



## **ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF THE NOBILITY BETWEEN OLD AND NEW REGIMES:**

### **TRANSFORMATIONS, REINTERPRETATIONS AND NEW USES**

#### **International conference**

Ljubljana, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU)

23–24 June 2022

**Call for papers, deadline for the submission of paper abstracts: 15 December 2021**

The significance of the nobility as artistic trendsetters, promoters of new artistic styles, meceneas and patrons has manifested and mostly been generally acknowledged throughout history. However, in historical perspective, the process of their decline as a social class has been in progress ever since the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century. What was initially a slow process, which enabled the elites to adjust to their declining influence, and was reflected mildly if at all in their artistic commissions and patronage, intensified in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It first culminated in the 1789 French revolution, continued during Napoleon's invasion and then throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Revolutions and subsequent invasions resulted in the plunder and looting of aristocratic property, its depositing and subsequent musealisation. While in Russia, the fate of the nobility was determined in the revolution of 1917, in the Habsburg territories, the most significant historical milestones were the abolition of serfdom in 1848 and the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, with the former resulting in decreasing estates (and consequently sales of residences) and the latter in the abolition of noble titles in the newly- formed successor countries. The radical agrarian and tax reforms in some of the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy, such as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), Czechoslovakia and Hungary, highly affected the financial and social position of the nobility, frequently resulting in increasing debts, and the sales and export of properties (including artworks and art collections). During the Second World War, especially in the post-war communist states, the mass appropriation and confiscations of aristocratic heritage occurred.

The main objective of this conference is to address how the social and political circumstances that contributed to and accompanied the nobility's decline influenced their role as trendsetters and patrons and also how they affected the reception of their artistic and architectural legacy. How did the events outlined above affect the nobility's commissions and artistic productivity at the time? The changes in social structure involved the growing influence of the new, systemised nobility from the strata of state officials and the military. How did newly-nobilitated, often highly ambitious individuals, contribute to artistic creativity and production? Did their commissions differ from those of the old and established noble houses, and, if yes, how? How did the nobility respond to the increasing influence of the bourgeoisie as patrons? Revolutions in France and the Napoleonic wars resulted in the emigration of the nobility to the Habsburg Monarchy. How did the newly- settled nobles integrate into their new communities and what legacy did they leave as commissioners, patrons and collectors? What was the role of the new and the established nobility in the adopting of new residential types and styles in architecture, interior design and residential furnishings in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and long 19<sup>th</sup> century (such as neo-styles, orientalism, Asian styles)? Moreover, we encourage topics regarding aristocratic collections, such as the adopting of new collecting trends vs. the retaining and adapting of old family collections, questions of the fragmentation of aristocratic collections (often due to inheritance or sales of estates), and topics related to the dispersal

of noble collections between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We wish to discuss and compare the aspects of varying, often increasingly negative attitudes towards aristocratic heritage and its fate in the new political regimes (such as mass sales, export, safeguarding, plunder, appropriations and confiscations, degradation). And, finally, we wish to address the ways in which it has been reinterpreted, protected and its new uses.

**The topics may include but are not limited to the following:**

- Commissions and patronage of the old aristocratic houses and of newly-nobilitated families around and after the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Visual representations of the nobility.
- Collections and collecting practices of nobility after the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Sales, transfers and dispersal of aristocratic art collections.
- Trading objects of aristocratic heritage.
- Reconstructions of noble collections based on archival sources (interior photographs, inventories).
- New architectural commissions of the nobility in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the long 19<sup>th</sup> century and the usage of new styles (historicistic, oriental, Asian) in architecture and interior furnishing.
- Renovations or adaptations of aristocratic residential buildings in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- New institutionalised uses and presentation of castles and manors; the role of organised heritage protection in their preservation.
- Aristocratic heritage and its fate during and after the revolutions and wars.
- Musealisation of aristocratic heritage.
- Visualisation of the nobility and their historical role in the post-WWI and post-WWII art.

We welcome researchers at all stages of their careers, and especially encourage young scholars. Please submit proposals for approx. 20-minute papers in English consisting of: a title and short abstract not exceeding 250 words; a short CV of maximum one page to the conference e-mail address [cfp.uifs@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:cfp.uifs@zrc-sazu.si), by **15 December 2021**. The selection will be made by 7 January 2022.

Speakers will be invited to publish papers in a joint thematic volume of the peer-reviewed journal *Acta historia artis Slovenica* (for the journal, which is indexed in Scopus and ERIH PLUS, see <https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/ahas>). For all information, please contact either the above email address or [tina.kosak@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:tina.kosak@zrc-sazu.si).

## **Organizers**

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The conference is a part of research project “Art and Nobility in Times of Decline: Transformations, Translocations and Reinterpretations” (Slovenian Research Agency, J6-1801), which since July 2019 has been conducted at the ZRC SAZU, France Stele Institute of Art History, in cooperation with ZRC SAZU, Milko Kos Historical Institute and University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Civil Engineering, Transport Engineering and Architecture.