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## **IZIDOR KRŠNJAVI AND BEGINNING OF ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN ZAGREB IN THE 1880s**

### **ESTABLISHMENT AND WORK OF ARTS SOCIETY**

Already in 1868, Izidor Kršnjavi<sup>1</sup> made an official proposal to the authorities to establish an Arts Society (*Društvo umjetnosti*). After returning to Zagreb in the late 1870s, he found that his proposal had been accepted, although the society had not yet been set up. He decided to found it himself and he was duly elected leader. Count Buratti was elected president, the first professional historian Franjo Rački became the Vice President and Kršnjavi was also made the secretary. Later, Kršnjavi became the president, until the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918. The Society organized exhibitions and acquired works of art, but it also tried to create institutional support for new artists. Nevertheless, the main aim of the Society was to popularize art among a wider audience.

Main aims of the Society, by the official rules and regulations, were improvement of *national* art and artistic crafts, staging of exhibitions by local and foreign artists, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Izidor Kršnjavi (1845–1927) was the first chair of art history at the University of Zagreb. Previously he studied art history and philosophy in Vienna, and painting in Munich. He was closely connected with the Yugoslav circle around bishop Strossmayer. In the 1880s, he joined pro-Hungarian party of Ban (viceroy) Hedervary what enabled him to become minister of religious affairs and education in 1891. He was forced to resign in 1896, after Croatian students burnt Hungarian flag during Franz Joseph's visit to Zagreb. During his ministerial rule, he reformed secondary education and sponsored various artists. He continued to teach art history at the University and in 1906 joined Croatian Party of Right. He was one of the most prominent founders Arts Society, Arts and Crafts Museum and Crafts school.

moral and material support of young talented artists and craftsmen. Also, the Society wanted to protect the copyright of its members, to keep contacts between national and international artists and similar artistic societies, and to organize parties and popular lectures for the broader public.

Based on how much one paid, there were three different types of memberships: establishing member, regular member and participating member. Establishing members paid a fee of 100 or more forints and their membership was for life. They were also annually given original national works of art or good reprints from classical works. Other members could acquire artworks through regular lotteries which were organized by the Society. All members had the right to participate in regular meetings and a free family entrance to exhibitions organized by the Society.

Society's professional goals were, except aforementioned, exhibitions of artworks of older schools, acquisitions and orders of new artworks, gathering of graphical copies of famous paintings, mediation in selling, and establishing of art schools for the greater population. Owners of the artwork needed to pay a 5 % commission fee to the Society after artwork was successfully sold. The artistic committee of the Society made decisions on which works were to be bought. In case of a breakup of the Society, all works would be given to the Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Up until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, although situation may vary in different places, learned societies were exclusive organizations of higher nobility. Science for such aristocracy was in Rita Krueger's words «an alternate realm both separated from the dangers of modern political and social life and yet able to provide the solutions for political and social problems»<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, science was meant to cure and strengthen national community. The main topics discussed in such societies were questions of progress, national competitiveness and industrialization. Although the Arts Society was functioning in later period, the topics remained the same. Learned societies, including the Arts society, soon became arbiters of public knowledge and were asked to give an expertise on the questions of national importance<sup>3</sup>. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, learned societies started attracting the new upper middle class of university professors, archeologist and alike, which resulted in a less exclusive character of societies. As a result, learned societies became momentous places of social intersection where new class of professional academicians could establish social contacts with aristocracy and clergy, while hoping to acquire financing for excavation projects, printing of books, ordering artworks etc<sup>4</sup>.

Unlike exclusive learned societies, the Arts Society was inclusive from its beginnings. Croatian elites were less economically powerful than their Western counterparts resulting in a lack of learned societies in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Art Society was also a place of social intersection of younger generation of intellectuals and older generations of aristocrats and clergy. Clergy usually formed the core of the learned societies throughout

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<sup>2</sup> Krueger R. Czech, German, and Noble. Status and national identity in Habsburg Bohemia. Oxford, 2009. P. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Krueger R. Czech, German, and Noble. P. 94.

<sup>4</sup> MacGregor A. Forming an Identity: The early society and its context, 1707–51 // Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1707–2007 / Ed. by S. Pearce. London, 2007. P. 45; Sweet R. The incorporated society and its public role // Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries of London. London, 2007. P. 94.

Europe since they were usually better educated<sup>5</sup>. Such situation enabled intellectuals like Kršnjavi and Lacko Mrazović to use economic power of aristocrats and clergy such as barons Vraniczany, who allowed first art exhibition in his palace, and Josip Juraj Strossmayer<sup>6</sup>, who financed various projects and gave part of his collection of folk textiles and church inventory to the Arts and Crafts museum. Strossmayer also wanted to establish a gallery of his paintings collection, so he asked Kršnjavi to organize the gallery and the transportation of paintings from Đakovo. Kršnjavi's task was to interpret artworks by giving them meaning and importance. Therefore, the knowledge of art history was not only aesthetic, but also political.

In general, aristocrats in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had the tendency to transfer their collections from private houses to regional centers and capitals in order to make them more accessible to broader public. Consequently, collections gathering changed from individual curiosity and endeavor to collective research and preservation of national wealth, while newly formed institutions served to educate broader public. This led to the, as Rita Krueger put it, «public consumption of national culture and national myth»<sup>7</sup>. The main goal of such institutions was to show the continuity and longevity of the nation which could be preserved, portrayed and celebrated.

The first meeting of the Society was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 1879 and it numbered twenty six members, mostly from upper middle class, aristocrats and clergy. The first decision of the Society was to organize art and craft exhibitions to promote national art and craft products. Although Kršnjavi argued for autonomous development of art without any influence of external factors such as politics, he considered that art should be based on tradition. Therefore, art was seen as a material expression of the will and intellectual need of the people, similar to science: «One of the most important rules of historical style is traditional intellectual origin of artworks. We should never forget the main idea which is foundation of artwork... Art is not pure luxury, but similarly as science, an intellectual need of the people»<sup>8</sup>.

#### FIRST EXHIBITION

The first exhibition was organized from the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1879 to the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1880 in the palace of Baron Dragan Vraniczany in the Zagreb city center. The Arts Society sent calls to newspapers, various local organizations, and individuals calling to display their artifacts on exhibition. Exhibition was advertised in daily newspapers, although very briefly and after opening Kršnjavi and Mrazović started writing articles in order to describe exhibits and get people interested. Kršnjavi also held few lectures which were well received due to his excellent presentation skills.

The exhibition consisted of paintings, Herman Bolle's construction plans, sculptures, needlework, folk textiles, cast artworks, carpentry, turnery, pottery, glasswork and home

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<sup>5</sup> *Levine P. J. A.* The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, historians, and archaeologists in Victorian England 1838–1886. Cambridge, 2003. P. 48, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815–1905), bishop of Bosnia and Syrmia with seat in Đakovo. He was leader of Yugoslav circle arguing for federalization of the Monarchy and unification of Southern Slavs. He was also great sponsor of artists and scholars.

<sup>7</sup> *Krueger R.* Czech, German, and Noble. P. 162.

<sup>8</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Oblici graditeljstva u starom veku i glavna načela gradjevne ljepote. Zagreb, 1883. P. VII.

crafts. The main aim of the exhibition was to popularize arts and crafts in the wider society and educate it in «good» taste. Mrazović poetically explained in one of his articles on the exhibition in the journal *Vienac* that art is ennobling people, giving them freedom and elevating everyday life: «Art is important means to ennoble importance of people. Beauty educates and transforms people giving them freedom to be what they are»<sup>9</sup>. He continues by stressing the role of government in educating its citizens in aesthetics. However, Mrazović warns that people need to pay attention to other elements besides aesthetics, such as science, political life, and national autonomy: «Today rulers do not build palaces, raise monuments, and create art galleries, theaters, music institutes just to show their power, but because every rational government considers its duty to awake sense of beauty among its citizens. Nobody would want for some people to cherish only beauty and to neglect national autonomy, state life, civic freedom, scientific endeavor. It is impossible to exist without cherishing beauty, since it ennobles purport, soothes wilderness of passion, and raises people's thoughts above everyday existence to higher objectives»<sup>10</sup>.

Mrazović sees crafts as most important for the education of citizens because it is simpler than higher arts such as painting, sculpture and architecture; it is not only important as a first step in education of citizens' taste, but also because higher art developed from crafts. Mrazović's views are anti-elitist as he considers that art should be accessible to everybody like it was before being alienated. Therefore, people should start decorating their houses, flats, and surrounding areas after being aesthetically educated: «As if you do not give children works of Gundulić [baroque poet from Dubrovnik] and trigonometry to learn how to read and count, thus if you want to aesthetically educate peoples, you should not start by interpreting Capitoline Venus, Raphael's Madonnas or high art. You should start with artistic craft which was beyond any doubt harbinger of high art. Today everybody thinks that art should not be only luxury for elites, but it should become what it was previously — a need for everyone. How will art ever become need, unless we introduce it in our own living spaces?»<sup>11</sup>

In order to educate both citizens and artisans in good taste, Mrazović argued for a need to establish institutions like the first arts and crafts South Kensington Museum in London. The South Kensington Museum was organized to research and promote the collections of applied arts from whole British Empire. It was also needed to educate its citizens to the main rules of good taste and to promote the superiority of British products at international fairs and exhibitions. The main idea behind the project was that applied arts are an appropriate medium that can easily penetrate into households and integrate its people<sup>12</sup>.

Such institutions would help in developing technical skills and in establishing the prosperity of the nation. It would also establish generally accepted aesthetic rules in order to resist trendy fashion: «Governments, friends of art and artisans realized that they need to follow the South Kensington Museum, if they want technical arts not to lag behind and not to harm national prosperity. Such institutes strive to act both on producers and consumers to teach them what is good. Biggest archenemy of the reform is fashion, that invisible and inconceivable force, which proscribes us which cut or color should we wear, which furniture

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<sup>9</sup> *Mrazović L.* Umjetničko-obrtnička izložba u Zagrebu // *Vienac*. 1879. No. 50. P. 798.

<sup>10</sup> *Mrazović L.* Umjetničko-obrtnička izložba... P. 799.

<sup>11</sup> *Mrazović L.* Umjetničko-obrtnička izložba... P. 800.

<sup>12</sup> *Karim Rahman S.* Designing empire: Austria and the applied arts, 1864–1918. Ph. D. Dissertation. Berkley: University of California, 2010. P. 1–2.

or dishes should we buy. Fashion declares something to be ugly, stupid and of bad taste, for which it previously said to be nice and good»<sup>13</sup>.

In conclusion, Mrazović argues that local circumstances are worrying since craftsmen have no aesthetic taste or skills, and have turned to smaller importers of cheaper goods. The only way out from such a situation is to educate both craftsmen and consumers: «If we think about our local situation, sadness will grow in our hearts. Our craftsmen are mostly producing ugly products or do nothing, but have turned into merchants. They are ordering and selling goods which are usually being discarded from other countries and cities... So, neither craftsmen, nor consumer are educated enough, but if education goes in wrong direction, it will never find the right path itself. The only way to get education on the right path is by education and science»<sup>14</sup>.

Besides exhibitors from the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, there were also exhibitors from Vienna, Bohemia, Trieste, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is interesting to note how Kršnjavi considers the whole Monarchy as his homeland when writing memories on the exhibition: «...People were participating from Vienna, Bohemia, Trieste, Bosnia and other parts of our fatherland»<sup>15</sup>. Also, Zsolnay from Pecs in Hungary exhibited his majolica products. He was praised not only for the quality of the products, but also because he managed to establish highly successful family business. Two of his daughters finished the Craft school in Vienna and his son was sent to England to research craft production. Special attention was given to his products that were considered to be decorated in Croatian ornaments. This was used as an example to show how Croatian craft has great commercial potential, but is not being used due to negligence and nonchalance, which was used by *foreigners* to earn money: «The best products from Zsolnay's collection are the ones representing our peasant motifs. This crafts are rich spring, which is being used by foreigner, while we are letting it decline in negligence and nonchalance»<sup>16</sup>.

One of the most interesting collections to exhibition came from Vice-Consul Adolf Falkner from Livno in Herzegovina. He sent amateur works from silversmith Mato Todić and wood carver Sulejman Vrebac. Vrebac was a self-taught Muslim from Livno who became famous for his wood carving skills on smoking pipes, cutlery, walking sticks, and cigar boxes. For Kršnjavi, Vrebac and Todić were exceptions to the rule since he considered that talents are usually lost due to a lack of institutional support from places such as schools and museums. Although Kršnjavi was anti-Ottoman and anti-East oriented, he appreciated their «primitive» craft schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina. «Our people had very little use of Ottoman rule. Nevertheless, Turkish government recognized importance of crafts, so it erected numerous craft schools on different places. The schools are not subsidized institutes, but some paid craftsmen teaching the others his skills. This institutes are primitive, but still they are better than nothing. Museums and schools are necessary in order to keep skills from self-thought craftsmen»<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Mrazović L. Umjetničko-obrtnička izložba... P. 800.

<sup>14</sup> Mrazović L. Umjetničko-obrtnička izložba... P. 801.

<sup>15</sup> Kršnjavi I. Malo mojih uspomena [A bit of excerpts from my memories] (Hrvatski državni arhiv (further — HDA). Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.3.1. P. 15).

<sup>16</sup> Pajas F. Hrvatsko društvo umjetnosti i njegovo djelovanje od osnutka 1878. godine sve do konca 1917. godine. Zagreb, 1918. P. 29–30.

<sup>17</sup> Kršnjavi I. Malo mojih uspomena... (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.3.1. P. 26).

Vice-Consul Falkner commented that the lack of useful western influences can be seen in the artifacts he sent. Although Kršnjavi did not oppose western influence and civilizing mission of the Monarchy on the Balkan Peninsula, he believed art needed to stay autonomous: «Mister Falkner notices from the works he sent that western culture has not shone its useful rays there. Although it is nice and necessary for western culture to warm up the Balkan Peninsula, we are still fearing its influence on art. Western culture is poisoning, corrupting, and nay destroying advantages of our naïve, healthy folk art. Reformation and management of home crafts seeks high attention, unselfishness and skilled hands»<sup>18</sup>.

The main goal of the first exhibition was to show talent of Croatian artists and craftsmen to a wider audience and local governments, and that it should be preserved and reproduced with an establishment of the arts and crafts museum and school. The exhibition also wanted to stimulate artists and craftsmen to improve their skills in order to be able to compete with best products on the market, or as Kršnjavi wrote, «Our Croatian pride must be such that we must demand from our craftsmen to be equal to the best foreigners, similarly as we demand from our scholars and artists»<sup>19</sup>. In order to get the government interested in such projects, the Arts Society propagated economic benefits of local production both for society and economy. Such production would be of better quality and cheaper than imported goods from elsewhere. Although a main characteristic of the production would be autarkic, the best products would be also exported for commercial purposes. Also, there was assuredness among the organizers of the exhibition that folk art was rapidly vanishing and that institutions such as schools and museums are necessary to protect it from disappearance.

Besides financing of the museums and schools the role of the government was to support craft production by ordering products from local artisans and artists. Similarly, the clergy were expected to stimulate local production, especially by ordering objects like candlesticks, altars, or baptisteries. Clergy were also to be educated in good taste so they would know how to recognize good artwork.

Around 8800 people visited the exhibition, half of them for free as members of the society with families or exhibitors. Considering that the population of Zagreb was around 25,000 at the moment, the exhibition can be considered as a success. Also, the main goals of the exhibition were accomplished — establishment of the arts and crafts school and museum.

#### THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MUSEUM

One of the first aims of the Arts Society was to establish institutions which would research, preserve and develop further national culture. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, museums became centers of learning and collecting or in Douglas Hurt's words «they [museums] served as depositories, research centers, and educational institutions which enabled public to interpret the past through sight, touch, and inquiry»<sup>20</sup>. Collections were usually organized chronologically so the visitors had an impression of walking through the epochs of national history<sup>21</sup>. The main

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<sup>18</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Malo mojih uspomena... (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.3.1. P. 26).

<sup>19</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Rukopis o nastanku društva i izložbama koje je priredilo [Manuscript on the establishment of the society and its exhibitions] (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.3.3. P. 1/z).

<sup>20</sup> *Gänger S.* Relics of the Past: The collecting and study of pre-Columbian antiquities in Peru and Chile, 1837–1911. Oxford, 2014. P. 8; *Hurt D. R.* Agricultural museums: A new frontier for the social sciences // *The History Teacher.* 1978. Vol. 11. No. 3. P. 367.

<sup>21</sup> *Alexander E. P., Alexander M.* Museums in motion. An introduction to the history and function of museums. Lanham, 2007. P. 10.



aim of such chronologically organized collections was to fill the gaps of the national history, and to create a visual encyclopedia of the nation<sup>22</sup>.

Firstly, the Society organized an exhibition in order to show the necessity for the establishment of the Museum and the Craft school. After the successful exhibition and after acquiring some artifacts for the collection, the Society decided to rent an apartment in the Zagreb city center to open the Museum, while Kršnjavi was writing an organizational program for the museum<sup>23</sup>. Kršnjavi was greatly inspired by his former professor Rudolf Eitelberger who organized the Museum for Art and Industry in 1864 and the School for design in 1868 in Vienna<sup>24</sup>.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1880, the Museum was officially opened and it consisted of three rooms<sup>25</sup>. The exhibited collection consisted mostly of folk art such as carpets, wood carvings, folk textiles and pottery. Only four months later, the Museum was closed due to the severe damaging of the apartment in the earthquake. It was reopened in 1882 in another private apartment with five exhibiting rooms, until it was finally moved to the official building of the Museum and the Crafts school in 1888. The local government financed the Museum with five hundred forints annually<sup>26</sup>.

As Michael Wallace demonstrated museums «set out to preserve and celebrate fast-disappearing craft and rural traditions. They commemorated, and fabricated, the life of “the folk”, visualized as a harmonious population of peasants and craft workers»<sup>27</sup>. Consequently, «the folk» was considered to be «progenitors of timeless ideal and values»<sup>28</sup>. As elsewhere, the main aim of the Museum in Zagreb was also to preserve the rapidly disappearing folk culture which was considered to reflect national character: «People create folk motifs similarly as songs, although they are not aware of it, they invest their soul and national character into them... Our age has the duty to save worthy artistic traditions from oblivion, since we cannot produce our own style»<sup>29</sup>.

Style was considered to be the proof of authenticity with its forms as a material expression of people's will<sup>30</sup>. Kršnjavi believed that style should be based on tradition, while being fully aware of the ideology invested in the production of the artwork. «The main law of historical style is that the artwork should be made based on tradition. The principal idea, which is

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<sup>22</sup> *MacKenzie J. M.* Museums and Empire: Natural history, human cultures and colonial identities. Manchester, 2010. P. 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Maruševski O.* Iso Kršnjavi kao graditelj: Izgradnja i obnova obrazovnih, kulturnih i umjetničkih objekata u Hrvatskoj. Zagreb, 1986. P. 107.

<sup>24</sup> *Rampley M.* The Vienna School of Art History: Empire and the politics of scholarship, 1847–1918. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013. P. 116–119.

<sup>25</sup> *Damjanović D.* Arhitekt Herman Bolle. Zagreb, 2013. P. 89.

<sup>26</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Rukopisne bilješke o otvorenju muzeja [Handwritten notes on the opening of the Museum] (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.6.2. P. 84, 86).

<sup>27</sup> *Wallace M.* Visiting the Past: History museums in the United States // Presenting the Past: Essays on history and the public / Ed. by S. Porter Benson, S. Brier, and R. Rosenweg. Philadelphia, 1986. P. 145.

<sup>28</sup> *Wallace M.* Visiting the Past... P. 148.

<sup>29</sup> *Truhelka Ć.* Drvorezbarstvo // Glasnik Društva za umjetnost i umjetni obrt. 1886. Vol. 1. P. 9, 15.

<sup>30</sup> *Smith K. A.* Real Style: Riegl and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Central European art // Centropa. 2005. Vol. 5. No. 1. P. 23–24.

the basis of the artwork, should never be forgotten»<sup>31</sup>. As Bratislav Pantelić pointed out, style was (and still is) considered as «a sublimation of the “spiritual” characteristics of the nation, since only forms derived from the national past and containing national attributes and symbols are thought to preserve national identity»<sup>32</sup>. The search for style was therefore search for the dominant character of the nation<sup>33</sup>. Kršnjavi considered style as a spiritual force which remained the same in various artistic forms: «Our folk art shows us not only historical development of technique, but also natural progress of basic and aesthetic principles, which remain the same life-force among people in the most simple and most complex works of art»<sup>34</sup>. The afore-mentioned inability to produce style can therefore be seen as the result of the previously unexplored tradition and insufficient knowledge of the main ideas surrounding the artworks.

Folk art was collected in several ways. Part of it was bought from private collections, while part was acquired during ethnographic missions or ordered directly from producers. Besides national folk art, the Museum ordered copies and photographs from various similar museums throughout the Monarchy, Germany and Norway. Sara Tas rightly argues that the acquisition of foreign works for national collections was seen as a patriotic act of enriching national culture. Such works could later inspire artists to produce «national» artworks<sup>35</sup>.

Similarly, all the exhibits in the Arts and Crafts Museum in Zagreb were meant to serve as auxiliary teaching tools for the education of craftsmen, since the craft school had classes in the museum. Therefore, museums were not only exhibitory complexes but also educational places<sup>36</sup>. Paradoxically, the relationship between nationalism and internationalism was closely interconnected in the given period<sup>37</sup>.

Similar thoughts were expressed in the Sarajevo journal *Prosvjeta* (Education) by an anonymous writer in the article *Success of our artists* in 1896. The author sees art and education as the most appropriate means for the promotion of the nation and its capabilities. «The greatest products of human spirit are works of art. If today this is mainly achieved through education, thus through the progress of spirit, then artworks, as products of the greatest spiritual progress, should become the most appropriate means through which we can express national purposes. Indeed, history teaches us, as well as modern experience, that the world often started showing interest in people because of their art products, in which the greatest ability of the people is reflected»<sup>38</sup>.

Such a line of reasoning, that of promoting the nation through culture, was also shared by Kršnjavi, and was a shift from the previous way of political behavior characterized by a

<sup>31</sup> *Damjanović D.* Iso Kršnjavi i arhitektura historicizma u Hrvatskoj // Iso Kršnjavi — veliki utemeljitelj / Ed. by I. Mance and Z. Matijević. Zagreb, 2015. P. 243.

<sup>32</sup> *Pantelić B.* Nationalism and architecture: The creation of a national style in Serbian architecture and its political implications // *Journal of the Society of architectural historians*. 1997. Vol. 56. No. 1. P. 35.

<sup>33</sup> *Tollebeek J.* Historical representation and the nation-state in Romantic Belgium (1830–1850) // *Journal of the history of ideas*. 1988. Vol. 59. No. 2. P. 340.

<sup>34</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Dvije radnje o umjetnosti. Zagreb, 1876. P. 39.

<sup>35</sup> *Tas S.* Between patriotism and internationalism. Contemporary art at the Musée Du Luxembourg in the nineteenth century // *Journal of the history of collections*. 2014. P. 236.

<sup>36</sup> *Bazin G.* The Museum Age. New York, 1967. P. 232.

<sup>37</sup> *Tas S.* Between patriotism and internationalism. P. 238.

<sup>38</sup> [Anonymous author]. Uspjeh naših umjetnika // *Prosvjeta*. 1896. Vol. IV. No. 11.



focus on historical rights and sovereignty, with the main goals of (re)establishing political autonomy or independence. Kršnjavi realized that endless political debates about historical rights were not yielding results, so he started to practice politics through education (teaching at the University, the Crafts School, public lectures) and culture (the Arts and Crafts Museum, and various exhibitions) immediately after settling in Zagreb.

An important part of this narrative was pinpointing affiliation of the nation to the «cultural» nations with the «history» of the Western Europe, in contrast to barbarian nations without «history and culture», usually connected with the East. «The foreign world has realized that through the observation of artworks, the people who produced them are worthy of living, that they are not barbarians, that they can be a useful member of humankind, and that their subjugation or distinction cannot be allowed. This influence of foreign opinions over the artworks can be beneficial; every nation likes to use this means because it is the most decent and noble way of fighting for the happiness of one's own nation»<sup>39</sup>.

Kršnjavi's goal was to reaffirm Croatian national culture as an integral part of a broader European community of «cultural nations». For this reason it was necessary to establish museums as «indispensable attributes of any civilized state, essential elements of any civilized nation»<sup>40</sup>.

#### THE SECOND ART EXHIBITION

The second art exhibition was organized during December 1881 in the palace of the Academy of Arts and Sciences. Unfortunately, there are almost no documents referring to it, except for short newspaper articles and a few lines in Kršnjavi's memories. Unlike the first exhibition in which international exhibitors were allowed to participate, the second exhibition was organized only for national exhibitors.

During the exhibition, Kršnjavi held two public lectures in order to attract more visitors. First lecture was about folk art with special emphasis on the Russian case. The Russian case was chosen to show how Russian villages were organized in peasant collectives producing folk art. Folk art was seen as an additional source of income which peasants could earn during the winter months when it was not possible to work in agriculture<sup>41</sup>. During the second lecture, Kršnjavi spoke about Indo-European ornaments. His conclusion was that all Indo-European ornaments had similar character what could be seen in the similarity of the Norwegian and Romanian ornaments with the Croatian ones.

The conclusion of the second exhibition was the same as for the first one — to preserve national folk art from oblivion by organizing schools and museums. There is a short excerpt of Rački's speech held at the meeting of Arts Society shortly after the exhibition had ended. Rački advocated better preservation of folk art and protection from foreign influences which distort the original character of folk art. Also, it is important to mention that Rački was a far greater nationalist than the majority of Arts Society members and he considered nation in more organic terms: «People everywhere are particularly interested in their culture, and we should start protecting our folk art from disappearing since it is sick from foreign motifs and

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<sup>39</sup> [Anonymous author]. *Uspjeh naših umjetnika // Prosvjeta*. 1896. Vol. IV. No. 11.

<sup>40</sup> *Gervits M. Historicism, nationalism, and museum architecture in Russia from the nineteenth to the turn of the twentieth century // Visual Resources: An international journal on images and their uses*. 2011. Vol. 27. No. 1. P. 35.

<sup>41</sup> *Narodne novine*. 1881. Br. 291.

losing its original character... This exhibition showed all advantages and disadvantages of folk textile production. Therefore, we should initiate working habits, skills and taste of the people... It is necessary to organize craft schools in which this beautiful talent of the people could be developed and improved»<sup>42</sup>.

Kršnjavi was also concerned with the disappearance of folk art, and he considered the collection and research of folk art to become useful in the future. He also stated that the people lost the skills for domestic craft production. «Domestic craft's roots have been cut down, and it will disappear in the near future. What we are collecting and publishing now, will be useful afterwards... It cannot be deduced that the domestic craft is disappearing when we observe what the people own, but rather when we witness what people produce»<sup>43</sup>.

Consequently, it was necessary to collect and exhibit these possessions owned by the people. Kršnjavi also saw folk culture as a reflection of people's individuality, but appreciated Western influences, although he believed that they caused alienation among different strata of society: «Sadness is even greater when we see that a part of national individuality is disappearing with the decline of artworks in which it was reflected... Unfortunately, our national individuality is wilting and dying on a daily basis... Although we speak and appreciate our national language, we do not feel unity with the people; foreign civilization, to which we owe plenty of intellectual fortune, has brought us one negative consequence. We have alienated from the rest of the people on spiritual level, so we do not understand each other anymore»<sup>44</sup>.

National history and a collective memory were means of overcoming such alienation between elites and ordinary people on a daily basis<sup>45</sup>. Therefore, the Arts Society's initiatives could be seen as means of renegotiating identity and creating sense of community.

#### THE CRAFTS SCHOOL

In the early 1880s, Kršnjavi ran a campaign at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Education and its Minister Ivan Vončina, for the establishment of an art and crafts school and a museum. The museum and school were ran by the Directory of Arts Society for the first six years and it was only in 1888 that the local government took over. Following Eitelberger's advice, Kršnjavi organized the school similarly as the craft school in Brno, which was seen as a role model for the crownlands<sup>46</sup>. Members of the Directory were Kršnjavi, Bolle and Suhin who were responsible for the functioning of the School and Museum. The Directory was obliged to hand in reports and proposals to Arts Society which would forward it to the local government, if they agreed with the proposed<sup>47</sup>. Also, the local government was the first to contact the Arts Society which would forward their demands and approvals to the Directory.

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<sup>42</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Rukopis o nastanku društva... (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.3.3. P. 31a/95).

<sup>43</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Listovi iz Slavonije. Zagreb, 1882. P. 55.

<sup>44</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Gradjevni narodni styl // Glasnik Društva za umjetnost i umjetni obrt. 1887. Vol. 3. P. 1.

<sup>45</sup> *Stråth B.* Myth, memory and history in the construction of community // Myth and memory in the construction of community: Historical patterns in Europe and beyond / Ed. by B. Stråth. Bruxelles, 2000. P. 22.

<sup>46</sup> *Jirsak L.* Izidor Kršnjavi und die wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte. Zagreb, 2008. P. 200.

<sup>47</sup> *Maruševski O.* Iso Kršnjavi kao graditelj... P. 128.

Although the School and the Museum were independent institutions which were subsidized by the local government, all their actions needed to be approved by the local government. Besides the local government, the municipal authorities of Zagreb also helped establish the School with two thousand forints and later they paid the annual fee of 500 forints. For the first six years, Kršnjavi worked for free as the head of the institution. Later Kršnjavi admitted that he was mostly concerned with the education of artists, but concealed his intents for artistic craft. «We were laying foundations of Croatian art in the Craft school by educating artists. All my intents were hidden under the gown of artistic craft»<sup>48</sup>.

First generation of the Crafts school consisted of twenty pupils — fifteen Roman Catholics, three Orthodox and two Jews. The School was situated on the Dolac square, but moved the next year to Ilica Street due to lack of space and poor conditions. In 1882, wealthy merchant Guido Pongratz from Zagreb gave a construction site for the School and the Museum to Arts Society. The construction of the building went relatively slow, due to the lack of funds, and the school finally moved to the new building in 1888. The School consisted of dormitory, classrooms and workshops for stone carving, foundry and minting. It was divided into four sections — for art, architecture, mechanics and chemistry<sup>49</sup>. Courses and practice were held in statuary, stone carving, ornamental and figurative decoration of locks, metal-casting, decorative painting, textile production, enamel, decoration of ceramic vessels, carpentry. Due to lack of funds and educated teachers, mechanic and chemistry department were not opened. Additionally, more people were permitted to take classes of individual choice, under the condition they had some previous education in crafts. From such applications, it could be seen that most applicants were applying for painting classes. Since there are no other documents preserved, besides applications, the outcome of these classes remains unclear. Nonetheless, it can be seen that painting was obviously perceived as the easiest way for future employment. In 1884, the department for decorative painting and wood carving was opened, following pottery and furnace-making in 1885. The most attention was given to the department of architecture since the Directory believed that architecture will stimulate production of other forms of arts and crafts. The local government gave 24,000 forints to the Arts Society for the expenses of boarding school (11,700), functioning of the School (10,000), unpredicted expenses (1500) and the Museum (2500)<sup>50</sup>.

Since Kršnjavi considered education a part of politics, he tried to implement his ideas in the Crafts school. The School was meant not to educate children only in practical skills, but also to instill in them a sense of collectivity and moral obligation. In order to establish a sense of collectivity, the Craft school was organized as a boarding school, therefore, education could be practiced all the time and pupils were obliged to wear official uniforms. Also, majority of pupils were coming from poor families which can be seen from requests of their parents asking to be freed from scholarship. In Kršnjavi's view, collectivity was seen as one of the means to fight materialism which was individualizing society and destroying work for common good: «What can our country expect from youth which is so entrenched in materialism that they see only a complicated chemical process in love? What is love for

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<sup>48</sup> *Pajas F.* Hrvatsko društvo umjetnosti... P. 99.

<sup>49</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Osnutak obrtne škole u Zagrebu [Establishment of the Craft school in Zagreb] (HDA, Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.7).

<sup>50</sup> Državni arhiv u Zagrebu. Fond 135: Obrtna škola. Sign. 22013.

homeland then? Where are the foundations for unselfish work for common good? Where are the wells for feeling the duty that needs to be zealously done?»<sup>51</sup>

In one of his notes on education, Kršnjavi similarly concluded that a person is as valuable as much as he or she serves the community. Similarly, he saw the purpose of education in the creation of love towards fellow citizens. «Community is everything. An individual is as worthy as much as he or she is of use to the community... The purpose of education is to develop love towards fellow citizens»<sup>52</sup>.

Also, it was obligatory for pupils to regularly go to religious services and classes. Gifted children from lower strata of society were chosen because they were considered easier to educate. In one of his records, Kršnjavi noted: «Poorer students could be given studentships, with insignificant savings, but then we would not have the whole education in our hands, or such success»<sup>53</sup>. Long term, it was expected that the Craft school alumni would later educate youth in their workshops with the help of the local government. It is not clear whether this idea ever came to being.

The School was officially opened on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1882. Ceremony started with the Holy Mass, led by the Directory member Eduard Suhin, for both officials and pupils<sup>54</sup>. Afterwards, ceremony continued in the Crafts school. Firstly, Kršnjavi held speech as a member of the Directory: «Role of the Craft school is not only to educate good craftsmen, but also good citizens who will be good example of honor and real unselfish patriotism; who will be role model for others; who will get recognized place in the artisan class, that they deserve. Therefore, we have organized the boarding school»<sup>55</sup>. The School was officially opened by the Minister of Religious Affairs and Education Ivan Vončina with the following speech: «Among so many boys who applied to this institute, you were chosen, my dear kids, by the famous Directory, to be the first cadets of the Crafts school. This is a great boon and honor for you. Boon, because the country has given you full provision, so you could educate yourself as skilled craftsmen and honorable men; honor, because you have been given great task to be the first Croats armed with knowledge and skills who will enter the unkempt field of artisan life as workers and teachers, to spread everything good and beautiful among people, that you have heard, seen, researched and been taught here. With this words, I declare the school opened»<sup>56</sup>.

The main idea behind the School was to create an upper middle class of patriotic artists and craftsmen who would help the country to develop economically. The development of arts and crafts production was seen as an alternative to the heavy industrialization of the bigger European cities. Heavy industry with factories was seen as dehumanizing and as a creator of proletariat. Factories were also seen as polluters of cities and disturbers of aesthetic appearance<sup>57</sup>. Also, it was believed that factories distorted art and good taste. Consequently,

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<sup>51</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Odgovor mladom kritičaru [Answer to the young critic] (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.7. P. 6).

<sup>52</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Razni fragmenti o školstvu [Various fragments on education] (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.2.1.9. P. 6).

<sup>53</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Malo mojih uspomena... (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.3.1. P. 34).

<sup>54</sup> *Jirsak L.* Izidor Kršnjavi... P. 203.

<sup>55</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Malo mojih uspomena... (HDA. Fond 804. Sign. 804.1.3.1. P. 36).

<sup>56</sup> *Kršnjavi I.* Malo mojih uspomena... (HDA. Fond 804 Sign. 804.1.3.1. P. 37).

<sup>57</sup> *Mrazović L.* Umjetničko-obrtnička izložba... P. 800.

the poor industrialization of the Triune Kingdom was seen as an advantage since it preserved environment and people from working in dehumanizing conditions.

From the first generation of the Craft school, three names stood out — Ivan Tišov who became a painter, Robert Frangeš Mihanović and Rudolf Valdec who both became sculptors. All three were given stipends from the local government to master their skills in Vienna. Later, Frangeš Mihanović spent some time in Paris, while Tišov and Valdec spent time in Munich. When Kršnjavi became the Minister of Religious Affairs and Education, all three of them were assigned important commissions for the renovation of the Ministry headquarters. Pupils of the Craft school were also given commission to build a fence and a fountain for the headquarters<sup>58</sup>.

In general, the Crafts school was educating youth pretty successfully in professional terms. Since Bolle was given numerous restorations and building projects, especially after the earthquake in Zagreb in 1880, the Craft school served him as a source of free labor power, but also enabled the School to acquire some income from orders. Bolle and Kršnjavi were awarded by the emperor for the establishment of the School and the Museum, clearly indicating that they were following the cultural policy of the Monarchy. Bolle was also awarded the position of architectural advisor (Baurath) by the emperor in 1890. This title was so important that afterwards Bolle was usually mentioned just as Baurath in papers, without the mention of his personal name. Bolle was also given the award of Saint George by the pope Benedict XV for the effort in construction and renovation of churches<sup>59</sup>.

#### CONCLUSION

The main aim of the paper was to provide a broader context in which Kršnjavi's work can be situated. Special emphasis was given to the political usage of art history as part of imperial practices, such as establishment of museums, development of ethnography and research of folk arts. More broadly, in the research I tried to explain how Kršnjavi's art historical education, combined with patriotism / nationalism, influenced his public and political work in the Arts society, Crafts school, and Arts and Crafts Museum.

In general, members of the Art Society considered themselves to be at the crucial turning point of national history. Their role was to preserve the rapidly disappearing national culture which was believed to represent authentic voice of the nation, and to have economic benefits from it. Such ideas were a mixture of (alternative) modernism and antimodernism; antimodernism in terms that there was an idea of decline of national culture in previous times which should be restored. The restoration was imagined to be done in an alternative way by the creation of a small wealthy class of craftsmen and artists, unlike in the West where the big factories dehumanized people and created proletariat. In order to fulfill their duty, the Arts Society established institutions, organized exhibitions and lectures, so they could educate the wider population and a new class of artists and craftsmen. The Arts Society promoted ideals of patriotism and morality through its projects, institutions and education, with the main aims to representing the nation and to legitimize the Monarchy.

The Arts and Crafts museum, and the Craft school were following more or less the official policy of the Monarchy in establishing multi-national nation of various cultures, that is,

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<sup>58</sup> Both are still in place.

<sup>59</sup> *Damjanović D.* Arhitekt Herman Bolle. P. 82, 105.



multicultural political nation. One piece of evidence for such claim surely are awards that Kršanjavi and Bolle received from Franz Jozef for their efforts in establishing the School and the Museum. Also, they were sponsored by ban Hedervary who was working on the pacification of the Triune Kingdom.

Kršnjavi, as many other intellectuals from the Monarchy previously schooled in Vienna, can be seen as some kind of liberal monarchic patriot with the aim to establish economically and culturally self-sufficient nation which would peacefully coexist with other nations and cultures of the Monarchy.

#### Данные о статье

**Автор:** Вранич, Игор — докторант, Европейский университет во Флоренции, Италия, Igor.vranic@eui.eu

**Название:** Исидор Кршнявый и становление движения искусств и ремесел в Загребе в 1880-е гг.

**Резюме:** В статье поставлена цель показать развитие движения искусств и ремесел в Загребе в 1880-е гг. Основная идея при этом заключается в том, чтобы поставить данное движение в единый контекст с другими подобными движениями в Габсбургской монархии и в других частях Европы, указав на политические идеи, стоящие в его основе. Особое внимание уделено деятельности Хорватского общества искусств и его основателю Исидору Кршнявому, Музею искусств и ремесел, Школе ремесел и первой художественной выставке в Загребе.

Члены Хорватского общества искусств считали, что они находятся на решающем переломном этапе национальной истории. Их роль заключалась в том, чтобы сохранить стремительно исчезающую народную культуру, которая, как они полагали, представляет собой подлинный голос нации, и приобрести от этого экономические выгоды. Такие идеи были смесью (альтернативного) модернизма и антимодернизма — антимодернизма в том смысле, что тогда существовало убеждение в упадке национальной культуры, которая должна быть восстановлена. Возрождение предполагалось осуществить альтернативным путем, создав небольшой зажиточный класс ремесленников и художников, в отличие от Запада, где большие фабрики дегуманизировали людей и создали пролетариат. Для выполнения данной задачи Общество искусств создавало учреждения, организовывало выставки и лекции, чтобы они могли обучать широкие слои населения и новый класс художников и ремесленников. Общество искусств продвигало идеалы патриотизма и нравственности через свои проекты, учреждения и образование, главные цели которых состояли в том, чтобы представлять нацию и легитимировать монархию. Музей искусств и ремесел и Школа ремесел в большей или меньшей степени следовали официальной политике монархии Габсбургов в создании многонационального государства различных культур, то есть поликультурной политической нации. Одним из свидетельств в пользу данного тезиса, безусловно, являются награды, которые Исидор Кршнявый и Герман Болле получили от императора Франца Иосифа за их усилия по созданию школы и музея. Кроме того, они были спонсированы хорватским баном Куэном-Хедервари, стремившимся к умиротворению Тринецкого королевства. Кршнявого, как и многих других интеллектуалов монархии, ранее обучавшихся в Вене, можно считать своего рода либеральным патриотом-монархистом, стремившимся к созданию экономически и культурно самодостаточной нации, которая мирно сосуществовала бы с другими нациями и культурами Габсбургской монархии.

**Ключевые слова:** Исидор Кршнявый, историзм, Хорватское общество искусств, монархия Габсбургов

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**Title:** Izidor Kršnjavi and beginning of arts and crafts movement in Zagreb in the 1880s

**Summary:** Aim of the paper is to show development of arts and crafts movement in Zagreb. Main idea behind the paper is to contextualize arts and crafts movement in Zagreb with other similar movements in the

Habsburg Monarchy and elsewhere in Europe by pointing out to the political ideas behind the movement. Special emphasis is given to Arts Society and its founder Izidor Kršnjavi, Arts and Crafts Museum, Crafts school, and the first art exhibition in Zagreb.

Members of the Art Society considered themselves to be at the crucial turning point of national history. Their role was to preserve the rapidly disappearing national culture which was believed to represent authentic voice of the nation, and to have economic benefits from it. Such ideas were a mixture of (alternative) modernism and antimodernism; antimodernism in terms that there was an idea of decline of national culture in previous times which should be restored. The restoration was imagined to be done in an alternative way by the creation of a small wealthy class of craftsmen and artists, unlike in the West where the big factories dehumanized people and created proletariat. In order to fulfill their duty, the Arts Society established institutions, organized exhibitions and lectures, so they could educate the wider population and a new class of artists and craftsmen. The Arts Society promoted ideals of patriotism and morality through its projects, institutions and education, with the main aims to representing the nation and to legitimize the Monarchy. The Arts and Crafts museum, and the Craft school were following more or less the official policy of the Monarchy in establishing multi-national nation of various cultures, that is, multicultural political nation. One piece of evidence for such claim surely are awards that Kršnjavi and Bolle received from Franz Jozef for their efforts in establishing the School and the Museum. Also, they were sponsored by ban Hedervary who was working on the pacification of the Triune Kingdom. Kršnjavi, as many other intellectuals from the Monarchy previously schooled in Vienna, can be seen as some kind of liberal monarchic patriot with the aim to establish economically and culturally self-sufficient nation which would peacefully coexist with other nations and cultures of the Monarchy.

**Keywords:** Izidor Kršnjavi, historicism, Croatian Arts Society, Habsburg Monarchy

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