

## Zagreb City Museum - The Dictates of the Time / Zvonimir Faist / Posters from the late 1930s to early 1960s, CD ROM

2003 Croatian Museum Association Annual Award for outstanding "Integrated Museum Project: Exhibition & Catalogue & CD-ROM"

# The Dictates of the Time / Zvonimir Faist / Posters from the late 1930s to early 1960s



**T**he Dictates of the Time / Zvonimir Faist / Posters from the late 1930s to the early 1960s is a museum project realised through the exhibition, catalogue and CD-ROM that presents Zvonimir Faist, the oldest living Croatian academically trained painter (born in 1914), who had from 1937 devoted 40 years of his professional life to the design of posters in Zagreb, working both as a freelance artist and as an employee in state propaganda institutions.

The fact that the author preserved posters in his private collection enabled us to bring together his entire opus in a monograph and to evaluate it both in the chronological context and in the context of style, as well as with respect to the various aspects of the interpretation of the context of the time. The author who was practically unknown and his work were presented at his first exhibition (at the age of 90!) in the Zagreb City Museum from October 2003 to January 2004. As a result, we have new knowledge about the author, about the beginnings of true film posters in the late 1930s, as well as the significance of commercial posters from the 1950s in Croatia. Had he not preserved

his work, we would never have known that we had film posters before 1945, a vintage for collectors, nor would we have any idea of the image that was offered as an ideal of a happy life in the 1950s. Today, when there is a revived trend of nostalgia, this project inaugurated the theme of the 50s in Croatian museums. Since the posters were created in Zagreb over a period that saw the change of three political regimes and three states, and in spite of the fact that they do not directly belong to the category of political posters, their content provides us with an indirect message of ideological propaganda, and it is this that defined the name of the entire project 'The Dictates of Time'.

The museological concept was drawn from the interest that is directed not only to the object but primarily at the meaning of the object, the information and message it conveyed. The aim was to provide knowledge about life in Zagreb through one segment in the entirety of its distinctive separate nature. The presentation of the opus of **Zvonimir Faist** once again stressed that the heritage, be it tangible or intangible, is always linked with the people that created it. The multimedia CD-ROM within a cultural and his-

torical framework, in the sense of a representative selection, presents the opus and brings the user into interaction with content that reconstructs the original context of the posters in a new concept. It is original in the concept of the content that includes theme that will be of interest to the public at large like, for example: What did we watch in the cinema? What was happening then? What did we produce? What did we buy? Which slogans did we listen to?, along with the introductory text 'Who is Zvonimir Faist', 'Faist's Audio Photo Album' and 'Brief Illustrations from Faist's Home'. The theme 'What did foreign posters look like?' is provided as comparative material precisely in the way that multimedia products can and should present comparative content that otherwise could not be shown at an exhibition.

The dimension of the authors speech that follows his biography provides an authentic testament, as well as the selection of the sound canvas that illustrates the spiritual climate of the time. The concept of the CD-ROM provides an interactive approach, the possibility of searching through themes as well as an insight into the aim of the museological concept, thus making it complex and interdisciplinary.

The scope of information for recreating knowledge about the life of people, as well as the synergy of the presentation of the tangible and intangible heritage, make this electronic publication one of the most modern museum publications.

The possibility of choosing from the offered new interpretive content (for example, a photo gallery of actors, film synopses and so on) and the interlinked audio-visual material contribute to making this CD-ROM a complete experience aimed at a broad range of potential users.

Apart from attracting great numbers of individual visitors, this project also drew the attention of special groups. University professors asked for organised special guided tours through the exhibition for students of history of art, museology and design for their students.

The exhibition attracted the attention of all forms of media, both daily and weekly publications, professional journals like 'Grafika', 'Informatica Museologica', 'Vidi', while various aspects of the interpretation of the content aroused interest not only in the sphere of the fine arts but also culture in general (in film and media culture, as well as multimedia culture), as well as in the

sphere of discovery (the TV show 'Heureka'), which is of vital importance for education and for popularising our cultural heritage.

The publication of the CD-ROM (produced by 'Novena d.o.o.' under the artistic guidance of Ervin Šilić) led to the constant increase in the number of users of this project since it has been realised in the entirety of the multimedia installations at the exhibition, both in Croatian and in English, and has, what is more, symbolically prolonged the life of the exhibition while at the same time continuing to thrive on its own after the close of the exhibition. Now the virtual presentation through the multimedia approach allows insight into the broadest range of various information, comparisons and additional interpretations in a concept that does not mirror either the exhibition or the catalogue literally, although it offers this as well (five virtual panoramic views and a 10 minute film from the exhibition, three short video clips from Faist's home, the catalogue of the exhibition in PDF format in Croatian and English that can be read using the Acrobat Reader). In short, the production of the CD-ROM has rounded off the museological concept of the entire project into the 'Integrated Museum Project: the Exhibition & Catalogue & CD-ROM'. (Željka Kolveshi)

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