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**ARTISTIC HERITAGE ON PAPER - THE PRINT
COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY IN ZAGREB**

Abstract

The paper gives a short introduction to the Print Collection of the National and University Library in Zagreb, which forms part of the Special Collections Department. The uniqueness of this extremely rich heritage collection is owed primarily to the fact that it consists of paper-based art works created by Croatian and foreign artists, which have a great artistic value. In addition, the Collection also includes visual materials of documentary significance. Diverse materials consisting of prints, drawings, posters, print portfolios, postcards and the like, constitute the rich cultural heritage of the Library and Croatia. In its nearly century-old existence, the Print Collection has become the largest collection of pictorial material on paper in Croatia. It collects, protects documents, provides access and enables the use of non-book visual material. Digitization and the presentation of the material on the Web, as a modern way of communication with users, has also been actively carried out by the Collection's staff.

Keywords: Print Collection, library, procurement, processing, prints, drawings, postcards, posters, users, art

The Print Collection of the National and University Library in Zagreb is a special unit which, together with the Collection of Manuscripts and Old Books, Maps Collection and Music Collection, constitutes the Library's Special Collection Department. What differentiates the Print Collection from the others is its legal status of a museum unit that forms part of an institution, in this case a library. As such, it carries out museological functions of collecting, preserving, researching and communicating artistic material, primarily paper-based works of art. These include drawings, original prints, posters, but also postcards and book jackets. The amount and significance of the material makes this collection the biggest, but also the oldest print collection in the country.

FOUNDATION OF THE COLLECTION

The Print Collection was founded in 1919 as a special unit within the library on the recommendations of the Religion and Education Committee. The committee representatives, canons of the Zagreb Chapter, University Library's director and Artur Schneider as Zagreb University's representative were joined by artists Menci Clement Crnčić, Ljubo Babić and Tomislav Krizman in supporting the foundation of the collection. The first head of the collection was Dr Artur Schneider, an art history professor at the University of Zagreb.



Tomislav Krizman, Self-portrait, 1908

In the early 20th century, the University Library contained a large amount of art-related material such as drawings and prints, which was indicative of the need to form a special department that could be dedicated to safeguard appropriately this specific material by respecting the contemporary regulatory framework for its research, documentation and preservation.



Fischer von Erlach, Johann Bernhard. Brücke und Mausoleum Hadrians, before 1712.

The art works that were at the time housed at the library included works of French and Austrian print makers, draftsmen and architects.¹ Among individual sheets found in the library's storage spaces, special attention should be given to the drawings of Austrian Baroque architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach that became part of the Print Collection. Erlach's works represent an extraordinary series of 79 pencil and ink wash drawings of relatively large formats created as models for the engravings in the book *Entwurff Einer Historischen Architectur*. The drawings were being made during a twenty-year period – the oldest drawing dates back to 1688 while all of them were completed by 1712.

1 Mikica Maštrović, "Povijest Grafičke zbirke NSK" in *Od Klovića i Rembrandta do Warhola i Picelja : izložba povodom 90. obljetnice Grafičke zbirke Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu: Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 8. prosinac 2009. – 31. siječanj 2010* (Zagreb: Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica u Zagrebu, 2009), 21.

One part of the initial holdings was, in addition to the aforementioned material, formed by a large donation of the Collection's founders – Ljubo Babić, Menci Clement Crnčić and Tomislav Krizman, which constituted the basis for the subsequent collection of prints and drawings by Croatian artists.

The first comprehensive overview of the material in the Collection was written by Artur Schneider, its first head², and published in the *Narodna starina journal*. He stated that in the twenty years of its existence, the Collection had obtained almost all works created by Yugoslav print makers, a large number of historical portraits and a considerably big specialized reference library.

The original location of the Collection was in Rudolf Lubynsky's beautiful Secessionist building constructed in 1913, where it first occupied the space of one and later two rooms. The storage and workspace also served for small-scale displays. The material was kept in storage cabinets surmounted by display cases, the latter of which had been designed and made in the same period as the building and its remaining furnishings.

The relocation to a new building in the late 20th century brought the Collection an adequate amount of workspace, several storage areas and a large reading room. Valuable print material has systematically and carefully been preserved and documented. A large part of the holdings has been digitally catalogued and is accessible online. Computer-based documentation is done in the Aleph library system that integrates MARC21-format for machine-readable cataloguing of primarily books and book-related material. Drawings, prints, print portfolios, exhibition catalogues and referential literature have all been entirely documented. Postcards and posters are currently in the process of digital documentation, which, due to a large quantity of the material, requires considerable amounts of time.

In close collaboration with the Library's Preservation and Storage Department, the material of the Collection regularly undergoes preventive and curative care and it is stored in spaces with constant control and maintenance of adequate microclimate conditions.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOLDINGS

In the course of years, the Collection's holdings have been extensively growing and systematically developed through purchase and donation. In the 1960s, the Collection grew owing to a large number of posters and postcards that were delivered as legal deposit, while in the subsequent period old and valu-

2 Artur Schneider, "Grafička zbirka Kr. sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu," *Narodna starina*, vol. 10, No. 25, 1931. 107–110.

able ones were acquired through purchase and donation. In addition, the Collection was enlarged by print portfolios and bookplates.

Today, the Collection acquires material through purchase, donation, less often through exchange and legal deposit, the last of which relates only to postcards and posters. The key criterion for the acquisition of original (authorial) art works, primarily drawings and prints, but also artistic posters, has been their artistic value. The primacy has given to the works that can be related in various ways to Croatia, the origin of the artist, Croatian territory and people. In other words, the collection policy relates to works of artists born and living in Croatia, but also foreign artists who depict in their works Croatian cities and nature, people living in Croatia and important events from the country's history.

In addition to artistic value, the Print Collection acquires works that have documentary value, such as old prints illustrating battle scenes, folk costumes, and portraits of famous and less known personalities.

HOLDINGS OF THE PRINT COLLECTION

In terms of the amount of collected and safeguarded material, this is the biggest collection of its kind in Croatia. The majority of artists who used to work or are currently active in Croatia have been represented by artworks in the Collection's holdings. In order to ensure bigger efficiency in terms of policy implementation and organisation of work, the material is divided into smaller subcollections, namely the subcollections of prints by Croatian artists, drawings by Croatian artists, prints by foreign artists, drawings by foreign artists, posters, postcards, print portfolios and bookplates

The oldest work of art in the holdings, forming part of the Subcollection of Prints by Foreign Artists, is a woodcut depicting the city of Geneva, which was created in the late 15th century by Michael Wolgemut. The oldest postcard in the holdings, mailed in 1886, shows part of the Arth-Riga railway track. It is interesting to note that the two oldest items in the Collection are both related to Switzerland.

SUBCOLLECTION OF PRINTS BY CROATIAN ARTISTS

This section contains works by most notable Croatian artistic personalities from the 16th century to the present day. Special mention should be made of two very talented artists of Croatian origin who worked in the 16th century – Andrija Medulić and Martin Rota Kolunić.



Andrija Medulić, Christ, 1548-1550

Andrija Medulić is represented with fifteen etchings from the Christ and Twelve Apostles cycle. Engravings made by Martin Rota Kolunić, namely Portrait of Emperor Ferdinand I and Massacre of the Innocents attest to his extraordinary skill in this medium.



Martin Rota Kolunić, Ferdinand I, 1575

Printmaking as a means of artistic expression, whether intaglio or relief, enabled artists to express and convey their own world views onto a piece of paper. Numerous 19th- and 20th-century artists used printmaking and its potential of producing multiple copies without compromising the artistic authenticity in order to reach their public.

These artists include: Menci Clement Crnčić, Josip Račić, Miroslav Kraljević, Oskar Herman i Milivoj Uzelac, Vilko Gecan, Marijan Trepše, Mirko Rački, Krsto Hegedušić, Ivo Šebalj, Ivan Lovrenčić, Ivan Lacković Croata, Edo Murtić, Miroslav Šutej and contemporary artists such as Zdenka Pozaić, Nevenka Arbanas, Maja Franković, Mirjana Vodopija.



Crnčić, Menci Clement. Fishermen, 1902

SUBCOLLECTION OF DRAWINGS BY CROATIAN ARTISTS

This subcollection contains works of almost all artists who left an indelible mark in Croatia's art history. As in the case of prints, drawings date from the 16th century to the present day. They were made in a multitude of drawing techniques (pencil, ink, pastel, charcoal, watercolour) and genres (portraiture, nudes, landscapes, cityscapes or the so-called vedute, abstract art etc.). Drawing styles vary from sometimes a mere sketch or croquis to elaborate and minute drawings, or sets of fine lines that multiply and create different forms depicting either real or imaginary worlds.

Among Croatian draftsmen especially deserving of attention is miniaturist Julije Klović who was called by his contemporaries the Michelangelo of miniature drawing, which can be attested by his works such as Madonna with the Sleeping Child, St. Joseph and St. John the Baptist, the latter two of which were modelled in red chalk on Michelangelo's works.



Julije Klović, Virgin Mary with sleeping Jesus, St. Joseph and John the Baptist, 1540

Within the body of works by older generations of artists, special mention should be made of Conrad Hugo von Hoetendorf, a painter of the 18th-century circle of Osijek-based painters whose drawing forms the very basis of the Collection since it is the first entry on the inventory register. Ivan Zaslavski is a famous 19th-century artists, whose drawing of Jurjaves Park (the present Maksimir Park), a minute depiction of the park's beauty, is represented in the Collection with both drawings and the portfolios modelled on them.



Hugo Conrad von Hötendorf, Park, 1846

Drawings can be an individual work of art as well-rounded depictions of an artistic state but they can also be an initial thought that becomes another piece of art, elaborated on in another medium such as painting or print. The Collection safeguards both types of drawings. The following works, though equally important as others in the holdings, can provide an insight into the relevance of the Collection. These include the drawings Ljubo Babić created during his travels in Spain, children's book illustrations, portraits created by Miroslav Kraljević (artist's mother), Milivoj Uzelac (artist's wife), Tomislav Krizman (artist's wife) and a more recent watercolour by Munir Vejzović depicting Zagreb's Zrinjevac Park. The Collection holds the biggest number of cartoons created by painter and cartoonist Andrija Maurović, the most popular among which is *Grička vještica* (*Witch from Grič*), a cartoon inspired by the homonymous book by Marija Jurić Zagorka. The genre of caricature is represented by numerous drawings by Franjo Maixner such as illustrated jokes about Bobi and Rudi.



Andrija Maurović, *Witch from Grič*, 1960–1962

SUBCOLLECTION OF PRINTS BY FOREIGN ARTISTS

This subcollection contains works by foreign artists among who the most prominent are Giovanni Battista Piranesi, one of the most esteemed 17th-century print-makers who created a series of architectural interiors of imaginary prisons that is widely known as *Carceri d'invezione*; Katie Kolwitz, George Grossa and Max Pechstein. Especially attractive acquisition were two portraits by Rembrandt van Rijn, which although small in format, contribute greatly to the value of the Collection.

In addition to high-profile personalities, there are also works by less known artists whose works are in some way connected to Croatian people and territory, such as cityscapes and portraits of more or less prominent women and men.

A certain number of prints belong to the genre of book illustrations but they had been inappropriately taken out or even ripped out of books and kept as individual artworks. They include a beautiful 17th-century etching by Franz Hogenberg showing the city of Šibenik (originally created for his book titled *Civitates orbis terrarum*, vol.2 1572–1617), which was most probably modelled on Martin Kolunić Rota's prints. There are also prints depicting the cities of Petrinja and Sisak made by Georg Hoefnagel for the same book. This material can be challenging in terms of research because it needs to be explored from within the context of books and their original purposes.



Illustration 9. Franz Hogenberg, Sibinium, before 1617

Topics related to battles against the Ottomans, which form part of Croatia's history, are also represented in prints and they include, but are not limited to the Battle at Sisak, the Sultan Suleiman Bridge on the Drava River near Osijek, Nikola and Petar Zrinski, to name just a few most popular among the Collection's users.

There is a number of works that have yet to be identified through research but whose attribution is considerably facilitated by consulting professional literature and information published online.

SUBCOLLECTION OF PRINT PORTFOLIOS

Print portfolios are a group of prints by one or more artists created on a common topic and kept together as individual sheets within a folder, box or bound as a book. The Print Collection has in its holdings more than six hundred print portfolios, which is the largest number of that type of material collected by an institution or individual in Croatia. A certain number of them have been published by the NUL's Print Collection. They have been systematically collected since the 1960s. A special type of portfolios is the one that is jointly created by a poet and visual artist when they contribute to each other's artistic expression, printed images and verses, leaving thereby a joint mark of their cooperation.

Print and poetry portfolios are frequently published as books³ containing original prints or drawings signed by the artists. The visual significance of the portfolios, which lies primarily in the originality of the prints, and often drawings, makes them a specific type of publication that are known as bibliophilic editions. Special mention should be made of those print and poetry portfolios on whose sheets visual scene and poetic texts overlap; they are composed of intertwined, mutually complementing elements that create an effective visual whole through inseparable artistic expressions.



Maja Franković, *Book for the Colour Blind*, 1997

3 Tonko Maroević, "Autorski oslikana knjiga," *Bibliofilska izdanja Zbirke Biškupić: fundus Grafičke zbirke Nacionalne i sveučilišne biblioteke*, (Zagreb: Nacionalna i sveučilišna biblioteka, 1981), 9.

SUBCOLLECTION OF POSTERS

As a public medium that communicated information about events, commercial products, propagandistic messages and the like, poster are documents of cultural, sports, political and economic circumstances of the times in which they were made. The sheer number of posters in the Print Collection can provide an endless supply of information to various researchers. Theatre, political, music, sports and film are only some of the main topic that aroused the interest of artists and wishes to express themselves in this medium. Since they were primarily found in public spaces, they were visible and accessible to everyone, which helped in transmitting messages to passers-by.

A large number of artist tried out their skill in creating posters, among whom the most popular and well known were Frano Branko Angeli Radovani, Mirko Rački, Ferdo Bis, Otto Antonini, Andrija Maurović, Sergej Glumac, Mihajlo Arsovski, and have been Boris Bučan and Mirko Ilić.



Ferdo Ferdo, Film Festival – Pula, 1954

SUBCOLLECTION OF POSTCARDS

Postcards represent valuable sources of information about the past and form a considerable part of the Print Collection with approximately hundred and fifty thousand items depicting a wide range of motifs. Images on the postcards show numerous topics and motifs, though the most frequent ones are urban scenes, ei-

ther cityscapes or individual buildings such as train stations, post offices, or hotels. Other motifs include vacation sites, reproductions of artworks, portraits of different people, and elements of ethnic heritage. The subcollection also includes greeting cards for birthdays, Christmas, Easter and New Year and different other holidays. Among postcards, most numerous are those showing Croatian cities and towns and international cities, especially those printed in the so-called “golden age” of postcards in 1897–1918⁴. As has been mentioned previously in the text, the oldest postcard in the Collection was printed in Switzerland and was mailed in 1886.

Like any other visual material, postcards can be seen as historical records⁵ attesting to the existence and appearance of significant architectural and cultural monuments, people and customs and are, therefore, important for many researchers, historians, local heritage enthusiasts to whom old postcards can serve as evidence of the past times.



Old Building of the National and University Library, before 1927

COLLECTION OF BOOKPLATES

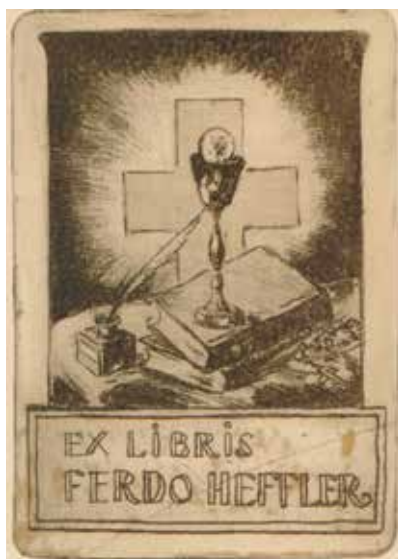
Bookplates, also called *ex libris* (Latin “from the books of”) are small prints on paper that are usually pasted on the first page of a book and they indicate the

4 Tonie and Valmai Holt, *Picture Postcards of the Golden Age: a collector's guide* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1971), 37; Krunoslav Leko, *Umijeće sakupljanja razglednica*, (Rijeka: Ex libris, 2015), 43.

5 Elisabeth K.Freyckshlag, “Picture Postcards: Organizing a Collection”, *Special libraries* vol.71, no.5/6, 259.

book's owner.⁶ Due to high quality of the visual motifs, bookplates can often have an artistic value. They are mostly prints created in techniques that can range from older - etching, engraving, woodcut - to more modern techniques – lithography and serigraphy.

Important artists who printed bookplates and whose works form part of the Collection include Milenko Gjurić, Ljubo Babić, Dragutin Renarić, Tomislav Krizman and contemporary artists such as Nevenka Arbanas, Zdenka Pozaić, Munir Vežzović, Hamo Čavrk, among others.



Dragutin Renarić, Ex libris Ferdo Heffler, 1934

A special mention should be made of bookplates donated by two collectors, bookplate enthusiasts. The first is historian Emilij Laszowski, who mostly collected bookplates created in the late 19th and early 20th century in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The other is Ignac Hogge, a collector of coins and postage stamps, and an admirer of small prints, within whose donation there are works by both Croatian and foreign artists. With their specific imagery and symbolism, bookplates speak about both the book owner and the artists who left their signatures in efforts to use visual means to represent the owner.

6 Josip Bratulić, *Hrvatski ex libris*, (Zagreb: Ex libris, 2007), 7.

COMMUNICATION WITH USERS

As source of information, the artistic material of the Collection is very useful and interesting to a large number of users, and in order to understand their needs⁷, it is important to learn more about them. Therefore, the Collection has been systematically gathering information about its users for years.⁸ They can roughly be divided into two groups:

1. Professionals and experts (people working at museums, galleries, libraries, members of the academic community such as professors and students)
2. General public.

This classification of users has formed the basis for the ways the Collection communicates with them. Sound two-way communication with users and efficient search of the material is a precondition for the satisfaction with the services the Collection offers.

First, there is direct communication, which entails providing access to original items. In cases of particular enquiries (for example, searching for prints that have a particular motif on them) users are asked a series of questions through an informal interview, which provides sufficient information and, in turn, facilitates the staff's search. Users mostly ask for access to originals for the purpose of research, both professional and scientific, but there are also individual and private reasons, for example research motivated by inheritance.

The most numerous users are experts, mostly in human and social sciences (art historians, architecture historians, historians, ethnologists) who either explore the original material for their professional and scientific work or use the referential library as a secondary source of information.

The Collection organises and puts on exhibitions, which is another way the material is communicated to users. Since, unfortunately, there is no specially equipped gallery, the main library hall and the reading room of the Collection often serve as spaces for temporary or small study exhibitions where only a fraction of the material can be shown. However, very often, the material is shown at exhibitions, both retrospective and thematic, organised by other Croatian institutions.

In addition to physical experience of the items from the Collections, users have access to online resources through the digital catalogue of the Library, searchable by different parameters (author/artist, title etc.), while somewhat more compre-

7 Andrew Roberts, "Dostavljanje informacija o zbirkama i korisnicima," *Muzeologija* 41/42 (2004/2005), 9.

8 Tamara Ilić Olujić, "Likovna građa na papiru i njezini korisnici u Grafičkoj zbirci NSK" in *Istraživanje korisnika baštine*, ed. Žarka Vujčić (Zagreb: Zavod za informacijske studije Odsjeka za informacijske i komunikacijske znanosti Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta, 2014), 78.

hensive access is provided on the Digital Library portal. Since 2016, when the portal was set up, the Print Collection has published information about works of art together with their photographs.

Currently, the biggest number of items published on the portal are postcards showing different scenes of Zagreb, which can be searched by street names, publishers and photographers. The Digital Library also contains other types of material (books, magazines, drawings, prints etc.), and one of the most important information in it relates to copyrights, namely whether the copyright was obtained from authors/artists or their heirs. The most important purpose of digitization is the protection of original material and the provision of access to a large number of people.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Artistic material is an infinite source of various types of information that needs to be described and appropriately presented. Connecting images and words, that is digitized art works and their information, and presenting them in various ways is crucial for establishing better relationship between heritage and its users.

In addition to being the oldest, the Print Collection is the biggest such collection in Croatia. It stands out amongst others by the significance of art works, variety of media and the span of time covered by the works that represent mostly Croatian artists but esteemed international masters as well.

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Summary

Artistic Heritage on Paper – the Print Collection of the National and University Library in Zagreb

The paper gives a short introduction to the Print Collection of the National and University Library in Zagreb, which forms part of the Special Collections Department. The uniqueness of this extremely rich heritage collection is owed primarily to the fact that it consists of paper-based art works created by Croatian and foreign artists, which have a great artistic value. In addition, the Collection also includes visual materials of documentary significance. Diverse materials consisting of prints, drawings, posters, print portfolios, postcards and the like, constitute the rich cultural heritage of the Library and Croatia. In its nearly century-old existence, the Print Collection has become the largest collection of pictorial material on paper in Croatia. It collects, protects documents, provides access and enables the use of non-book visual material. Digitization and the presentation of the material on the Web, as a modern way of communication with users, has also been actively carried out by the Collection's staff.

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