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Foto: R. Maric

## EXHIBITIONS IN CROATIA

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For many years now I have tried to persuade curators of exhibitions in Croatia to send in good time information about their exhibitions of international interest for possible inclusion in “Listings” of the major monthly art publications in this country. In these “Listings”, exhibitions around the world are presented by country and then by city. Croatia is rarely included and it appears that nothing of interest happens in our country as far as the arts are concerned. I feel very sorry about it.

For example, some years ago, there was an exhibition on Giulio Clovio, 1498 – 1578, held at the Gallery Klovićevi Dvori in Zagreb. Exhibitions on Giulio Clovio, worldwide, are rare. Sadly, there was no notice of this important exhibition showing in Zagreb in any of the art publications in this country. Reviews of catalogues of exhibitions, past or present, are also a valuable source of information, but this does not seem to happen either.

This year, 2021, there are exhibitions of international interest being organised in Croatia. In Rijeka, which was the joint City of European Culture in 2020, an exhibition on



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Niccolò di Giovanni Fiorentino, St. Jerome from the chapel of Blessed John from Trogir, c. 1480

Gustav Klimt is being held at the time of writing, pandemic conditions permitting, until end of October 2021. Gustav Klimt, 1862 – 1918, Austrian symbolist painter and the most prominent member of the Vienna Secession Movement, was commissioned by the architects of the National Theatre and Opera House in Rijeka, Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer, to paint nine large canvases for their theatre. These canvases, of which three were painted by Gustav Klimt and the others in collaboration with his brother Ernst and painter Franz Matsch, were recently taken down from their original positions for the first time since their installation in 1885. The conservators in Rijeka gave the canvases a thorough conservation treatment and they are now exhibited in the City Museum of Rijeka, under the title: “UNKNOWN KLIMT – LOVE, DEATH, ECSTASY”. In November 2020, the City Museum of Rijeka moved into one of the grand baroque, Austro-Hungarian buildings. Known as the “Sugar Refinery Palace” and built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Sugar Factory has been rebuilt and it is now the City Museum and an arts and culture hub in Rijeka.

The June issue of the APOLLO Magazine, in their On-Line pages, published a review, written by Lea Vitezić, about this important exhibition, bringing Croatia into



BAŠTINA





The exhibition on St Jerome in the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments, Split





The Art of The Slavonian Nobility: Masterpieces of European Heritage

focus and drawing attention to Rijeka's history and the arts scene. The full article about this exhibition can be found on our website, [www.croatianmonuments.org](http://www.croatianmonuments.org). In Split, an exhibition devoted to St Jerome, born c. 347 AD in Stridon, Dalmatia, died in Betlehem in 420 AD, the Patron Saint of Dalmatia, celebrates the 1600s anniversary of his death. This was marked in Croatia last year by conferences and symposia and now, a year later, a tribute is paid to St Jerome by the exhibition, "CULTURE OF THE RENAISSANCE IN THE SIGN OF ST JEROME". This was held at the Museum of Croatian Archeological Monuments. It opened at end of April until end of June 2021. There are multiple images of St Jerome along the Dalmatian coast and, indeed, if it had not been for the pandemic, an important "Tourist Trail" of works of art devoted to St Jerome, the saint who translated the Bible into Latin and, it is believed in many quarters, who also devised the Glagolitic Script, could have been a fitting tribute to his memory. St Jerome is also the patron saint of the Franciscan friars in Croatia, with the main seat in Zadar. In Rome, the Saint Jerome Church and its adjacent Pontifical Croatian College of St Jerome has been active for centuries in the education of Croatian priests. In Venice, in the Scuola degli Schiavoni, there are paintings representing scenes from life of St Jerome by Vittore Carpaccio.



In the words of the curator of the exhibition, Dr Josip Belamarić: “The exhibition charts the rapid spread of the cult of St Jerome in Dalmatia during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. A range of art works are on display, some of which can be counted among the most significant examples of their kind in Croatian Renaissance art (Gentile Bellini, Andrea Aleši, Nicollò di Giovanni Fiorentino, among others)”. The exhibition was well attended, in spite of the pandemic, and its short duration is explained by lack of funding, mainly due to high insurance costs.

Anna Somers Cocks OBE, our trustee and founder of The Art Newspaper, wrote an article about this exhibition and St Jerome in the On-Line pages of the July issue of The Art Newspaper. This can also be read on our website, [www.croatian-monuments.org](http://www.croatian-monuments.org).

In Zagreb, an exhibition of works by Raphael Sanzio, 1483 – 1520, was held at the Museum of Arts and Crafts, one of many exhibitions around the world devoted to this great artist to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Some of these exhibitions, as in the National Gallery in London, had to be cancelled/postponed due to the pandemic.

Also in Zagreb, an exhibition entitled, “THE ART OF THE SLAVONIAN NOBILITY: MASTERPIECES OF EUROPEAN HERITAGE”, was held at the Gallery Klovićevi Dvori from April to July this year. Works of art were obtained from galleries and individuals from Croatia and from the neighbouring countries, accompanied by various events. The exhibition presented collections of 12 aristocratic families from Slavonia. It also drew attention to the precarious state of the buildings which once housed these collections and the need for their restoration as they could represent a great cultural potential for eastern Croatia.

In the Glyptothèque, the Museum of Casts, of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, in Zagreb, an exhibition, THE SCULPTURE OF ANTIQUE SALONA, showing examples from their own holdings, was held during June and July 2021. As I will be reporting in my Progress Report 2021, our Trust has contributed to the cost of restoration of four of their plaster casts and two of these are shown at this exhibition. The Glyptothèque suffered major damage in the earthquake of March 2020 when more than 350 of their plaster casts were damaged or destroyed.

