

Foreword

RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF ART REQUIRES RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF ART REQUIRES INFRASTRUCTURE, RESEARCH PROJECTS AND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES AND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

At the Department for Theoretical Studies of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Ljubljana (UL ALUO) we pursue research in the field of art, design and restoration and conservation, which we recognise is important for many reasons. Scientific analysis of these areas encourages innovation and creativity by fostering new ideas, thus facilitating questioning and pushing boundaries, often with the aim of challenging conventional thinking. The artistic approach to research gives artists and designers the opportunity to experiment with various materials, techniques and concepts, which leads to the development of new artistic ideas and design solutions. Scientific research, meanwhile, analyses the present condition, generates new knowledge and develops new methodological approaches.

Art and design are powerful vehicles of cultural and social commentary and as such enjoy broad cultural and social influence. Research in this area helps us understand and address social, cultural and political questions and probe, as it were, the temperature of society in the past, present and future. The Department for Theoretical Studies of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Ljubljana also covers the field of cultural heritage research, where it has made important contributions to its interpretation, understanding and conservation. By studying the historical artistic and design movements, techniques and artifacts, the

researchers can open a special window into the past, conserving cultural traditions and providing valuable context for modern artistic and design practices. The research helps us recognise new trends and opportunities in a world that, ultimately, needs to be re-designed into a sustainable one—in every sense of the word.

Newly researched facts precipitate new thoughts and insights, stimulate dialogue and bring about positive change. In art and design, we analyse how creative practices can enhance the human experience and contribute to well-being on the psychological, emotional and cognitive level, leading to insights on how to create meaningful and impactful experiences for individuals, as well as diverse communities with their specific needs.

10 For the members of the Department for Theoretical Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Ljubljana, the project *Models and Practices of Global Cultural Exchange and Non-Aligned Movement: Research in the Spatio-Temporal Cultural Dynamics* (J7-2606 ARRS Basic Research Project) was the first project at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana that offered the opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration, since the members of the Department otherwise cover different theoretical fields, work in different departments and with different groups of students. In contrast to our usual commitments, which represent a barrier, the opportunity to undertake a joint research project brought us closer together. Working together with other Slovenian researchers from a range of institutions (Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, Institute of Contemporary History and the Science and Research Centre of Koper) and with the international partner (Institute of Art History, Croatia) had numerous positive consequences for the development of theoretical sciences at the UL ALUO, as it enabled us to step up the exchange of knowledge, ideas, new perspectives and approaches, while each of us contributed innovative solutions and approaches to the research challenges.

The joint research efforts fostered a mutually beneficial synergistic relationship, which can bring positive effects to the uniting members through the exchange of knowledge among students, professors and researchers in different fields at UL ALUO. The collaboration also connects us to researchers from other faculties of the University of Ljubljana, as well as other scientific research institutions. The broader range of topics also allows students to acquire varied competences and insights into different aspects of fine art, design and related disciplines.

The joint scientific research of the members of the Department for Theoretical Studies of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design of

the University of Ljubljana thus not only stimulates the generation of new knowledge and theoretical concepts, but also enriches the artistic production and spurs innovation in the cultural ecosystem to which UL ALUO belongs, thereby helping us to find answers to the current social challenges and needs. Accordingly, we will work to secure, as soon as possible, new research funds for further research projects and, in particular, for a research programme that will allow us to conduct more strategic and focused research over the longer term.

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