Zagreb Art Donations On-line

Summary
Since 1946, 27 art collections have been donated to the City of Zagreb. This unique phenomena has to be stressed as an example of good cultural policy and creative attitude towards cultural heritage management. A brief overview of these donations and its present accessibility will be given. The collections consist of almost 13,000 items - sculptures, drawings, paintings, objects of arts and crafts. The problem how to make them visible as part of Zagreb art heritage has to be solved by using common database for all range of objects that form donations and delivering information making on-line public access catalogue. The example of Dr Josip Kovačić bequest of paintings by Croatian women painters born in 19th century will be presented. At the web address http://www.donacijezg.mdc.hr one can access to all of the artworks donated by Josip Kovačić and make search by the name of artist, techniques and themes. Short biographies of 33 lady painters and the profile of the collector are also available. This site is a good model how to manage all other donations and accomplish the basic goal - reach wide audience.

Zagreb is not only considered the cultural centre of Croatia due to its status as the capital, but also because of the cultural climate created primarily by its citizens. Even if there have not been noticeably large or important steps in culture taken by the ruling structures of the city, we can see how contributions made by individuals have been leaving their mark on the city for years now. Examples of this kind of phenomenon are gifts of artistic, cultural-historical
and ethnographic collections, family archives and libraries to the city of Zagreb.* There are few cities in the world to which so much has been given by its citizens with so much affection and love. Donations are to be found everywhere, entrusted to establishments which deal directly with heritage: libraries, museums, archives and institutions.

Apart from that, often the very spaces in which the donors lived are bequeathed, most often buildings with cultural and historical value. In this way, a fine network of small cultural oases is gradually being built, each of which emanates the spirit of the owner, his or her preferences and artistic tastes, passions and affinities.

In the last fifty years, ever since the practice of donations became commonplace, the City of Zagreb has been enriched by 27 collections, of which 6 are of an environmental-memorial nature. Together they comprise about 13,000 objects, or 39,000 including library volumes.* The city has created a highly defined and established procedure for the receipt of donations, and we can expect that this number will only increase.

Specialists within the City have endeavoured to ensure that all information relating to the issue of donations can be found on the official web pages of the City of Zagreb at www.zagreb.hr. In the section “Culture”, under “The Museums and Galleries” there is detailed information on “The Donation of Art Collections to the City of Zagreb”. Apart from a list of donors and a brief description of each donor, information on the cultural policy relating to donorship can be found, along with the procedures for receipt, and information concerning upkeep of donations.*
Accessibility of donations

In order for donations to be adequately cared for and protected, and also to ensure that collections are expertly prepared and presented, we look to museums and other heritage institutions as the most competent authorities for collections management, and which are thematically related to hosting exhibitions. Thus, the Museum of the City of Zagreb has received the largest number of donations (7, with two under preparation); followed by the Museum of Arts and Crafts (3 + 1 under preparation); the Ethnographic Museum (1+1), and Klovićevi dvori (1). The Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the School of Music and the Centre for Artistic Education also number as recipients.

The question arises as to how all these institutions carry out one of the functions for which they are responsible, and that is ensuring accessibility to the public.

There are several modes of presentation:

- In situ, i.e. in the original space portraying the story of the collection and the donor. Since most collections and the spaces in which they are to be found are usually in poor condition and are still awaiting cleaning and adaptation to the requirements of visitors, only 5 collections are...
open to the public to date. (Richter, Krleža, V. Kovačić, Schneider, Kljaković). However, due to various objective and subjective problems within museums, these collections are only open one day a week for between two and six hours. Analysis has shown that the number of visitors is exceptionally low.
The building at no.23 (formerly Tucšanc 6A, Barone sofa, Jelačič Square 1) was constructed in the second quarter of the 19th century for the baroness of the same name. It was originally designed to accommodate a retail store on the ground floor and houses. It was later owned by Štefan Špilak, a famous Zagreb architect and the son-in-law of Countess Barone. The building has been restored over the years and is now occupied by the Zagreb municipal museum.

The Villa Rešov

Behind the double guarded door is Bela’s little room (the yellow salon as it was also called), a room that (as it was originally the “room of the first moment”) Bela, a great theatre director, used to use for meetings, which he used to host for various artists, for example, the family of Erinta, which was then the most famous art festival of the time. Today, the room is used for various cultural events and exhibitions.

The entrance to the Villa is the large door on the right side of the building. The main entrance is through the large front door, which leads to the main hall. The hall is decorated with beautiful frescoes and has a large fireplace. The hall is used for various cultural events and exhibitions.
The Collection and Flat of the Architect Viktor Kovačić

Maksandra 31, Zagreb, tel. 01/45-911
Open Thursdays from 10 to 17

- Hall
- Dining Room
- Room for work and conversation
- Bedroom
- Kitchen
- Viktor Kovačić

The Collection and Flat of the renowned Croatian architect Viktor Kovačić (1874 – 1926) constitutes a unique and easily recognizable example of the life style of the early 20th century and mirrors the spirit of the times. One of the very few preserved centers of this kind, this flat, the architect actually designed for his own residence. Thanks to Mrs. Teretza Kovačić (1891 – 1986), who, years after her husband’s work, took care of the memorial, the ambience of the flat, including the original furniture, have been preserved. The flat and the inventory in the city of Zagreb in 1993, Mrs. Kovačić wanted it to house a memorial collection to celebrate the work of Viktor Kovačić and the atmosphere of his times more accessible to the coming generations.

Bedroom

This, the largest room in the flat, faces south; it is furnished in the Edwardian style. In the centre of the room is a large bed, and opposite the window is the desk, which is a small black table with an open drawer. The upper drawer, which is fitted, can be turned into a writing box. On top of the
- As part of the permanent exhibition of a museum, where the collection is presented either as a unit (here, the donor can be fully acknowledged); or distributed within other collections, depending on the concept of the museum (in this case the name of the donor appears only on the object's description card).
Virtual presentation. Here it must be emphasised that in almost all cases the objects are presented on the web sites of museums where basic information about donations is also given.
Initiatives

Considering that the problem of access to donations can at least partly be solved using new information technologies, the Museum Documentation Centre has, in conjunction with the City Office for Culture, begun an internet project entitled “Donations to the City of Zagreb”. The project consists of the creation of a pictorial and textual database of all donated items, the creation of a virtual panorama of the collection and/or space, and a portrait or biography of the author. Databases of museum objects will be searchable by several categories, depending on the specific importance of the object and the possibilities for its contextualisation.

This approach has not only been taken in order to increase use and access, but also makes use of the capabilities of digital media to present even those aspects of items which cannot be allowed by actual museums, most often due to security issues, and sometimes is the only possible means of display.
Example

The donation by Dr Josip Kovačić of “Croatian Women Painters Born in the 19th Century” was the first donation to be prepared in this way. The classic computer application for museum collections, M++, was used. M++ is now used by 57 Croatian museums. For this development a special web application was used, which takes data from the program for the creation of museum collections and transforms it into data which can be viewed on web pages. The advantage of this concept is that it is possible to later increase the amount of content, and to manage the content in such a way as to select what will be shown on the pages at any given time.

Clearly, on public internet pages, not all data which is entered into the application for preparing collections is shown. The web application enables one to choose which information suits the concept of the web pages, and creates new sets of data which will only be shown only on the web pages.

On the web pages http://www.donacijegz.mdc.hr/ almost all the functionality of the application has been used, including the search facility and various options for showing objects. In this way, it is possible to search for objects by name, description or biography of the artist. The object itself is displayed by name, basic description and a photograph which can be enlarged step by step. Subjects are also interconnectable so that when a picture is displayed, the biography of the artist can also be called up, and vice versa – when a biography is displayed, all of the artist’s pictures can be shown. A suitable place is also provided for the details of the donor. A selection of photographs, a short video and audio recording of his speech were used to create an exceptionally personal portrait of Mr Kovačić.
Dr. Josip Kovačić's Bequest

Croatian women painters born in 19th century

DIGRAPHIES | WORKS | ABOUT DR. JOSIP KOVACIĆ
Dr. Josip Krošić's collection of paintings done by Croatian women painters is an exceptional bequest, a whole collection of works of various origins, but of a unique conceptual level. The collected Croatian women's paintings, produced in the capital cities of Zagreb and in Osijek, have succeeded in conveying their personal idea about painting being their vocation at least in one period of their life.

The variety of their painting styles is noticeable and reflects the time when the works were created, so we can easily follow the history of the events and trends in modern European art at the end of the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century.

**THE MOST OUTSTANDING WORKS FROM THE BEQUEST**

- **APPLES**
  - Dora Ćurcic

- **GARDEN**
  - Željka Velčić - Hubar

- **GARDEN WITH LILIES**
  - Zora Pauzner

- **IN THE PARK**
  - Cara Engels Hubar
Biographies

[Image of a webpage with a grid of portraits and text in Croatian]

Croatian women writers of the 19th century

[Names and images of writers listed]
Biographies

Slava Raškaj

1877
1996

Biography: Slava was born and raised in Zagreb, where she attended the Institute for the Deaf and Mute. She was recognized for her artistic talent at a young age, and was later introduced to the Society of Croatian Artists. In 1999, Slava returned to Croatia, and in the same year she was introduced to Zlatko, whom she married. After the birth of their daughter, Slava's paintings began to reflect a new direction, introducing the paintings demonic motives from the deepest layers of the subconscious. No art historian has yet dared to interpret Slava Raškaj's later works from the esoteric point of view, i.e. by correlating the irrational and mysterious spheres with her genius. She died in the State Mental Institution, after spending there 2 years, 9 months and 11 days.
Conclusion

The perspectives of this form of exhibiting donations and donors are great, especially if donations which have not so far been exhibited are prepared in this way. An internet exhibition is a space for acquainting the Croatian and international public with this type of content.

With this kind of project, the cultural and tourist potential of a given place can be increased, enabling the public to get better acquainted with this or similar kinds of content, as well as with cooperation on future projects.

Notes:


2. Veljko Mihalić “Art Collections Donated to the City of Zagreb”. Muzeologija 32, 1995, pp. 82-108.
3. The author of the page is an expert advisor on donations and the conservation of cultural objects in the Veljko Mihalić City Office for Culture.
