

# The Olomouc Museum of Art will make its collections accessible thanks to the so-called Norwegian Funds

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Nowadays, it is almost impossible for an ordinary visitor to leaf through the beautifully illuminated Duchka Bible from 1433 or other rare manuscripts, first editions or prints administrated by the Olomouc Museum of Art. However, this will change thanks to 37.5 million crowns from EEA and Norway Funds for the digitization of collections, their accessibility for the public and educational use. For the Olomouc Museum of Art, the cooperation with the Moravian Library in Brno and the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic is crucial, as well as with the National Archive in Reykjavík, which will digitize a part of its holdings.

"Making our collections accessible is one of the priorities we have been working on for a long time. We publish collection catalogues, we have made it possible to visit permanent exhibitions free of charge and we are preparing a user-friendly website with an offer of digitized works of art. In this effort, the project funded by the so-called Norwegian Funds is one of the most important," says MUO director Ondřej Zatloukal.

The project called "Loaded – Open" covers the digitization of a collection of manuscripts, incunabula, old prints, graphics and music stored at the Archbishop's Chateau in Kroměříž. In this way, the Olomouc Museum of Modern Art will continue with its activities started in previous years. "The professional and general public will be surely pleased by the digitization of substantial parts of the subcollections of drawings, graphics, photographs and medals," says Marta Perůtková, head of the Collection and Documentation Department. "This also applies to the part of the architecture collection that is one of the largest in the Czech Republic, and researchers are very interested in it."

The scanning mainly concerns paper collections that are very sensitive to storage conditions. "Their degradation or destruction is caused by various factors: changing temperature, relative humidity, air pollution, the effects of biological pests and of humans, too. The extreme sensitivity of paper to light also limits the possibility of exhibiting the works. Digitization is therefore a unique opportunity to make these works accessible to the widest possible public", says Miroslav Kindl, Head of the Department of Old Art.

Over 80,000 collection items will be digitized in three years, and a large part of them will first undergo the conservation and restoration treatment. "The

Museum of Art has therefore set up two specialized restoration and conservation workplaces, employed two new restorers, three documentarians and two scanning clerks," says Jana Macháčková, Head of the Archdiocesan Museum in Kroměříž.

The Olomouc Museum of Art will be helped with the digitization unit to be put into operation by the Moravian Library in Brno, which will also ensure the publication of the collections in the Kramerius Digital Library. In addition, experts from Brno will digitize part of their funds, which have long been exposed to a large burden caused by frequent lending. "Part of the long-term strategy of the Moravian Library is the digitization and access to funds that belong to the cultural heritage. Due to their nature, they cannot be made accessible to the general public in physical form, but they would surely deserve it. Their digitization will thus have an impact on further professional and research work, but also on the possibilities of their popularization. We are therefore pleased to be able to participate with our experience together with the Olomouc Museum of Art on this project," said the Director of the Moravian Library Tomáš Kubíček.

### **Project in education**

An essential part of the project is the use of digitized collections, in which the Education Department will be involved. Together with the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (KNAV), it will further develop the already existing INDIHU Exhibition program, which is a creative tool for creating virtual exhibitions and scientific work with digitized information carriers.

In addition to virtual exhibitions, the INDIHU project was focused on creating a number of tools related to digitization, "explains Martin Lhoták, Head of the Information Technology and Digitization Department at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The availability of digitized documents is a particular problem for users. That is why the INDIHU Index was created, which connects previously dispersed databases via a single search interface. "For researchers, students, educators, we have reduced the barrier to the use of digitized collections from archaeology, ethnography and art. We are very pleased that the Olomouc Museum of Art is interested in including its collection into the Index, " adds Nina Wančová from behalf of the INDIHU team.

The lecturers from the Department of Education will build on the original INDIHU project and will further develop it. "INDIHU Exhibition allows you to create virtual exhibitions on any topic accessible on the web. Combining various digital content - images, texts, photo galleries, videos, maps or small interactive games - it then helps to draw people into the story," describes Marek Šobáň, Head of the Department. "We intend to expand the existing tool with another twelve functions directly related to the mediation of fine arts. We will focus mainly on cooperation with teachers and lecturers dealing with education through the visual arts. We will create methodological materials for them, organize demo-classes and workshops. All with the use of our digitized collections."

## **What are the so-called Norwegian Funds**

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway contribute to the EEA and Norway Funds - they serve to reduce economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area. The beneficiaries of the financial support are the countries of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. An important element that distinguishes these funds from EU funds is the emphasis on sharing and exchanging experiences between donors and grant recipients.

### **Tomáš Kasal**

spokesman

### **Olomouc Museum of Art | Denisova 47 | 771 11 Olomouc | Czech Republic**

O: Muzeum moderního umění | Denisova 47 | 771 11 Olomouc

P: +420 585 514 282 | M: +420 602 671 477

E: [kasal@muo.cz](mailto:kasal@muo.cz) | [web](#) | [facebook](#) | [twitter](#)