visual identity?

The most important outcome is that the new identity created a platform for continued change. It gave the museum a clearer voice and a more flexible visual system, but it also changed the way the team can think about communication.

### Recognition:

- Bronze Award at the A' Design Award & Competition for the new logo / visual identity.
- The international cultural collaboration behind "Who is marrying whom?" received the annual award of the Croatian National Committee of ICOM in 2025.
- Dvor Trakošćan strengthened its international museum network and professional visibility during 2025.

### The broader institutional result:

The rebranding became an integral part of the museum's wider strategic development, supporting stronger visibility, audience engagement and a more consistent public presence across channels.

This matters because the rebrand did not sit outside the institution's strategy. It became part of how the museum pursued its wider mission: preserving heritage, improving access, developing audiences, strengthening professional networks and increasing national and international visibility.



## A new chapter for a place with centuries of stories.

The rebranding of Dvor Trakošćan was never about replacing heritage with modernity. It was about making heritage easier to enter, understand, share and experience.

By combining a distinctive new identity with a broader transformation of digital communication, PR, content, exhibitions and audience engagement, Trakošćan has created a stronger foundation for its next chapter as a contemporary museum.

The castle stayed the same. The conversation changed.

### The lasting change:

A historic museum now has a contemporary brand system capable of carrying its heritage into new contexts — without losing the visual and cultural cues that make Trakošćan unmistakably itself.

The project is ongoing. The identity is designed as a flexible system rather than a fixed endpoint, able to evolve with new exhibitions, programmes, partnerships, digital formats and audiences while maintaining a recognisable connection to Trakošćan.