

Revaluation of the plaster cast collections of of the Glyptotheque of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb

The Glyptotheque of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb is an institution unique in the Republic of Croatia, one that has the most systematically collected material of plaster casts of ancient sculpture as well as of the Croatian monumental sculptural heritage.

The Glypthoteque has several collections of casts, which present the major works of given individual periods, from Antiquity, pre-Romanesque, Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance, divided according to period or theme into several groups. There are plaster casts of ancient sculpture of the best known major works of Greek and Roman art acquired from the second half of the nineteenth century. Another group is that of plaster casts of fragments of immovable monuments of the Croatian cultural heritage from the pre-Romanesque to the Renaissance including major works from various sites in Croatia. The Collection of Plaster Casts of George of Dalmatia constitutes a separate unit in which the oeuvre of the most important Croatian builder and sculptor of the 15th century is shown, with casts from Ancona, Split, Pag island and Dubrovnik, as well as from St James' Cathedral in Šibenik, which is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Another unit contains plaster casts of stechaks, specific and unique monolithic medieval funerary monuments which is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2016.

The material listed will be shown in a context of its historical value, for conservation and restoration purposes and in the context of the technical methods used to make moulds and casts in our collections. The paper will show what functions do the plasters have in our museum collection and their role and purpose throughout history. The traditional presentation of the collections was founded on the scholarly disciplines of history, archaeology or art history, so as to be able to present, for educational purposes, the development of sculpture between Antiquity and the Renaissance. The earthquakes in 2020 in Zagreb and its surroundings was unfortunately, unique experience and a generator of changes. The paper presents a valuable experience after the earthquake with the aim of raising awareness of endangered cultural heritage and the importance of its preventive protection, as well as the necessity of revaluation of museum activities. Therefore, we have started creating plans for the future renovation of the museum complex, as well as plans for new modernized permanent exhibits. The present paper aims to indicate the way in which the focus could be taken off just one scholarly discipline in the presentation of the cast collections so that they can be presented interdisciplinarily. Plans have been made for a new contemporary museological setup, which includes diverse forms for the communication and interpretation of the sculptural heritage of plaster casts.

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