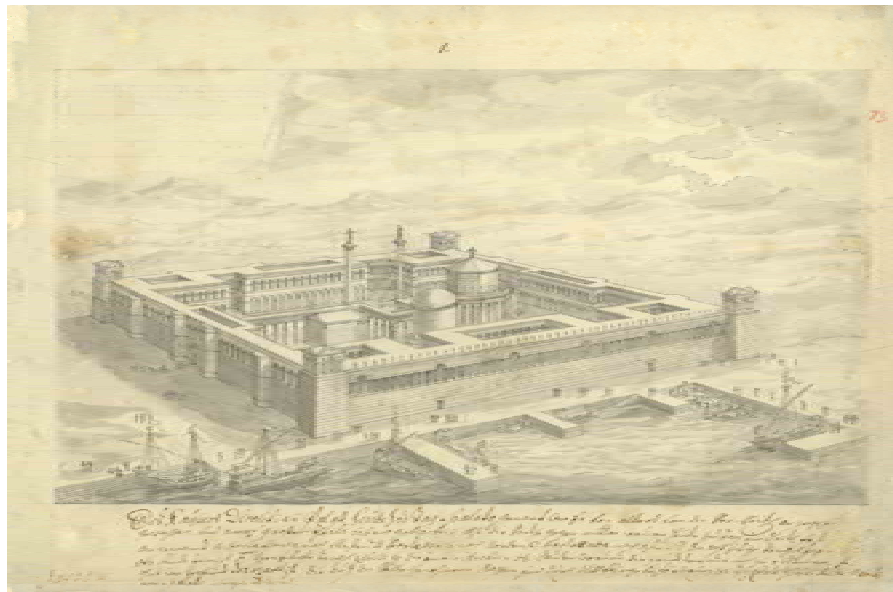


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Documentation, Displaying and Presentation of the Print Collection of the National and University Library

At the end of 1918 Croatian artists Ljubo Babić, Tomislav Krizman, Menci Clement Crnčić and Branko Šenoa proposed that within the University Library a graphic art collection should be set up, the fundamental holdings of it being the extensive and valuable Valvasor Collection. After the necessary preparations and agreements with the Dean and Chapter, the owner of the Valvasor Collection, on December 18 1919, a gubernatorial order was issued containing a Charter for the newly-founded Graphic Art [Print] Collection. Dr Artur Schneider was appointed director of the Collection. According to its Charter (or Statutes), the Collection contains both prints and original drawings.

After it was founded, those prints and drawings that had accumulated in the Library over the course of time were placed in it. Among these we must certainly highlight the 79 drawings that the celebrated Austrian architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach did for his work Entwurf einer historischen Architektur, Vienna 1721.



III. 1: J. B. Fischer von Erlach, Diocletian's Palace, 1712,
drawing (graphite pencil, pen), 332x474 mm

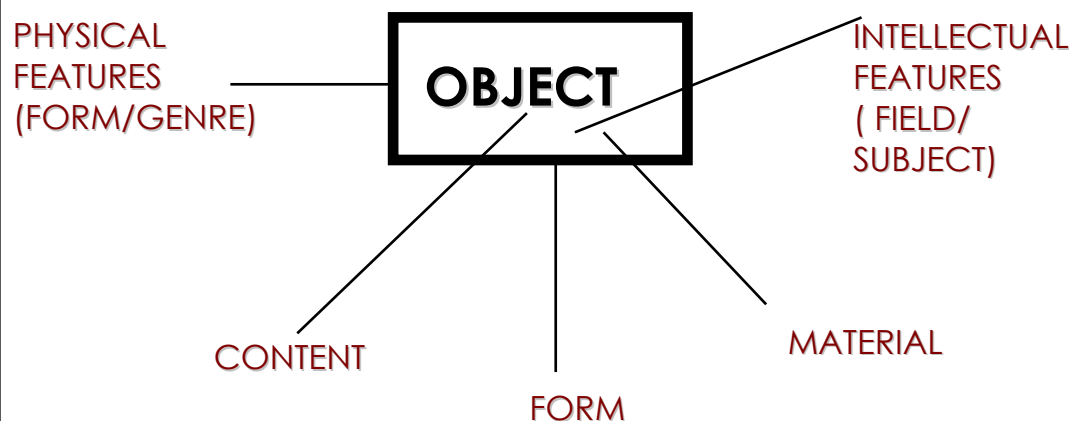
Among the prints placed in the Collection from the holdings of the Library were some prints by the French and English masters of the 18th century. Also among them were drawings by painter Ivan Zaslavsky, including some for the Haulik album called *Jurjaves*. During the course of just a few years, the Collection expanded considerably, through both purchases and donations. A gift from Izidor Kršnjavi was one of the more significant donations of the period.

Pictures can be and are useful to historians, teachers and students, to illustrators, designers, collectors and curators. Everyone agrees that a picture is necessary to an art historian, so he or she can carry out research; but also for other historians, the information contained in images is useful for their investigation of the past. "Pictures are one of our strongest weapons and one of our richest sources," writes one museum director in an article entitled "Pictures and Historical Society". They can show not only what the period looked like, but also what it found worthwhile recording. The advantage and drawback of pictorial sources is that a picture can mean different things to different

The diversity of the material of the Print Collection and the many users of different interests, and their increasingly numerous requirements, often very specific requirements, have resulted in the approach to the material being such that it is sought physically (and so damaged) as little as possible. Whatever principle is used for storing the material, searches according to a given topic or subject will always contain the danger of its physical

impairment. When we interpret a picture in words, as a visual work, then every observer, every interpreter, from the point of art history, included through the comparability of picture and language. This relation is the base of every understanding in the area of the interaction of visual and verbal. The basic precondition for every treatment is standardisation, irrespective of whether it is in terminology or standardisation of the actual processing. This is particularly to the fore in the field of computerisation, in the age of globalisation, conditioned by the new technologies. For us to be able to communicate better with each other there has to be a common language for this communication. In the treatment of visual material, this joint or common language resides in the standards that relate to the unambiguity of processes in the treatment, a precisely established order of data, rules that will be applied, and the manner of finding the data about the material we have processed. Without reliance on standards, it is very difficult to have successful communication. Every visual work of art constitutes an indivisible whole of three elements: of content, form and material. Without the unity of these three elements there is no proper description of the visual work, which means that we have to transfer the visual elements and messages into their meanings in language, and the linguistic concepts with which we express the contents of the visual art work have to be in a certain way settled and used.

What is visual material comprised of?



III. 2: Comprised of visual material

When it is visual material that is concerned, one should not ignore the definitions of the genre, which mark various categories of material through which the genre of pictorial types is determined, the method of projection, the

manner and purpose of the depiction, and the definitions for the physical characteristics with which we label the material, differentiating it according to the process of techniques in which it was created, its shape and size, as well as other physical features of the visual material. Some visual material is also important because of its artistic value and because of the subject. Users know very well whether they want to see examples of genres, or depictions in which the genre and physical characteristic is the subject. Traditionally in our museums and collections visual material is found according to contents and artists, while the approach according to genre and physical characteristics is somewhat neglected. So in the processing of the visual material, we always should bear in mind the answers to the questions: Who? What? When? Where? and How? – it was created, and with what intent. Some people will find it important whether something is a chalk drawing, some people want to see copies of 16th century etchings, while some look for depictions of Diocletian's Palace, irrespective of technique, author, period. We need, then, to analyse and describe the importance of the visual works, classify and define the kind of importance the picture might have. In order to do this, semantic theories in art and language as well as some theories of classification are very important. This is a mere hint of what is necessary for the description, in terms of form and content, of the visual work.



III. 3: Hans Schueltes, Battle of Sisak 1573, coloured woodcut, 380 x 538 mm

There is a widely known saying that a picture will stand for a thousand words. The description of any visual work, with all the effort and expertise of the

person dealing with it, will also bring something subjective into the description, and it is very difficult to describe a picture and make sure this description meets the needs of all the users of the work. Speed and quantity of information obtained is immeasurable when there is an image database. Not with the best will in the world is anyone able to give such an amount of original material for use as can be reviewed when browsing in a image database. In this manner the quantitative and qualitative values of the search are greatly enhanced. User and curator, in a collection so processed, will spend much less time to provide or arrive at the relevant information. A reason that is not a whit less important for the creation of an image database is the safekeeping and protection of sensitive material. When we speak of the Print Collection of the National and University Library, we should not lose sight of its double role, of preserving the national heritage, and the university role, which requires close cooperation with the tertiary level establishments. Guarding the national heritage and feeling the need to cooperate with the university, aware of our educational role, we often release large numbers of specimens for use; this nevertheless constitutes a source of potential damage. Not a single reproduction, however high the quality that is provided by contemporary technology, can replace the original work, but it can reduce number of occasions on which it is necessary to give out the original, to just those works that the user, searching through the visual base, has selected; and the period of time, from searching to the provision of quality information, is done in a short period of time, the material is protected to the maximum, and the user is satisfied with the service provided.

New technologies have brought libraries, museums and archives closer together. The term museum user has increasingly begun to be used in addition to the term museum visitor. Digital, that is, virtual world has united those institutions and they are beginning to work closely together as they did when they were set up. Museum experts have learnt a great deal from librarians. However, now that picture is progressively replacing word, librarians have much to learn from museum experts in order to provide a great number of different users with as thorough information as possible.

Subject analysis

- *Crayon drawings--16th Cent*
- *Saints--16th Cent*
- *Virgin Mary*
- *Christ*
- *St. John the Baptist*
- *St. Joseph*



III. 4: Julije Klović, Madonna del Silenzio, 1540, red pencil, 292 x 244 mm

Subject analysis

- *Etchings--16th Cent*
- *Saints--16th Cent*
- *St. Andrew*



Ill. 5: Andrija Medulić, St. Andrew (from
“Christ and the Apostles”) around 1548,
etching, 220 x 115 mm



III 6: Martin Rota Kolunić, Ferdinand I., 1575., engraving, 218 x 151 mm

Subject analysis

- *Bookplates--1920-1930*
 - *Etchings--20th Cent*
 - *Landscape prints--20th Cent*
- Subject analysis*



III. 7: Tomislav Krizman, Bookplates for Mr. Brataruč, around 1920, etching, 156 x 152 mm

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