Commissioners, Artists, and the Public (Zagreb, 18–20 Feb 27)

Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Feb 18–20, 2027
Deadline: Sep 1, 2026

Dubravka Botica

In the final year of the project "Patterns of Patronage: Commissioners, Artists, and the Public in Zagreb in the 17th and Long 18th Century", funded by the Croatian Science Foundation (IP-2022-10-3190, PI Professor Dubravka Botica), we are pleased to announce the international conference "Commissioners, Artists, and the Public in the Cities of Central Europe (16th–mid-19th centuries)".

The conference is co-organized in collaboration with the Society for 18th Century Studies on South Eastern Europe (SOG18), University of Graz, and will be held at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, from February 18 to 20, 2027.
Between the 16th and early 19th centuries, urban environments experienced intensified artistic production and cultural consumption, leading to significant transformations in the visual and spatial character of cities through a wide range of commissions. Patronage emerged as one of the key mechanisms forming both individual and collective identities, functioning as a prominent form of (self-)representation that reflected social status alongside the personal and shared interests of individuals and groups.

The conference seeks to explore the dynamic processes and the social and cultural conditions that influenced commissioning practices, the circumstances surrounding the production of artworks, the complex relationships between artists and patrons, as well the reception and afterlife of artworks. These processes will be examined within the broader context of southeastern Central Europe and its border regions – including their connections with the Mediterranean, Central Europe, and the Ottoman Empire – which functioned as a densely interconnected space characterized by dynamic cultural exchange. Particular attention will be given to the role of cultural transfer within receiving environments and to the ways in which imported artistic models were adapted to local contexts. In this context, the historiographical debate on the concept of centre and periphery will also be considered.

Proposed topics include, but are not limited to:
 Diverse forms of patronage and their social and cultural contexts
 Sites of artistic display – commissions in public and private spaces
 Relationships with local artistic environments and traditions
 Networks between patrons and artists, and the role of these contacts in the dynamics and mobility of artistic production

 Individual commissioners and strategies of self-representation
 Collective patronage and the role of different groups and communities within the pluricultural context of Central Europe
 Dynamics of reception between centres and peripheries
 National historiographies and the history of scholarship

Keynote speaker: Martina Frank (University Ca' Foscari, Venice)
Scientific Committee: Dubravka Botica (University of Zagreb), Sanja Cvetnić (University of Zagreb), Matej Klemenčič (University of Ljubljana), Konrad Petrovszky (Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna/SOG18), and Damir Tulić (University of Rijeka)
Organising Committee: Josipa Alviž, Dubravka Botica, Danko Šourek, and Maja Žvorc (University of Zagreb)
Submissions: Please submit an abstract (up to 300 words), a short CV (up to 250 words), and your institutional affiliation by September 1, 2026 to modenar@m.ffzg.unizg.hr
Notifications of acceptance will be sent by September 30, 2026.

Important Information:
The conference language is English.
Presentations should be 20 minutes in length.
Selected papers will be published in a peer-reviewed open-access volume in English, to be published by FF Open Press - open access books from University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (https://openbooks.ffzg.unizg.hr/index.php/FFpress).
Conference fee: 90 € /early bird (until 30.11.2026) 70 €
Conference fee covers lunch and coffee breaks during conference (Thursday and Friday and coffee break on Saturday) and dinner for participants on Friday; conference materials and abstract books
The organizers do not cover travel or accommodation costs.

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- Notification of acceptance: September 30, 2026
- Conference dates: February 18–20, 2027

Reference:
CFP: Commissioners, Artists, and the Public (Zagreb, 18-20 Feb 27). In: ArtHist.net, May 26, 2026 (accessed Nov 22, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/52562>.