

SLOVENIAN FRESCOES AT YUGOSLAV MEDIEVAL ART EXHIBITIONS DURING THE 1950s

KATARINA MOHAR

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
France Stele Institute of Art History, Ljubljana, Slovenia, katarina.mohar@zrc-sazu.si

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia sent art exhibitions abroad as part of formalised cultural exchange programmes, which played a vital role in cultural diplomacy and the country's positioning in the international arena.¹ One of the most important exhibition projects and simultaneously the first such presentation of Yugoslavia in the West after World War II was the exhibition Yugoslav Medieval Art (*L'art médiéval yougoslave*), which opened in Paris in 1950. Over the next decade, a series of smaller spin-off exhibitions of “Yugoslav”² frescoes followed in some of the most notable Western European art centres. All of these exhibitions also presented artworks from the territory of Slovenia – mostly copies of Gothic frescoes created for this very purpose – to foreign audiences.

The exhibitions in question raise numerous research questions, including their organisation, concept, reception, role in cultural diplomacy, and their impact on the development of medieval studies and (contemporary) visual arts. So far, researchers have only analysed Miroslav Krleža's introduction to the Paris exhibition in the context of developing the concept of Yugoslav culture and art,³ while all other questions remain open. The present chapter therefore focuses on a few crucial foundations for further research, specifically examining exhibitions that included

¹ On the state's cultural diplomacy, see DOKNIĆ 2013.

² Because Yugoslavia did not exist at the time, the use of the adjective “Yugoslav” to describe phenomena related to the Middle Ages is somewhat problematic. Yugoslavia brought together nations with very varied and dissimilar artistic and cultural pasts, and most of its republics sought to preserve the national character of their own heritage, rather than accept the imposed unification of the Yugoslav cultural space. In the present discussion, it is therefore used with appropriate caution and only when referring to the names of relevant exhibitions.

³ ZIMMERMANN 2010, pp. 174–176; ZIMMERMANN 2016, pp. 473–484; BAGO 2021, pp. 285–293. See also the recording of Ivana Bago's lecture “Yugoslav Fanonism in Three (Exhibitionary) Acts: 1950/1972/1989” at the seminar titled *Art Exhibiting in Slovenia, from the Early 19th Century to Today*, organised by the Department of Art History of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and the Igor Zabel Association, 24 May 2021 (<https://igorzabel.org/en/news/2021/Ivana-Bago-Fanonism>).

artworks from Slovenia. Drawing mainly on the sources from the fonds of the Federal Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in the Archives of Yugoslavia, the Heritage Information and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Archives of France, and Archive of the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade,⁴ it focuses on the aspects that are most relevant for understanding the inclusion of Slovenian frescoes into the Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions. It provides insight into the project of copying medieval frescoes in post-war Slovenia; presents the Paris exhibition in detail from the viewpoint of its organisation, conception, and execution; identifies the exhibitions of Yugoslav medieval frescoes that included Slovenian works; and, by analysing the media responses to them, evaluates the place of Slovenian frescoes in the projects under consideration. Due to the extensive scope of the topic, the wider reception of the exhibitions is only presented in broad terms and will remain a subject for further research.

THE COPYING OF MEDIEVAL FRESCOES IN SLOVENIA

The first serious initiatives to copy frescoes from the territory of Slovenia date back to the interwar period, though they did not yield any concrete results at the time. They were limited to attempts by Matej Sternen, who created a few copies in the old parish church of St Oswald in Zgornje Jezersko during the 1920s.⁵ The situation changed after World War II when, in 1947, the first official initiative to start systematically copying frescoes came from Belgrade, specifically from the Ministry of Education and the Committee for Culture and Art of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.⁶ This was a state project financed with extraordinary loans,⁷ and it was mainly inspired by the special, high-profile collection of medieval fresco copies (the so-called *Musée de la Fresque*), which had opened in 1937 at the French Monuments Museum (*Musée des Monuments français*) in Paris under the leadership of its director Paul Deschamps (1888–1974) to enrich the existing collection of architectural sculpture casts.⁸ The collection had played a prominent role in the surge of interest in French medieval mural painting. Following the French model, the intention was to assemble a similar collection in Yugoslavia, which would “allow for the establishment of a fresco museum

⁴ I would like to thank Mr Bojan Popović from the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade for his generous assistance with the research and for providing access to the relevant documents.

⁵ JENKO 2007, pp. 20, 47. The author also briefly covers the project of copying medieval frescos for the Paris exhibition; see pp. 23, 25.

⁶ Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Heritage Information and Documentation Centre, Ljubljana (INDOC Centre), Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk), No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Škofja Loka, 27 November 1947.

⁷ INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, Izredni kredit za kopiranje fresk, 14 December 1948.

⁸ DESCHAMPS 1945; FINANCE 2013. On Deschamps and his work, see THIBOULT 1975.

and facilitate the organisation of exhibitions abroad.”⁹ The project achieved both goals: in 1953, the Gallery of Frescoes was opened in Belgrade,¹⁰ while the copies were exhibited abroad several times, most notably at the great exhibition of Yugoslav Medieval Art in Paris in 1950. The exhibition’s concept kept changing throughout the initial post-war years, and at least from 1947 onwards, the intention was to also include works from the territory of Slovenia.¹¹

In Slovenia, the copying of the frescoes was carried out under the auspices of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the People’s Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana, which, as early as November 1947, invited a few selected painters to take part in the project. The archival sources list Marij Pregelj, Nikolaj Omerza, Lojze Kogovšek, Miha Maleš, Maksim Sedej, and Riko Debenjak.¹² The intention was to exhibit the copies as early as 1948, but it was not yet determined where. Therefore, the project should have started immediately, and the murals should have also been copied during the winter.¹³ However, due to the lack of time for organisation, adverse weather conditions, and shortage of painting and technical materials, the works – except for a few field visits and the first attempts at copying – were delayed until the following spring.¹⁴

⁹ A letter from Vladimir Ribnikar to the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Government of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, 8 June 1948 (reproduced in POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 24).

¹⁰ About the creation of the gallery, see POPOVIĆ 2022, pp. 33–40.

¹¹ According to the initial plans from 1947, the copies were to be included in the Federal Exhibition of Mural Paintings in the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk)*, No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Škofja Loka, 27 November 1947). Later plans propose to present them at the exhibition “Twelve Centuries of the Civilisation of the South Slavic Peoples” on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb in 1948 (*Pripreme 1947*). The account of events is outlined somewhat differently in *Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade (AY)*, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu*, p. 2: In 1948, an idea allegedly circulated to organise a Paris exhibition of Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, which would be copied by the French. At the beginning of 1949, the concept was extended to also include frescoes from Slovenia and Croatia, as well as sculptures and architecture. On 28 February, a two-day conference was organised to refine the concept. The initial intention was to open the exhibition on 15 September 1949 (*Archives nationales de France, Pierrefitte (NAF)*, 20150160/3, *Fresques yougoslaves, Le conservateur du Musée des Monuments français à Monsieur le Directeur des Musées de France*, 13 January 1949). However, due to time constraints, it was postponed, first to February and later to March 1950 (*AY*, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu*, p. 5).

¹² *INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk)*, No. 280, 1947. Later, the frescoes were also copied by numerous other Slovenian artists, for a complete list of authors of those kept at the National Gallery in Ljubljana, see JENKO 2007, pp. 123–140, for a list of those kept at the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade, see POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 323.

¹³ *INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk)*, No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Škofja Loka, 27 November 1947. The plan for the Škofja Loka District People’s Committee included the following locations: Suha, Križna Gora, Godešič, Gosteče, and Crngrob.

¹⁴ *INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk)*, No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Križna Gora near Škofja Loka, 15 December 1947.

In April 1948, a second, more urgent order came from the Committee for Culture and Art of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, requesting that the systematic copying of frescoes and architectural sculpture begin in all Yugoslav republics as soon as the weather allowed.¹⁵ Simultaneously, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the People's Republic of Slovenia organised a competition and invited all members of the Association of Visual Artists to participate in the creation of trial copies.¹⁶ The jury, consisting of the Institute Director Fran Šijanec, France Stele, Gojmir Anton Kos, and Matej Sternen, selected two teams of artists. In May, they started systematically copying the frescoes following the work plan drawn up by France Stele.¹⁷ The first two work sites were in Prilesje near Kanal ob Soči and Suha just outside Škofja Loka, while in the summer, works also began in Križna Gora and the Chapel of St Martin in Svete gore near the river Sotla.¹⁸ While the payment depended on the quality of the final product, the working conditions were difficult: the artists working on the copies complained about inappropriate accommodation, food supply problems, and poor weather conditions due to the rainy summer.¹⁹

In the field, the artists worked in accordance with the written instructions of Jaroslav Kratina (1893–1973), one of the most experienced fresco copyists in Yugoslavia.²⁰ Kratina provided detailed written instructions regarding the preparation of the materials, the priming process, and other relevant technical instructions for making copies using the tempera technique. To teach copying to as many artists as possible, each group was also assigned a student from the Academy of Fine Arts, who could then pass on the acquired knowledge and experience to their peers.²¹ One of the project's vital goals was also to offer art and architecture students the opportunity to

¹⁵ INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk*, No. 145, 1948, a letter from Vlado Madjarić to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 1 April 1948.

¹⁶ INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk*, No. 145, 1948, *Kopiranje fresk, natečaj*, 10 April 1948.

¹⁷ Stele selected the locations and specified the copying sequence; see INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk*, No. 145, 1948, a letter from Vlado Madjarić to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 1 April 1948; France Stele, *Seznam fresk, ki bi prišle v poštev za kopiranje*, 21 November 1947.

¹⁸ In Prilesje near Kanal ob Soči, the works were overseen by Riko Debenjak, assisted by Maksim Sedej and Mirko Kujačić. Meanwhile, in Suha near Škofja Loka, the copying was led by Rajko Slapernik, assisted by Karel Jakob and Ivan Čargo, though the latter was soon replaced by Aleksandra Ivanc due to – according to the Commission – the insufficient quality of his work. In the summer, the copying also began in Križna Gora (Tine Gorjup, later joined by Maksim Sedej) and in the Chapel of St Martin in Svete gore near the river Sotla, where Fran Stiplovšek worked; see INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk*, No. 145, 1948, Fran Šijanec, *Poročilo o kopiranju fresk*, 10 July 1948; cf. VELEPIČ 1949.

¹⁹ INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike*, No. 100, 1949, Ciril Velepčič, *Poročilo o kopiranju fresk v LR Sloveniji v letu 1949*, 1 October 1949.

²⁰ INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk*, No. 145, 1948, Miha Maleš, *Snemanje starih fresk po navodilu prof. beograjske umetniške akademije Jaroslava Kratine*, 2 April 1948; additional instructions: INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk*, No. 145, 1948, Rajko Slapernik, *Dodatek k navodilu profesorja Kratine za pripravo materijala, ki ga bomo rabili pri kopiranju fresk*, 10 April 1948.

²¹ POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 322.

study mural painting directly.²² This was particularly important in the first post-war years because of the notable increase in commissions for murals in public spaces, which the local artists (except church fresco painters) had little experience with.²³

At the suggestion of the Yugoslav diplomatic representation in France, nine experienced experts from France were invited to Serbia during the summers of 1948 and 1949 to teach the local artists the approach they used to make copies for the *Musée de la Fresque*.²⁴ The technique in question involved using the so-called *Stic B*,²⁵ a coating applied in two layers to a finely woven canvas to capture the structure of the original base, including the defects and damage. These bases would then be painted on using a casein emulsion. The process resulted in high-quality copies with convincing colours that could also be easily transported in rolls. A few promising individuals from each republic were selected for the training, who would then share the newly acquired knowledge with their colleagues back home.²⁶ Slovenia was represented by Marijan Tršar, who described his experience with copying frescoes at the Sopoćani Monastery in 1948 in his published diary.²⁷ He underlined the aspiration to imitate the very process of creating medieval frescoes rather than just their actual appearance as a crucial advantage of the French approach to copying. The French emphasised the integrity of the brush strokes and strived to reproduce them as faithfully as possible during the copying process. Instead of painting the damage on the fly, as was the practice in Yugoslavia, the French would usually not add “damage” to the copies until the end, when they erased the painted strokes in selected places. Their means of achieving the “faded” look of finished, dried paintings, characteristic of the *fresco buono* technique, was also different. Instead of painting with a higher white colour content like the Slovenian copyists, they imitated the intense colours of fresh frescoes, which they merely covered with a white pigment application at the very end.²⁸ In April 1949, Rajko Slapernik and Karel Jakob were also sent to

²² A ten-year deadline was set to complete the project.

²³ The most experienced of the painters tackling such commissions was Slavko Pengov, while Riko Debenjak, Tone Kralj, Gojmir Anton Kos, Marij Pregelj and several others also took on the challenge of painting large-scale works in the first post-war years. For an overview of profane mural painting after 1945 see PAVLINEC 2008.

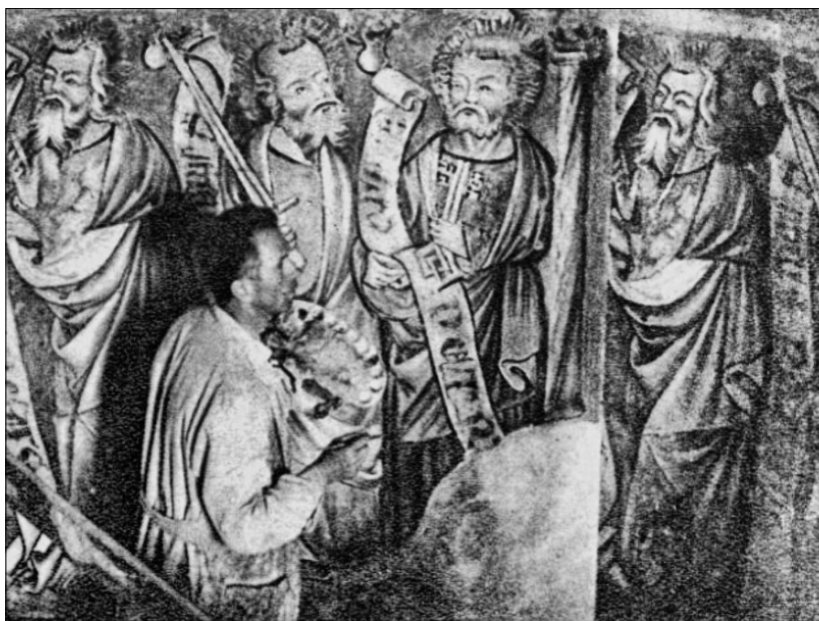
²⁴ In 1948, eight French artists (Elisabeth Faure, Marthe Flandrin, Irene Mesdrikoff, Marcel Nicaud, André Regnault, Leon Raffin, Charles Bouleau, and Maxime Rihet) arrived in Yugoslavia to copy the frescoes, followed by nine artists a year later; see POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 18. Such an agreement was reached by Paul Deschamps and Ambassador Marić from the Embassy of Yugoslavia in 1948; see DESCHAMPS 1950, p. 7; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 1, 4.

²⁵ An industrial coating containing silica sand, i.e. a paint invented in 1919, suitable for direct application to concrete or cement plaster; see STAHL 2006, pp. 93–103.

²⁶ POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 26, does not mention any Slovenians involved, although that was not the case.

²⁷ TRŠAR 2012, pp. 99–115. About Tršar’s copying efforts in Slovenia, see the chapter “Kopiranje fresk”, pp. 133–142.

²⁸ TRŠAR 2012, pp. 104–105.



1. Karel Jakob copying
a fresco in Turnišče
(*Tovariš*, 12 August 1949)

Belgrade to learn the new technique and then introduce it to their colleagues.²⁹ Since then, frescoes in Slovenia intended for the Paris exhibition were only copied using this technique.³⁰

After the spring of 1949, the copying project became much more intense and completely focused on preparing the major exhibition in Paris, planned for the end of the year. The works were carried out under intense time pressure, with even lower payment and worse working conditions than before.³¹ The demand to systematically copy all the frescoes in each individual building regardless of their quality³² was replaced by the new guidelines from the exhibition organisers, who drew up a priority list of frescoes to be copied first. The list included Turnišče (Figs. 1–2),

²⁹ INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike*, No. 100, 1949, Edo Turnher, *Kopiranje fresk*, 7 May 1949.

³⁰ By the end of the Paris exhibition, it was realized that the new technique had also caused some problems. Some of the copies had darkened, while a few of the copyists had allegedly failed to follow the instructions for the preparation of the materials, causing the base to peel (for example, the copy of the Magi from Mače). In addition, some unacceptable copying practices had allegedly been used, such as drawing on tracing paper and damping the frescoes; see AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu*, p. 5.

³¹ INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike*, No. 100, 1949, a letter from Edo Turnher to Miroslav Krleža, 11 June 1949.

³² INDOC Centre, *Kopiranje fresk*, No. 145, 1948, a letter from Vlado Madjarić to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 1 April 1948.



2. Ivan Sagadin copying a fresco in Turnišče (Tovariš, 12 August 1949)

Martjanci, Sv. Primož above Kamnik, and Beram in the Croatian Istria,³³ which ended up on the list along with the Slovenian frescoes, likely due to France Stele's influence in the selection of localities.³⁴ At its own prerogative, the Slovenian team, led by the Institute's conservator Ciril Velepč (1908–1992),³⁵ also used the financial and material resources that the Exhibition Organising Committee approved primarily for copying the works at the stated locations for the work sites elsewhere in Slovenia – in Bodešče, Mače, Muljava, Vrzenec, Vrh, Visoko, and Crngrob.³⁶ During the final stages of the work, the team ran out of funds for the copying in Beram, leading to a financial audit of the Slovenian Exhibition Organising Committee.³⁷ After much complaining, the project finally received additional financing.

THE SELECTION OF COPIES OF SLOVENIAN FRESCOES FOR THE EXHIBITION *L'ART MÉDIÉVAL YOUGOSLAVE* IN PARIS

The resulting copies, which were exhibited in the National Gallery in Ljubljana for a brief three days before being sent to Belgrade,³⁸ were evaluated by two commissions. The first panel, composed of local experts (Ivan Zorman, Fran Šijanec, Ciril Velepč, France Stele, Gojmir Anton Kos,

³³ INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, a letter from France Drenovec to Worksites of the Exhibition Organising Committee, 6 July 1949. Every ten days, those in charge had to send work reports to the Belgrade Exhibition Organising Committee.

³⁴ As the foremost proponent of the so-called geographical art historical method, Stele and his Italian and Austrian colleagues convincingly argued for the common characteristics of medieval mural painting across the territory of the Southern Alps spanning through Northern Italy, Southern Tyrol, Friuli, Carinthia, and Central Slovenia to Istria (Slovenian and Croatian); see STELE 1970, pp. 38–41.

³⁵ About Velepč, see e.g. Velepč 2013.

³⁶ See e.g. INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, a letter from France Drenovec to Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 20 July 1949, and other correspondence in the same folder.

³⁷ INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, Ivo Frol, audit decision, 27 July 1949.

³⁸ INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, Ciril Velepč, Poročilo o kopiranju fresk v NR Sloveniji v letu 1949.

and Matej Sternen), examined the works already in the field in Slovenia, while a jury appointed by the Ministry of Science and Culture of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, which started its work at the end of September 1949 in Belgrade, was in charge of the final selection of the copies.³⁹ The jury was chaired by Đurđe Bošković, a specialist in medieval architecture, while one of its most prominent members was Miroslav Krleža, the leader and organiser of the entire exhibition project. Slovenia was represented by France Stele.⁴⁰

After examining the copies judged to be of very high quality, the jury decided to exhibit more than just the originally planned frescoes from Martjanci, Turnišče, Sv. Primož nad Kamnikom, and Beram. Except for the copies of the frescoes from Sv. Primož nad Kamnikom, which were omitted due to the decision to include only works up to the 15th century, and those from Vrh pri Želimljah, likely excluded because their author, Johannes of Ljubljana, was already represented by works from Muljava and Visoko, copies from all the remaining buildings where the French technique had been used were presented. The following works were therefore included: frescoes from Muljava (succursal church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, The Death of Mary by Johannes of Ljubljana), Visoko pod Kureščkom (succursal church of St Nicholas: The Virgin/Luxuria by Johannes of Ljubljana), Mače nad Preddvorom (succursal church of St Nicholas: The Procession of the Magi), Bodešče (succursal church of St Leonard: St George), Crngrob (pilgrim church of the Annunciation of Mary: The Apostle, The Birth of Christ by Master Bolfgang), Beram (church of St Mary: The Procession of the Magi by Vincent of Kastav), Vrzenec pri Horjulu (succursal church of St Cantianus: Nativity), Martjanci (parish church of St Martin, St Martin by Johannes Aquila), and Turnišče (old parish church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary: Angel, The Legend of St Ladislaus, Apostles, and Death of St Catherine by Johannes Aquila). This covered all of the most notable medieval painters and the most significant stylistic movements of the 14th and 15th centuries in the entire territory of Slovenia.

The few surviving archival documents related to the jury's selection process reveal a few isolated and peculiar details, for example that the Dance of the Dead fresco from Beram was excluded at Oto Bihalji-Merin's initiative because similar works supposedly also existed in other cultures, or that Đurđe Bošković was concerned that the fragment from Turnišče, depicting a part of the legend of St Ladislaus with his defeat of the Cumans, should not be included in the exhibition for political reasons.⁴¹ Both considerations were taken into account, leading to the

³⁹ The jury carried out a part of its work in Ljubljana and Zagreb.

⁴⁰ According to the Decision on the formation of the jury for the selection of copies of frescoes, the following experts were also appointed as Commission members: Milo Milunović, Đorđe Andrejević - Kun, Oto Bihalji-Merin, Ljubo Babić, Ljubo Kece, Svetozar Radojčić; see Archive of the Gallery of Frescos, Belgrade (AGF), Rodoljub Čolaković, Decision on formation of jury (scanned copy of the document).

⁴¹ AGF, Slovenske freske. It is unclear why exactly the defeat of the Cumans was deemed inappropriate; perhaps it was simply because it depicted a battle.

exhibition of the Procession of the Magi from Beram and a different part of St Ladislaus' legend from Turnišče instead. According to the initial concept from the summer of 1949, the exhibition should have included, alongside the Gothic frescoes, a cast of the Prince's Stone from Zollfeld plain and an "early Romanesque cast" (without a more precise definition). However, for unknown reasons, they were not included in the exhibition.⁴²

THE *L'ART MÉDIÉVAL YOUGOSLAVE* EXHIBITION, PARIS, 1950

The *L'art médiéval yougoslave* exhibition, which opened on 9 March at the *Musée des Monuments français* museum in the *Palais de Chaillot* at the *Place du Trocadéro* in Paris, was planned as the most important and largest Yugoslav art exhibition in the West (Fig. 3). During the Cominform period after the dispute between Tito and Stalin in 1948, when Yugoslavia had to redefine its foreign policy, the country also developed such projects to better position itself within the bloc division of the world and increase its reputation in the West. The exhibition was therefore an extensive, exceedingly ambitious and challenging project with strong support from the authorities, and it proved to be a resounding success.⁴³ The exhibition, originally scheduled to remain open until 24 May, was extended until 25 June. In two and a half months, it was seen by some 38,000 visitors,⁴⁴ including many prominent names from the academic and artistic world, such as art historians Louis Réau, David Talbot Rice, Germain Bazin, Bernard Berenson, Otto Demus, the heads of major art institutions worldwide, as well as the artists Tristan Tzara and Marc Chagall.⁴⁵

⁴² The Slovenian copies from seven locations, the Prince's Stone, and the Renaissance cast were to be placed in hall XIII, together with five *stećci* tombstones, a copy of the fresco from Zagreb Cathedral, and a cast from Istria; see AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Ljubo Babić, *Izložba srednjovekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav*, 1949, XIII dvorana.

⁴³ According to Đilas's memoirs, the project was also costly, though it helped "dispel the prejudices about the South Slavs as a primitive people devoid of European culture"; see DJILAS 1983, p. 70, cited after ZIMMERMANN 2010, p. 174. The total expenses incurred by the Yugoslav Embassy in France for the exhibition between January 1949 and June 1950 amounted to around 37.5 million dinars, while approximately 15 million dinars were spent by the Organizing Committee in Yugoslavia (including their worksites); see AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Stanje kredita za izložbu n. d. 30. VI. 50; AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Troškovi izložbe srednjevekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije*.

⁴⁴ Archives of Fine Arts, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Zagreb (AFA CASA), 1950. *Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Grafikon posetnika izložbe*. The total number of 38,000 includes 30,850 tickets sold and around 7,000 free tickets.

⁴⁵ AFA CASA, 1950. *Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Važne posete*.



3. Main entrance to Palais de Chaillot, Paris (Jugoslavija, Winter 1950)

Since Yugoslavia wanted to appear in Paris as a single country with a shared past, one of the essential goals of the exhibition was to present to the Western audience the common history of the new Yugoslav republics and peoples, as was supposed to be reflected in the examples of medieval art on display. The collection consisted of 205 exhibits and included a few originals but mostly copies and casts of medieval works from the new Yugoslav republics.⁴⁶ It was divided into four parts. The most extensive part consisted of frescoes from Serbia and Macedonia; the second one included the so-called *stećci* (i.e. medieval tombstones) and some other monuments from Bosnia and Herzegovina; the third one comprised architectural sculpture from the Croatian Adriatic; while the fourth part contained Gothic frescoes from Slovenia and Croatia (Figs. 4–5). The leader of the successful exhibition project was the writer Miroslav Krleža, who organised the event together with a large group of associates, including a number of art experts. The process also involved the intense cooperation of a few politicians, most notably the Yugoslav Ambassador to France, Marko Ristić (1902–1984).⁴⁷ Some of the most notable reports and correspondence

⁴⁶ The exhibits included 205 fresco copies and 62 casts, while the originals comprised ten icons, a single wooden statue, and eleven frescoes; see VELEPIČ 1950.

⁴⁷ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske

reveal that the exhibition's preparation and reception was also closely monitored by the Minister of Education and Culture Rodoljub Čolaković, as well as one of the most prominent Yugoslav politicians, the President of the Commission for International Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Milovan Đilas.⁴⁸

Although the idea for a similar exhibition had already been conceived earlier, its actual organisation did not begin in earnest until 1949.⁴⁹ Paris was probably chosen as the location at least a year earlier when the French copyists' visit to Yugoslavia was being organised. Initially, the event was supposed to be held at the even more prestigious Petit Palais, which proved to be a less

20 LES MYRRHOPHORES AU TOMBEAU. Début du XII ^e siècle. H. 1,00; L. 1,75.	Relevé de Bruno Boulitch, 1949. Relevé de Bruno Boulitch, 1949.
21 FEMME DAMNEE ENTRAINEE PAR LE DIABLE (pl. 48). Détail de la peinture murale exécutée par Johannes de Laybaco (Jean de Lioublicana) en 1443 dans l'église de Visoko. — R.P. de Slovénie. Maître Johannes, provenant de la province voisine de Carinthie, transplante la manière gothique de son père, le peintre Fridericus, dans la région de la Carniole. 1443. H. 1,35; L. 1,00.	Relevé de Léo Koptors, 1949.
22 LA NATIVITE, fragment de fresque de l'église rurale de Vreždénets. — R. P. de Slovénie Commencement du XIV ^e siècle. H. 1,52; L. 2,86.	Relevé de M. Trchar, 1949.
23 FONTS BAPTISMAUX de la basilique de la Sainte-Vierge à Biskoupia. — R. P. de Croatie. Musée archéologique de Split. IX ^e siècle. H. 0,45; L. 0,50; Ep. 0,50.	

4. List of frescoes from Slovenia – hall II (*L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950*)

srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona šema Odbora za organizovanje izložbe srednjovekovnog slikarstva i vajarstva naroda Jugoslavije, February 1949. The document contains an extensive and complex plan of tasks and their distribution among the participating associates. Deputy Erih Koš, members Đurđe Bošković, Cvito Fisković, Jaroslav Kratina, jury members Dimče Koco, Oto Bihalji - Merin, Aleksandar Deroko, Antun Augustinčić, Mile Milunović, Veljko Petrović. Slightly differently, in the introduction to the catalogue, Deschamps mentions Bošković, Fisković, Kratina, France Drenovec, and Radivoje Ljubinković; see *L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950*, pp. 4–5. The final report refers to Krleža, Drenovec, Bošković, Fisković, Kratina, Koco, and Ljubo Babić; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 11. See also the list of participating associates in the catalogue *L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950*.

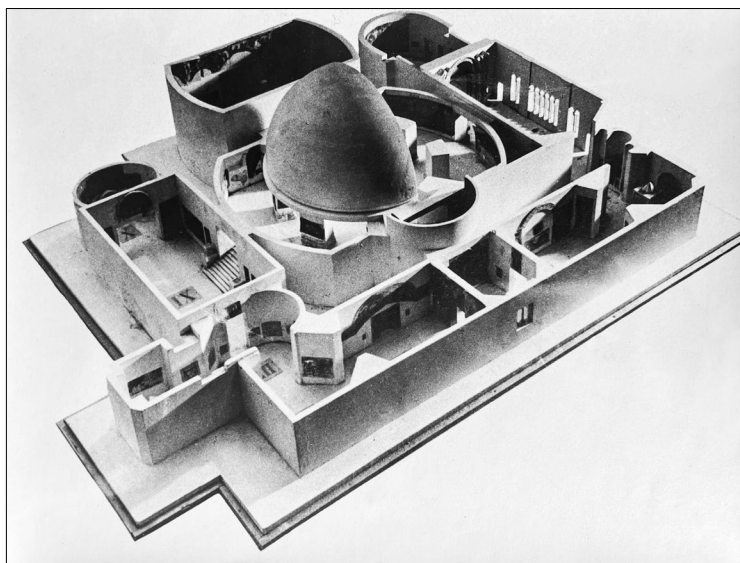
⁴⁸ E.g. AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Organizaciona priprema izložbe, p. 1. The document mentions that a copy was sent to Milovan Đilas.

⁴⁹ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Organizaciona šema Odbora za organizovanje izložbe srednjovekovnog slikarstva i vajarstva naroda Jugoslavije, February 1949.

- 154 **LA MARCHÉ DES ROIS MAGES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale Sainte-Marie à Scrlievo près de Beram. — R. P. de Croatie (Istrie).
Les peintures de l'église furent exécutées par le maître Vincent de Kastav. Dans le cadre d'une composition gothique se manifestent déjà les tendances vers l'esprit de la Renaissance.
1474. H. 1,60; L. 8,00.
Relevé de Sédei, Omerza, Preguel, 1949.
- 155 **L'APOTRE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Tserngrob. — R.P. de Slovénie.
Milieu du XV^e siècle. H. 0,53; L. 0,41.
Relevé de D. Petritch, 1949.
- 156 **LES APOTRES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale de Tournichtché. — R.P. de Slovénie.
Une partie des peintures de cette église furent exécutées par le peintre Johannes Aquila de Radkerspurga.
Fin du XIV^e siècle. H. 1,70; L. 1,80
Relevé de Karél Jacob, 1949.
- 157 **SAINT MARTIN.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Martiansi. — R. P. de Slovénie.
Les peintures ont été exécutées par le peintre Johannes Aquila de Radkerspurga.
1392. H. 2,00; L. 1,44.
Relevé de V. Horvat, 1949.
- 158 **PROCESSION DES ROIS MAGES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Matché. — R.P. de Slovénie.
Exemple de la peinture gothique de l'époque, œuvre d'une main sûre et d'un style épanoui.
1467. H. 2,50; L. 1,85
Relevé de S. Ivants, 1949.

- 159 **SAINTE CATHERINE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale de Tournichtché. — R. P. de Slovénie.
Milieu du XIV^e siècle. H. 1,30; L. 1,80.
Relevé de Karél Jacob, 1949.
- 160 **SAINT GEORGES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Bodéchtche près de Bled. — R.P. de Slovénie (pl. 51).
Les formes de la peinture gothique de l'époque ont été transformées par des peintres artisans dans le sens de la rusticité et du réalisme paysan.
Milieu du XV^e siècle. H. 2,30; L. 1,75.
Relevé de Raiko Slapernik, 1949.
- 161 **DORMITON DE LA VIERGE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Mouliava. — R. P. de Slovénie (pl. 49).
Les peintures sont exécutées par le peintre Johannes de Laybaco (Jean de Lioubliana). De la riche décoration de cette église rurale ne sont restés que des fragments.
1456. H. 2,50; L. 1,98.
Relevé de Tshoro Chkodlar, 1949.
- 162 **ADORATION DE L'ENFANT.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Tserngrob. — R.P. de Slovénie (pl. 50).
Milieu du XV^e siècle. H. 1,80; L. 2,40.
Relevé de D. Petritch, 1949.
- 163 **ANGE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale de Tournichtché. — R. P. de Slovénie.
Milieu du XIV^e siècle. H. 0,95; L. 0,80.
Relevé de J. Sagodin, 1949.

5. List of frescoes from Slovenia – hall XII (L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950)



6. Ljubo Babić: a model of the exhibition halls for *L'art médiéval yougoslave* in Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

suitable venue due to its price, the specifics of the premises, and the inconvenient dates available.⁵⁰ Finally, the 2nd floor of the *Palais de Chaillot* in the *Musée des Monuments français* museum was chosen, and it was rented free of charge – probably due to the collaboration with this institution, established during the copying project.⁵¹

The materials for the exhibition were transported to Paris in as many as fifteen railway freight cars,⁵² which, along with the artefacts, also contained the entire walling, made in Croatia according to the plans prepared by Ljubo Babić, a painter and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb (Fig. 6). The entire second floor of the museum, which was still completely empty at the time, was devoted to the exhibition and later intended to house the *Musée de la Fresque* museum.⁵³ For the occasion, the Yugoslavs divided the venue into thirteen specially designed halls. The dome-covered main hall, designed in the style of St Donatus in Zadar and most demanding

⁵⁰ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 11.

⁵¹ NAF, 20150160/3, Fresques yougoslaves, Le conservateur du Musée des Monuments français à Monsieur le Directeur des Musées de France, 13 January 1949.

⁵² AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Izvestaj br. /../ o toku priprema za izložbu naše srednjovekovne umetnosti u Parizu, 28 December 1949.

⁵³ DESCHAMPS 1950, p. 7. Precisely at that time, as the UN General Assembly vacated the premises, all partition walls were removed, leaving the organisers free to design the venue. See also NAF, 20150160/3, Fresques yougoslaves, Le conservateur du Musée des Monuments français à Monsieur le Directeur des Musées de France, 13 January 1949.



7. Hall VI, frescoes from Mileševa Monastery, carpets with floorplans of the monastery, model of the monastery, *L'art médiéval yougoslave*, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (*L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950)

to assemble, had already been set up as a trial at the premises of the Zagreb Fair (*Zagrebački velesajam*).⁵⁴ The halls were also furnished with carpets that the *Zadruga Ćilim* cooperative from Zagreb had produced especially for this purpose, according to Babić's plans (Fig. 7).⁵⁵ The carpets featured the floor plans of the most notable monasteries presented at the exhibition, attesting to the incredible detail and amount of thought that went into the exhibition's concept. The plan was also to place twelve billboards in the halls containing inscriptions from papal bulls, synods, and excommunications. However, these were censored by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs just a few days before the opening.⁵⁶ The texts that the Yugoslav side described as "documentary materials" and were meant to demonstrate the centuries-long rebellious, autonomous position of

⁵⁴ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Organizaciona priprema izložbe, p. 1.

⁵⁵ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 9.

⁵⁶ The final report lists thirteen of these: "Duces Venetiarum contra Slavos Meridionales ab anno 805 usque ad annum 1433, Epitheta in epistulis summorum pontificum romanorum, Gregorius I. – A. D. 600, Johannes X. – A. D. 925, Alexander III. – A. D. 1177, Lucius III. – A. D. 1185, Innocentius III. – A. D. 1200, Gregorius IX. – A. D. 1234, Nicolaus IV. – 1291, Bonifatius VIII., - A. D. 1298, Bonifatius VIII. – A. D. 1303, O Konradu, biskupu portuenskom g. 1223, O Raineriu g. 1180." See AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 7–8.

the Yugoslav peoples who had refused to submit to authority were evaluated as political propaganda that had no place at an art exhibition.⁵⁷

The exhibition's concept had already been thoroughly changed during the earlier stages of its preparation. According to the first exhibition plan from the summer of 1949, the Yugoslav organising committee had planned to include even more exhibits to give the exhibition a more overtly political propaganda tone.⁵⁸ At the entrance, visitors would thus be greeted by Avgustinčič's bronze statue of Tito and a large Yugoslav coat of arms,⁵⁹ while in one of the first halls, the so-called Jajce catacombs would be recreated⁶⁰ – i.e. the medieval underground church, carved out of rock, where Tito supposedly stayed during World War II – to emphasise the continuity and parallels between the “Yugoslav” Middle Ages and the National Liberation Struggle. The catacombs were also to be furnished with various “didactic” artefacts showing the industrialisation and progress of infrastructure in Yugoslavia and presenting the selected historical rebellions. Photographs from the National Liberation Struggle and the post-war reconstruction, as well as a large mosaic with the date of the Second Meeting of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, were also to be added.⁶¹ The relevant sources do not state the reasons for abandoning this exceedingly propaganda-oriented concept. Thus, the question remains open whether this change was also requested by the French or if the organisers themselves may have realised that such an approach would not be successful. The exhibition project with a greater focus on the medieval artworks themselves, as it was ultimately carried out, was therefore more refined and certainly better received by the public.

The exhibition's ideological aspirations were pursued in other ways, including the comprehensive and abundantly illustrated catalogue with as many as three introductory texts (Fig. 8). The first introduction was written by Paul Deschamps, the director of the museum that hosted the exhibition. He briefly presented the cooperation between France and Yugoslavia regarding the

⁵⁷ The sources mention Louis Joxe, who was responsible for France's cultural relations at that time, as the main opponent to the Yugoslav plans; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona priprema izložbe, p. 2.

⁵⁸ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949.

⁵⁹ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949, I dvorana.

⁶⁰ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949, Ia dvorana.

⁶¹ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949, Ia dvorana.

copying and highlighted some of the exhibition's main attractions, which he placed in the context of Western European medieval art and compared to French monuments.⁶² Đurđe Bošković and the conservator Radivoje Ljubinković contributed the outline of the development of medieval art based on the longer texts written by the experts from the individual republics, which, however, were quite disparate and therefore unsuitable for publication in such form.⁶³ However, the most notable (and most widely circulated) text in the catalogue was written by the mastermind behind the exhibition project, Miroslav Krleža, who attempted to prove the equality of medieval art from the territory of Yugoslavia with Western art,⁶⁴ and to connect the otherwise quite diverse exhibits created in culturally and politically very different environments.⁶⁵ In the text that was ultimately published, he highlighted anti-conformism and the struggle against oppressors as a common thread that united the medieval art and the culture of the South Slavs, who had persisted in the “in-between” territory between the East and the West since the Middle Ages.⁶⁶ Simultaneously, he distinctly pointed out the parallels with the Yugoslav geopolitical situation after the Cominform dispute.⁶⁷ All this was allegedly most evident in the so-called *stećci*, i.e. the medieval tombstones of the heretical Bogomil sect from the Bosnian region,⁶⁸ which had rebelled against the feudal state and the Church. Krleža described the artistic decoration of the Bogomils as primal, mysterious, rebellious, and “free from all false conventions”,⁶⁹ interpreting it as proof of an autonomous Yugoslav

⁶² DESCHAMPS 1950.

⁶³ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 9–10. The text on Slovenian art was written by Izidor Cankar, whose contribution was misplaced in Paris, so Ciril Velepič wrote another version. Cankar's text could not be used, as it was only found after the catalogue had already gone to print. For copies of some of these documents, see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Đurđe Bošković, Srednjovekovna umetnost jugoslovenskih naroda (a bust containing a variety of texts on different aspects of medieval art). About preparation of the catalogue, see also AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), a letter from Radivoje Ljubinković about work on the catalogue, 12 January 1949. Cf. BOŠKOVIĆ, LJUBINKOVIĆ 1950.

⁶⁴ Given the exhibition's audience and Yugoslavia's geopolitical situation at the time, the introduction contains far fewer references to Eastern art.

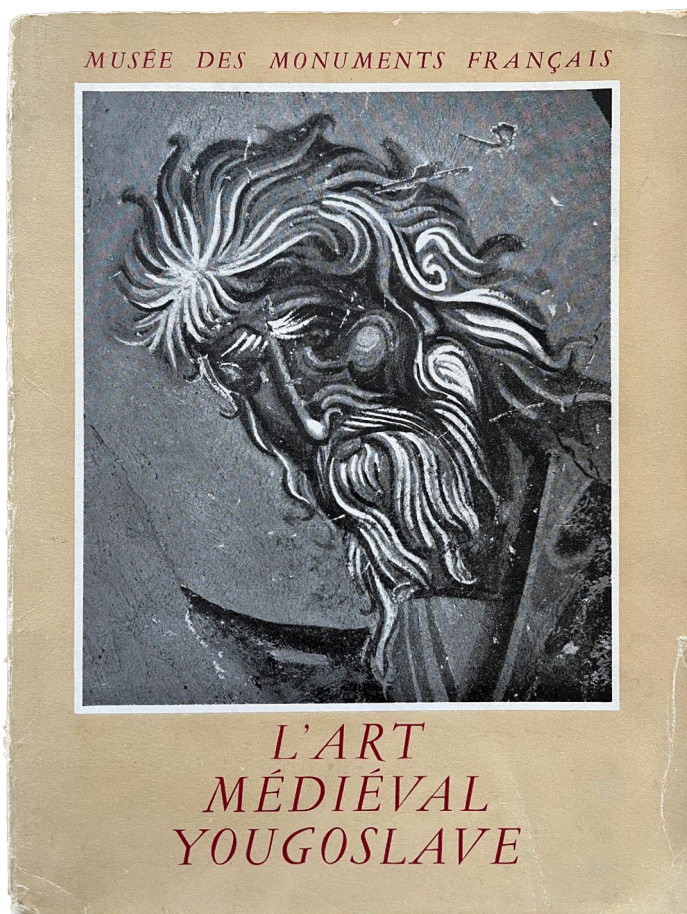
⁶⁵ KRLEŽA 1950b.

⁶⁶ KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 14: “Never in its history East nor West, our civilisation in artibus presents itself within these coordinates of spirit and artistic style as a third component, which, in line with its internal law of movement, was strong enough not to halt and resilient enough not to passively submit to stronger civilizational forces.”

⁶⁷ About the importance of Krleža's theses and their place in the subsequent discourse on the so-called Third Way and the definition of Yugoslav culture, see ŠUVAKOVIĆ 2012, p. 485; ZIMMERMANN 2016, pp. 473–484; BAGO 2021, pp. 285–293.

⁶⁸ It has since been proven that *stećci* are not exclusively connected with the Bogomils; see e.g. PURGARIĆ-KUŽIĆ 1995, pp. 251–253.

⁶⁹ KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 15.



8. Exhibition catalogue for
L'art médiéval yougoslave,
Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950
(*L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950*)

culture in the Middle Ages⁷⁰ and devoting by far the most attention to it in his text as well as in the exhibition itself. He also highlighted Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, noting the stylistic influences from other cultural backgrounds while simultaneously emphasising their inherent originality and defiance of contemporary (Byzantine) trends. In particular, he highlighted the Master from Sopoćani.⁷¹ The development of this “free” art, which Krleža occasionally compares to Fauvism, was largely a result of favourable circumstances related to the autonomy of the Serbian Orthodox Church and state.⁷²

⁷⁰ ZIMMERMANN 2016, p. 479.

⁷¹ Conclusion (KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 18): “The South Slavic civilisation was destroyed in a cycle of wars so that Western Europe could live and harmoniously create artistic works, without which the history of humanity would be unimaginable. This exhibition is merely a modest proof that our artists also participated in this endeavour.”

⁷² KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 18.

A PROPOS DE L'EXPOSITION DE LA PEINTURE ET DE LA SCULPTURE YOUGOSLAVES DU MOYEN AGE A PARIS EN MCML



ADAM ET EVE CHASSÉS DU PARADIS TERRESTRE. FRESQUE DU XVI SIECLE. EGLISE DE PZO, SERBIE

le qui nous renie depuis nos origines. Que pouvons-nous dire pour notre défense? Le fait même que nous soyons venus dans ces régions et que nous n'ayons pas disparu, constitue une des preuves de notre culpabilité. Nous sommes coupables de ce que, sur les côtes orientales de l'Adriatique, la civilisation romaine s'est slavisée, ce qui, pour Rome, équivalait à sa disparition. Aujourd'hui encore, ce sont les arguments de Létrau, de Vaitcan, de Byzance, de Venise et de l'Italie. Ce furent les arguments de la féodalité carolingienne et halbbourgeoise, de l'impérialisme bourgeois germanique et austro-hongrois, du fascisme italien, hongrois et national-socialiste.

La preuve d'une architecture originale (coupole sur base carrée) au 9^e siècle, jeune-telle en faveur de notre vitalité artistique? Non. Ce serait plutôt que nos maçons barbares sont incapables de construire d'après les modèles de Ravenne. Le treillis et la tresse (qui ont subsisté pendant 7 siècles) dans l'ornementation et les arts plastiques, seraient un épigonisme, un anachronisme barbare dérivé du lombard. La sculpture bogomile? Personne ne l'a encore prise en considération: donc, elle n'existe pas.

Une trentaine d'états souverains du 8^e au 16^e siècle révélerait un manque caractéristique de tout sens de forme ordonné, une

¹ Bogomile (d'après la traduction de Prætor Mémento ou à Dieu!) secte manichéenne correspondant aux Albigénois. L'Église bogomile en Bosnie se maintient jusqu'en milieu du XV^e siècle.

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survivance scythe et nomade. La continuité non-conformiste du paganisme bogomile qui constitue le siège de l'anti-pape et le refuge d'un hérétique: jusqu'à la débauche politique au XV^e siècle? Paganisme aux anachronismes barbares qui ne se laissent pas ordonner dans le sens moral et intellectuel latin, catholique, césaro-papiste, ou byzantin-occosmopolite; les Palaeoslavica sur des bases christianisées (en apparence) et relevant de la philologie comparée, d'importants travaux de traduction et de propagande, l'idée de l'Église glagolitique, le slaven d'église hautement intellectualisé pour l'époque en tant que herceux de toutes les organisations slaves orthodoxes depuis Chilandar jusqu'à Kiev; tout cela constituerait la preuve de l'infériorité barbare de nos masses qui ont résisté aux civilisations grecque et latine au sens supérieur et spirituel d'une coordination océanique ou catholique.

La peinture classique au XII^e siècle en tant que premier symptôme de l'art renaissant? Anachronisme, fait entièrement fortuit et qui montrerait l'incapacité de maîtriser les formes à la mode, dilettantisme, avec d'un retard dans la civilisation, importation de l'étranger. Les guerres contre les Turcs et les catastrophes depuis le XIV^e jusqu'au XIX^e siècle? Indices d'une capacité étiatique et organisatrice inférieure, insuffisance de résistance en raison du manque total de compréhension de la vie civilisée de l'Europe occidentale. Mais, que la domination de l'empire ottoman dans nos régions ait duré jusqu'en 1912 et que la Porte soit encore sur la Corne d'Or, mais, que pendant cinq cents ans cette ceinture se soit appelée Antemurale christianitatis, que, sur le sol dalmate, durant trois siècles, Venise n'ait fait imprimer aucun livre, que face aux

LAIDOYER PRO DOMO.

Par-devant qui?

Par-devant l'Europe Occidentale.

guelles des canons iures et vèlitiens soit née une littérature de la Renaissance (la seule parmi les littératures slaves, danubiennes et balkaniques), que, là aussi, avant Cimabue et Giotto, soit apparu un art occidental, que, depuis les arts plastiques des Bogomiles jusqu'à Schiavone, nous comptons par centaines, par milliers et par dizaines de milliers les manifestations et les appellations artistiques, que le protestantisme bogomile soit apparu trois siècles avant la Réforme sous un aspect beaucoup plus radical que la Réforme elle-même, — tout cela est né aujourd'hui comme au temps des guerres d'expansion aux XIII^e, XIV^e et XV^e siècles, (Festiliza, Iostigana), alors «antemurale antichristianitatis», aujourd'hui sept siècles de négation persistante... On s'obstine à contester tout ce qui, chez nous, au cours des siècles, était européen par excellence, les origines d'une lutte fondamentale pour une égalité internationale de la langue, dès le IX^e siècle (slave d'église, écriture glagolitique), lutte pour le principe de la nationalité, pour les principes éthiques et sociaux de la pensée chrétienne (antichristianisme des Bogomiles) du IX^e au XV^e siècle, lutte pour de libres canons de création artistique occidentale (peinture plastique s'opposant à la mode schématisée de Byzance aux XIII^e, XIV^e et XV^e siècles qui, dans sa conséquence occidentale, donne naissance à la perspective) ou aujourd'hui, lutte pour le socialisme, — tout cela sont les avens d'une barbarie qui anticipe sur la conscience nationale autant que sur la langue et la littérature, sur la philologie comparée, sur les coupoles. La perspective dans la peinture plastique et le protestant

Sur page 3: EGLISE ST DONAT (IX SIECLE). ZADAR, DALMATIE. — photo M. Gréville

9. Miroslav Krleža:

“A propos de l'exposition de la sculpture yougoslave du Moyen âge à Paris en MCML. Plaidoyer pro domo” (Yougoslavie, Winter 1950)

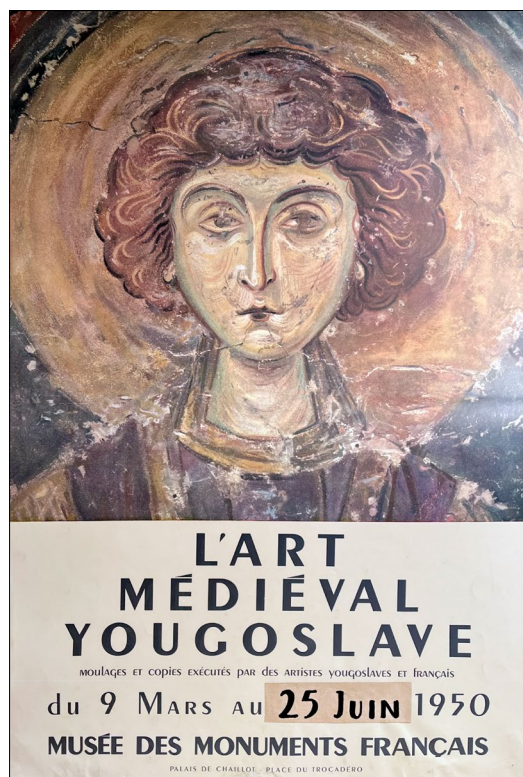
The French organisers also censored Krleža's text, and because of the delay with the corrections, the opening of the exhibition had to be postponed from 24 February to 9 March.⁷³ The original text is not available in the archives, and the extent of the requested corrections has not been documented. In 1950, Krleža also published an essay on the exhibition, subtitled “A Plea for the Homeland” (Fig. 9),⁷⁴ which he intended as a vindication of Yugoslav art before Western Europe and therefore wrote about the exhibition and its motivation even more propagandistically. The essay was published in a special French-language issue of the magazine *Jugoslavija*, accompanied by elaborate illustrations of medieval artworks and photographs from the exhibition. Allegedly, the French banned its distribution as well as the distribution of any other Yugoslav editions about the

⁷³ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona priprema izložbe, p. 2.

⁷⁴ KRLEŽA 1950a. Accompanied by a series of articles on Yugoslavia.

exhibition.⁷⁵ This essay was likely a version of the introduction that Krleža wrote for the catalogue, whose publication the French censors had prevented but which the Yugoslavs nevertheless used to disseminate the propaganda about the exhibition in their publications.

The promotion of the exhibition abroad was well thought out and meticulously executed. Alongside advertisements, promotional texts in the press,⁷⁶ and posters that were put up around Paris already three weeks before the exhibition (Fig. 10), images and longer texts about medieval art with a list of literature were circulated to the relevant media before the opening. A special issue of the popular magazine *Art et Style* was agreed upon,⁷⁷ and although the Yugoslav organisers complained they could not influence its contents, they still wanted to subsidise its publication to make it available to the public free of charge.⁷⁸ The exhibition was accompanied by lectures on medieval art by some of Yugoslavia's leading art historians, including France Stele.⁷⁹ Three



10. Exhibition poster for *L'art médiéval yougoslave* in Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

⁷⁵ AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Zaključni referat o izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu*.

⁷⁶ DESCARGUES 1950a; MARESTER 1950; VRINAT 1950. Many texts about the exhibition were published in foreign-language publications issued by various Yugoslav organisations, e.g. LJUBINKOVIĆ 1949; KERLEJA 1950; LIOU-BINKOVICH 1950, and also numerous short texts in *Bulletin d'information yougoslave. Bratstvo i jedinstvo (Paris)*.

⁷⁷ *L'art médiéval yougoslave* (title of special issue), *Art et Style*, 15, 1950. The editorial, titled "Visible Indivisible", was written by Vercors (the pseudonym of Jean Marcel Adolphe Bruller). The magazine contained 40 heliographs (including Vrzdenc and Visoko from Slovenia) and two colour artwork reproductions.

⁷⁸ AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Organizaciona priprema izložbe*, p. 4, 1 March 1950. The document does not clarify whether the plan was in fact implemented.

⁷⁹ AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Organizaciona priprema izložbe*, p. 6; AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Predavanja održana u izložbi*. According to Venio Pilon, who was among those in charge of overseeing the exhibition, these were not very successful overall; see CANKAR, PILON 2015, p. 46.

documentaries were also supposed to be filmed for the Paris exhibition, but ultimately, only one was screened – on the *stećci* tombstones.⁸⁰ In cooperation with the embassies, the Commission even drew up lists of experts in medieval art from each country to invite them to the exhibition's opening and reimburse their travel expenses.⁸¹ The increased reach of the exhibition would hopefully also stir up interest in its future appearances in other countries, and considerable effort was invested in a campaign to bring it to the United States of America after Paris.⁸²

The excellent attendance and public interest,⁸³ which led the event to be marked as the highlight of the season,⁸⁴ were accompanied by numerous media reactions, most of which were markedly positive.⁸⁵ The majority of the articles described the exhibition as one of the highlights and surprises of the year, underlining especially the importance of gaining insight into previously little-known but astonishingly high-quality art, while also lauding the project for creating an impressive collection of copies. Most of the articles would focus on the Bogomil *stećci* tombstones and describe them as a mysterious artistic expression of heretics, but they were even more enthusiastic about the Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, which were supposedly the greatest discovery

⁸⁰ AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 10, 20. The other two documentaries (one on the Adriatic art, the other unspecified, but most likely about frescoes and monasteries) were not completed.

⁸¹ See e.g. AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), a letter from W. P. Jowett to F. Drenovec, 11 November 1949 (a list of the British experts considered for participation); AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), a letter from Alex. N. Dragnich to F. Drenovec, 15 November 1949 (a list of American experts); AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), O italijanskim bizantolozima koje bismo pozvali u Pariz na izložbu fresaka (a list of Italian experts).

⁸² AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Propagandni materijal za izložbu srednjovekovne umetnosti u SAD; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Borislav Bogdanović, Izveštaj o preliminarnim pripremama za priredjivanje izložbe jugoslavenske srednjovekovne umetnosti u USA; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), several notes by M. Sardelic on talks with American representatives, June 1950; etc.

⁸³ One of the Lyon weaving mills was supposed to design new fabric patterns based on some of the ornaments presented at the exhibition, while a photographic editorial for the fashion magazine *Silhouette* was to be shot there as well; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 20.

⁸⁴ CANKAR, PILON 2015, p. 45.

⁸⁵ Longer, in-depth articles include: BEAULIEU 1950; BOURET 1950; CHERONNET 1950; DESCARGUES 1950b; PICHARD 1950; RÉAU 1950; see also AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Louis Cheronnet, "Romantisme primitif et classicisme romantique", *Opera*, 1950 (newspaper clipping).

of the exhibition. The reviews would also mostly repeat the thesis that the art presented was the so-called “third” link between the West and the East. On the contrary, some of the more serious analyses took issue with this very postulate of Krleža’s and labelled his introduction as exceedingly tendentious and propagandistic, while they nevertheless, without exception, acknowledged the remarkable quality of the exhibition.⁸⁶

THE TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS OF YUGOSLAV MEDIEVAL FRESCOS

Due to the success of the Paris exhibition, the demand for Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions increased significantly. Even before the Paris exhibition opened, the media had reported plans to also organise it in New York, Washington, Chicago, and London.⁸⁷ However, by the time it closed, the organisers had still not drawn up a definitive, detailed touring schedule.⁸⁸ The effect of the exhibition on Yugoslavia’s reputation in the West was a significant consideration regarding its future touring schedule.⁸⁹ Thus, it is unsurprising that the most intensive efforts were invested in organising it in the United States, which was the most crucial location in the strategic, geopolitical sense. However, this aspiration was only achieved a few years later and in a slightly different form, as those exhibitions did not include copies of any Slovenian frescoes.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ DU COLOMBIER 1950, a critique of the catalogue’s introduction and Krleža’s text in the *Jugoslavija* magazine, as well as the focus on the Bogomils instead of the much superior frescoes. BILLIET 1950, p. 82, reproaches the “Titoist authors” (excluding Deschamps) for their unfounded attempt to integrate the exhibits with Western European art.

⁸⁷ DESCARGUES 1950a; FAURE 1950.

⁸⁸ When the exhibition closed, the organisers were still undecided whether to send it to the USA or Zagreb; see AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, *Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu*, p. 22. At the same time, in June 1950, arrangements were being made to move the exhibition to Venice in the spring of 1951, where it would be shown at the Biennale from April to the end of June; see Historical Archives of the Biennale of Venice, Venice, b. 15, *Pratiche con il Comune di Venezia, 1947–1963*, 19, *Mostra monumentale dell’arte jugoslava del medioevo – Proposta Ivekovic*.

⁸⁹ AY, 559, *Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom*, 91, *Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967*, 203, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966*, *Komisija za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom*, Beograd, *Ambasada FNRJ*, 2 November 1953: “At this point, we cannot yet confirm where the exhibition will appear next. That will depend on the assessment of where we can benefit from it the most in terms of cultural promotion, and on the offers – i.e., on the exhibitors’ responsibilities, exhibition venues, etc.”

⁹⁰ The initial plan was to transfer the exhibition to the United States of America immediately after it was closed in Paris, and to show it at various important venues around the country to avoid multiple transportation costs connected with sending it over the Atlantic. It seems that the plans were postponed due to trouble with scheduling multiple venues in succession at short notice; see e.g. AY, 317, *Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ*, 88, *Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951*, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, several notes by M. Sardelic on talks with American representatives, June 1950. The question of reducing the number of exhibits for easier and more economical transport to the United States of America is raised in AY, 317, *Savet za*

Before being transferred to other Western European countries, the exhibition was also presented to the native public in Zagreb's Art Pavilion (*Umjetnički paviljon*) in 1951.⁹¹ The concept remained roughly the same, though with a few changes to adapt it to the domestic audience. Due to the smaller exhibition venue, the number of exhibits was reduced, yet all the copies of Slovenian frescoes shown in Paris were also included on this occasion.⁹² The title was different – “*Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije*” or “The Yugoslav Nations’ Medieval Art Exhibition” – probably to avoid the more problematic notion of the “Yugoslav medieval art”, which might have been perceived as exaggerated by the domestic audience that was more familiar with their own history and sought to preserve the national character of the heritage of their own republics. The legend for the map of the locations of the exhibited monuments was also different, categorising them as belonging either to the western or eastern circle rather than to the individual nations, as had been the case in the Paris catalogue. A further addition was a transcript of Josip Broz Tito’s speech given at the Second Session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia in Jajce in 1943, announcing the liberation of the major part of Yugoslavia, which preceded the translation of the introduction that Krleža had written for the Paris exhibition. The speech was captioned “1463–1943” to underline the parallel between the medieval “Yugoslav” art and civilisation, suppressed in 1463 by foreign oppressors (in this case, the Ottomans, who invaded Bosnia at the time), and the new Yugoslavia (founded in 1943), where it could once again fully flourish after centuries of foreign domination.

While making further plans, it became clear that the financial and organisational burden of transporting the entire exhibition with its extensive collection of casts would be too significant. Thus, at the initiative of the Federal Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, a smaller exhibition of Yugoslav medieval frescoes was assembled in the following years under the auspices of Milan Kašanin, the head of the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade,⁹³ and it travelled around Europe between 1953 and 1956. It was staged in some of the most renowned galleries and museums: in 1953 in the United Kingdom (Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Gallery, 20 August – 27 September;⁹⁴ London, Tate Gallery, 23 October – 13 December (Fig. 11));⁹⁵ in 1954

nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951)*, a letter from Popović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Čolaković, July 1950.

⁹¹ Catalogue: *Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti 1951*.

⁹² As this venue was smaller, the collection of exhibits here included twenty originals and thirty fresco copies less than the Paris event.

⁹³ POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 35.

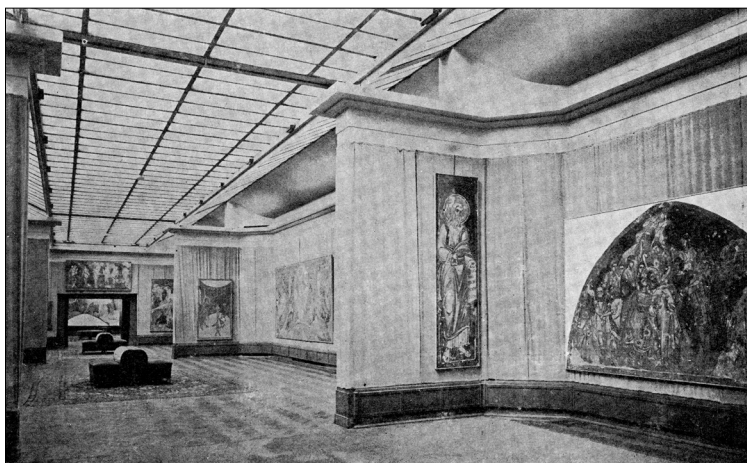
⁹⁴ Catalogue: *Yugoslav Medieval Frescoes 1953a*.

⁹⁵ Catalogue: *Yugoslav Medieval Frescoes 1953b*. For a report on the exhibitions in London and Edinburgh, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, *Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967*, 203, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložbe fresaka*, 6 May 1953.

11. *Exhibition Yugoslav Medieval Frescoes (Replicas), Tate Gallery, London, 1953*
(*Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964*)



12. *Exhibition Fresques médiévales yougoslaves, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 1954*
(*Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964*)



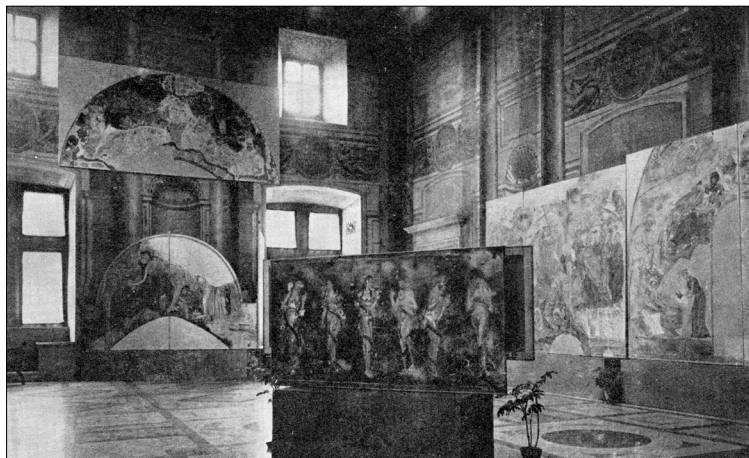
in the Netherlands (Utrecht, Centraal Museum, 3 January – 15 February),⁹⁶ Germany (Düsseldorf, Kunstverein, 21 February – 28 March;⁹⁷ Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 20 July –

⁹⁶ Catalogue: *Joegoslavische middeleeuwse fresco's 1954*. For basic information, as well as a photograph of the exhibition, see Centraal Museum Utrecht, *Joegoslavische middeleeuwse fresco's*, <https://hdl.handle.net/21.12130/exhibit.07B242C2-CB2A-4318-B88A-02672DFB5D06>.

⁹⁷ For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, *Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom*, 91, *Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967*, 203, *Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izveštaj o otvorenju izložbe jugoslovenskih srednjovekovnih fresaka u Düsseldorfu 21. februara 1954*, 24 February 1954.



13. Exhibition *Mittelalterliche Fresken aus Jugoslawien*,
Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna, 1955
(*Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964*)



14. Exhibition *Affreschi medievali jugoslavi*, *Palazzo Venezia*, Rome, 1955
(*Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964*)

August;⁹⁸ Belgium (Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 2 April – May) (Fig. 12), Switzerland (Zurich, Kunsthhaus, 2 June – 11 July),⁹⁹ and Austria (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 23 October –

⁹⁸ About the problems with the organisation in Munich, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203 Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from the Embassy of the People's Republic of Yugoslavia in Bonn, 10 August 1953: "Furthermore, we are still negotiating with Munich and expect to be successful here as well, despite the reserved stance of the responsible Munich circles towards everything that is Yugoslav (because of the strong influence of the Vatican)."

⁹⁹ For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložba freska u Cirihi, 29 July 1954.

5 January 1955)¹⁰⁰ (Fig. 13); in 1955 again in Germany (Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, 26 January – 28 February),¹⁰¹ in Finland (Helsinki, Ateneum, 18 March – 17 April),¹⁰² Denmark (Kopenhagen, Charlottenburg, 4 June – 4 July),¹⁰³ and Italy (Venice, Padiglione Centrale della Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte ai Giardini, 11 September – 2 October;¹⁰⁴ Rome, Palazzo Venezia, 19 October – November (Fig. 14)),¹⁰⁵ where the tour also concluded in 1956 (Milano, Palazzo della Permanente, 11 January – 5 February).¹⁰⁶ Although there was a demand for further exhibitions, e.g. at the Landesmuseum in Graz, the custodian of the copies, the Gallery of Frescoes, refused to allow for any more.¹⁰⁷ The copies of all exhibited frescoes, including those from

¹⁰⁰ For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložba “Srednjovekovne freske u Jugoslaviji” u Beču.

¹⁰¹ Catalogue: *Mittelalterliche Fresken* 1954. For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izveštaj o izložbi fresaka održanoj u Hamburgu.

¹⁰² Catalogue: *Keskiaikaisia freskoja* 1955.

¹⁰³ For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izveštaj o izložbi “Jugoslovenska srednjovekovna umetnost” u Kopenhagenu.

¹⁰⁴ Catalogue: *Affreschi medievali* 1955. The initiative to organize the exhibition in Venice to coincide with the 18th International Congress of Art History (11–18 September 1955) came from France Stele; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from France Stele, 21 January 1955; AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Ivo Frol, Izložba srednjovekovnih fresaka u Jugoslaviji, 28 January 1955; AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložba fresaka u Italiji, 29 January 1955. Contrary to the organizers' expectations, who anticipated that the public would be “knocked off their feet,” the exhibition was received rather poorly. This was likely due to the inferior venue within the otherwise very representative *Giardini*, the absence of an organized ceremonial opening, and a lack of publicity; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from France Stele, 3 October 1955.

¹⁰⁵ For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izveštaj o izložbi naših fresaka, 21 October 1955. The reception of the exhibition in Rome was apparently very good, much better than in Venice. On 22 October France Stele held a guided tour and lecture, both with good attendance; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from France Stele, 31 October 1955.

¹⁰⁶ To coincide with the exhibition, France Stele held a lecture for members of the press; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, newspaper clippings, 15 January 1956. For a list of exhibitions, see also *Naše freske u inostranstvu* 1964, p. 3; POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from Ivo Frol to Landesmuseum Joanneum, 17 January 1956; AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Marko Ristić to General Consulate of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in Graz, 6 February 1956.



15. The main hall (hall XII), Slovenian frescoes seen in the background, *L'art médiéval yougoslave*, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

Slovenia, namely became part of the collection of the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade, where they are kept to this day.¹⁰⁸

While these exhibitions focused on Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, they also included some from Slovenia and Croatia, though not as many as in Paris. The following copies were exhibited: those from Mače (The Procession of the Magi, in some cases also The Virgin Adoring),¹⁰⁹ Turnišče (Angel), and Visoko (The Last Judgement/The Damned Woman and the Devil), while Croatia was included with Beram (Dance of the Dead and/or The Procession of the Magi)¹¹⁰ and Butoniga (Head of Christ). The much more modest exhibition catalogues replaced Krleža's introduction with one by the director of the Gallery of Frescoes, Milan Kašanin, who also very briefly, in a single short paragraph, mentioned the Slovenian frescoes.¹¹¹ As the years progressed, a foreword by Svetozar Radojčić – completely ignoring the Slovenian copies – was also added to some of the catalogues.¹¹² The reception of these exhibitions was similar to that of the Paris exhibition, as anticipated. Additionally, despite some disapproval from the organizers, they were very popular among various Christian and religious associations.¹¹³ The organisers

¹⁰⁸ For a list of all copies of Slovenian frescos, see POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 323.

¹⁰⁹ For example in London, where more space was dedicated to the exhibition.

¹¹⁰ In Paris only The Procession of the Magi.

¹¹¹ E.g. KAŠANIN 1953. In some cases, one of the introductions was written by a local art historian; see e.g. JAMES 1953; TALBOT RICE 1953.

¹¹² E.g. the Venice exhibition catalogue: RADOJČIĆ 1955.

¹¹³ AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967,

were also dissatisfied with the media's frequent reference to "Byzantine" rather than "Yugoslav" frescoes,¹¹⁴ which attested to the less-than-successful promotion of the idea of an autonomous Yugoslav medieval art and a common cultural history among the Yugoslav nations.

THE RECEPTION AND ROLE OF SLOVENIAN FRESCOS AT THE YUGOSLAV MEDIEVAL ART EXHIBITIONS

Despite the expert community's overwhelming and mostly positive response to the abovementioned exhibitions, very few reactions were noted regarding the presented copies of Slovenian frescoes. Both in Paris and at the other exhibitions abroad, more attention would always be paid to the other parts of the exhibition,¹¹⁵ which is not surprising given its concept and, to some extent, also its layout. In France, most of the Slovenian copies were placed in the main, central hall, whose concept was the closest to being "Yugoslav", as it was the only one to bring together artworks from as many as four (of the five) participating republics (Fig. 15).¹¹⁶ However, it also contained the *stećci* tombstones, set up as that hall's main attraction. The middle of the room featured a cast of one of the most splendid examples of this kind in existence, the so-called Zgošća Stećak,¹¹⁷ with 17 other *stećci* tombstones arranged around it, while copies of Serbian, Slovenian, and Croatian frescoes hung on the walls (in groups according to the republics) (Fig. 16).¹¹⁸ Together with two Croatian copies from Zadar, the copies of the frescoes from Vrzdeneč and Visoko were placed in another hall among the architectural sculpture casts from the Croatian Littoral, including the magnificent portal from Trogir (Fig. 17).¹¹⁹ Therefore, the Slovenian and Croatian

203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izvještaj o otvorenju izložbe jugoslovenskih srednjovekovnih fresaka u Düsseldorfu, 21. februara 1954, 24 February, p. 3. Among other things, the report mentions that a few days after the opening of the exhibition in Düsseldorf, the local Association for Christian Culture organised an event with a screening of the film *Život fresaka*, followed by a lecture on medieval art, after which a Gregorian choir performed medieval music. The excerpt is underlined, with the word "*koješta!*" ("ridiculous!") added in red. The part of the report stating that the exhibition attracted considerable interest from religious associations is also underlined.

¹¹⁴ The organisers specifically referred to the Catholic magazine *Tablet*, where, while discussing the Edinburgh exhibition, the frescoes were referred to as Byzantine without mentioning their Yugoslav origins.

¹¹⁵ The same is true of Croatian frescoes, whose number was significantly smaller. They were only included in the Paris event but not in the other Yugoslav fresco exhibitions.

¹¹⁶ Macedonia was not represented here, while Montenegro was not a part of the exhibition at all; see *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950, pp. 52–57.

¹¹⁷ In the catalogue *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950, p. 54, this exhibit is listed as the "Bogomil funerary monument of 'Koulin Ban'". For more information about it, see MAZRAC 2021.

¹¹⁸ Alongside Beram, also frescoes from the sacristy of St Timothy from the Zagreb Cathedral.

¹¹⁹ Hall II included casts from Trogir, Zadar, Split, Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Rab; see *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950, pp. 31–33.



16. Hall XII, Slovenian frescoes, *L'art médiéval yougoslave*, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950.
From left to right: Birth of Christ, Crngrob; Death of Mary, Muljava; St George, Bodešče;
Death of St Catherine, Turnišče; Procession of the Magi, Mače; St Martin, Martjanci (Tovariš, 3 July 1950)



17. Hall II, fresco of the Nativity from Vrzdenc on the left wall,
L'art médiéval yougoslave, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

fresco copies were placed in such a manner as to leave the centre stage to the other artworks. Based on the available photographs, it is very difficult to glean any relevant information about the layout of the exhibits at the travelling exhibitions of Yugoslav frescoes. However, given the modest number of Slovenian copies included, we can assume they were probably not particularly highlighted.

In the texts accompanying the exhibitions, Slovenian works were even more noticeably placed in the background. Krleža's introduction did not discuss the Slovenian frescoes at all, though they were included in the other two catalogue texts of the Paris exhibition. They were briefly, in just a few sentences, presented in the outline of the development of medieval art, written by Bošković and Ljubinković,¹²⁰ as well as in Paul Deschamps's preface. The latter particularly highlighted the Nativity scene from Vrzenec and placed it alongside the French frescoes with the same motif from the church of St Julian in Poncé-sur-le-Loire (from the 13th/15th century (?)) and the crypt of the Benedictine abbey church of Saint-Amant-de-Boixe (from the 14th century).¹²¹ This is probably why, after the exhibition, the French also made a copy of this work for their copy collection, kept at the *Musée des Monuments français* museum. The texts by Yugoslav authors, published in foreign-language editions by Yugoslav publishers, largely ignored the Slovenian frescoes as well.¹²² In the best cases, they merely included an occasional reproduction. For example, they were featured in this manner in the *Les Nouvelles yougoslaves* magazine, published by the *L'Agence Yougoslave d'Information* agency in Paris, where details of the frescoes of St Martin from Martjanci and The Procession of the Magi from Mače were published, though the latter was misidentified as the fresco from Beram because of an erroneous caption.¹²³ Fewer materials are associated with the travelling exhibitions of frescoes, and even among those, no references to the Slovenian frescoes can be found, let alone any more detailed treatments.

The copies of Slovenian frescoes did not receive any special attention from the foreign media, either. In the *Art et Style* magazine, Vercors illustrated the diversity of the artworks exhibited in Paris by also referring to Luxuria from Visoko, which he compared to Cranach.¹²⁴ All other French texts that have been reviewed, even the more elaborate ones written by art historians, completely ignored the Slovenian Gothic frescoes, even though two lectures by France Stele on

¹²⁰ Preparing the texts for the catalogue involved a lot of work and complications, as nothing was good enough.

¹²¹ DESCHAMPS 1950, p. 9.

¹²² Of course, there were many references to Slovenian frescoes in the local press, but these are not relevant to understanding the reception of the exhibitions abroad and are, therefore, not discussed here.

¹²³ AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, "L'art médiéval yougoslave au Palais de Chaillot," *Les Nouvelles yougoslaves*, 25 March 1950 (newspaper clipping). A reproduction of Nativity from Vrzenec was published in KRLEŽA 1950a, p. 41. Other publications (without references to Slovenian frescoes): BOŠKOVIĆ 1950, p. 6; KERLEJA 1950.

¹²⁴ Apart from Luxuria, he also pointed out the Archangel from Mileševo, the fresco that he compared to Tintoretto, and the *stećci* tombstones.

Slovenian medieval art were organised in Paris as part of the exhibition's accompanying programme.¹²⁵ In some texts, the copies of Slovenian frescoes are mentioned as one of the groups of exhibits, though they are mostly not singled out at all. Nevertheless, the exhibition did resonate beyond the borders of France and Yugoslavia.¹²⁶ In the context of the reception of the Slovenian frescoes, the report written by Otto Demus is particularly relevant, as he (understandably) highlighted them as the part of the exhibition that was most relevant for Austria, although he did not elaborate on them in detail. However, he underlined the significance of the copying project itself and wished they also adopted it in Austria to assemble their collection of frescoes.¹²⁷

Due to the volume of the materials relevant to the present research, it was impossible to carry out a comprehensive and systematic analysis of sources. However, the newspaper archive collected by the organisers¹²⁸ and some other available sources provide a relatively good insight into the media reactions to the "spin-off" mural exhibitions. The events were mostly seen as exhibitions of Serbian and Macedonian frescoes exclusively,¹²⁹ and it is particularly surprising that even the Yugoslav expert publications treated them as such.¹³⁰ In the rare cases when Slovenian copies were also mentioned, they were mostly merely listed as the less important of the two groups presented, similarly as Kašanin introduced them at the beginning of the catalogue text.¹³¹ Only the Italian press elaborated on the Slovenian part of the exhibition, especially the Trieste *Il Piccolo* newspaper, which severely criticised the historically unfounded concept of "Yugoslav medieval frescoes" whose use the organisers forced as an umbrella term for the diverse range of artworks created in completely dissimilar cultural and historical circumstances. Unlike most other publications, *Il Piccolo* highlighted the Gothic frescoes from Slovenia and Istria (especially

¹²⁵ 27 May: La peinture médiévale Slovène, 3 June: L'art médiéval slovène. Sa position géographique; see AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Conférences avec projections.

¹²⁶ Longer contributions include the following, for example: BRUSSE 1950 (Netherlands); MAEHLE 1950 (Norway); AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Max Huggler, "Mittelalterliche Kunst in Jugoslawien", *Der Bund (Bern)*, 16 April 1950 (newspaper clipping) (Switzerland); AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Richard Dupierreux, "L'art médiéval yougoslave", *Le Soir*, 12 April 1950 (newspaper clipping) (Belgium); AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovjekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Richard Dupierreux, "La peinture chez les Slaves du Sud", *Le Soir*, 13 April 1950 (newspaper clipping) (Belgium). The latter article focuses on Croatian painting and mentions Slovenia once.

¹²⁷ DEMUS 1950, pp. 75–76. The contribution was also reported on by ZADNIKAR 1950, p. 206.

¹²⁸ AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovjekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, transcripts of media coverage.

¹²⁹ BIRCHLER 1954a; BIRCHLER 1954b; "Im Kunsthaus" 1954.

¹³⁰ *Naše freske u inostranstvu* 1964.

¹³¹ KAŠANIN 1953, p. 7: "The first group, which is of much greater importance for the history of art, comprises the frescos of the central and southern regions of the country. They were painted in the Orthodox Churches of the area and are connected with the Christian East. The second group, comprising a considerably smaller number of frescoes, is composed of the paintings of the north-western parts of Yugoslavia. These frescoes are to be found in the Roman Catholic churches of the Roman and Gothic style. They are certainly not without the naïve charm of the provincial art of spontaneous expression." See also "Medieval Art" 1953.

the works of Vicent of Kastav) as much superior to the Serbian and Macedonian murals, which it described as reactionary and rigid.¹³²

It was probably precisely because of such arguments that the short history of the participation of Slovenian frescoes at Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions ended in 1956. By that time, some of the exhibits (as well as their transport packaging) had also been quite damaged, so the authorities had to cancel all ongoing arrangements to send the exhibition to the United States of America for at least a year.¹³³ Throughout the 1960s, new editions of exhibitions of Yugoslav medieval frescoes continued to be regularly staged abroad, initially mainly outside Europe in South and North America. However, these events no longer included any Slovenian works but instead focused only on Serbian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin paintings.¹³⁴ Meanwhile, however, the project of copying frescoes continued in Slovenia as allowed by the available financial resources, and a representative collection was established, which is now kept at the National Gallery.¹³⁵

In 1971, the copies of Slovenian frescoes were once again presented in Paris, this time in the *Grand Palais* palace at the exhibition titled *L'art en Yougoslavie de la préhistoire à nos jours*, thus in a significantly different context, not specialised in the Middle Ages.¹³⁶ It was not until 1983 that they once again became part of a presentation of medieval art abroad. This time, they were included, together with frescoes from Serbia and Macedonia, in the exhibition *Mittelalterliche Fresken in Jugoslawien* in Villach (22 August – 16 September), organised by the National Museum in Belgrade and the National Gallery in Ljubljana.¹³⁷

¹³² BALDI 1956.

¹³³ AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Ivo Frol, Izložba fresaka u SAD, 31 August 1956.

¹³⁴ Brazil (Bienale de São Paulo, 1961), Venezuela (Caracas, 1962), Uruguay (Montevideo, 1962), Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1962), Mexico (Monterrey, Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Xalapa, 1962; San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi, and Durango, 1963), Chile (Santiago de Chile, Viña del Mar, Punta Arenas, Antofagasta, 1963); Canada (Ottawa, 1962; Montreal, 1962–63; Vancouver and London, 1963). The USA tour lasted from 1964 to 1966, and the exhibition visited most major cities (New York, Washington, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Los Angeles, etc.). Afterwards, exhibitions were also held in Eastern Europe, for example in Romania, Hungary, and the Soviet Union. The commissioner in charge of these exhibitions was Nada Antić-Kommenović from the Belgrade Gallery of Frescoes; see POPOVIĆ 2022, pp. 47–49. In 1964, there were also initiatives to create a new version of the medieval art exhibition, which would also present paintings from the western part of Yugoslavia. However, the course of the events is unclear; see JENKO 2007, p. 38; National Gallery Archive, Ljubljana (NGA), Umetnostni fond, 16 (VII/3), Kopiranje fresk. Srednjeveške freske in kopije – sezname, Ksenija Rozman, Zapisnik, 5 October 1964.

¹³⁵ JENKO 2007, pp. 26–44. NGA, Umetnostni fond, 16 (VII/3), Kopiranje fresk. Srednjeveške freske in kopije – sezname, Ksenija Rozman, Zapisnik, 5 October 1964: the financial support for the project was obtained because of the intention to keep exhibiting the collection, but apparently not in the context of joint Yugoslav presentations.

¹³⁶ *L'art en Yougoslavie* 1971. About the medieval part of the exhibition, see IVANČEVIĆ 1972.

¹³⁷ *Mittelalterliche Fresken* 1983. The exhibition featured twelve copies from nine locations in Slovenia. This time, their presentation was much more equivalent and balanced than in the 1950s. The accompanying catalogue texts on both parts of the exhibition were of equal length: Emilijan Cevc wrote about the Slovenian frescoes, while Nada Kommenović elaborated on the Serbian/Macedonian examples.

The elaborate Paris exhibition was a well-considered and carefully conceived project with a concept that was very understandable, given the country's aspirations during its first major artistic presentation in the West. With this exhibition, Yugoslavia strived to present an overview of medieval artistic endeavours over a large territory, which necessarily included artworks exceedingly dissimilar in terms of quality as well as the socio-political and cultural context in which they had been created. As France Stele emphasised in a 1953 article that looks back on the exhibition's concept, the event had been notable precisely because of its broad and diverse programme, whose purpose had been to allow the organisers "to address the general art-historical issue of the Balkan Peninsula".¹³⁸ Such a selection inevitably led to pronounced differences in the reception of the various parts of the exhibition. The Byzantine-influenced frescoes were the most highlighted and highest-quality exhibits. As expected, both professionals and the general public responded to them with the most enthusiasm. Bogomil art also garnered significant attention due to its unusual nature and the way it was presented in the accompanying texts and at the exhibition itself. It could also be conveniently associated with Yugoslavia's position, goals, and aspirations. The other parts of the exhibition remained in the background, as is also clearly evident from the reception of the Slovenian frescoes. As reported by Venio Pilon, who was among those in charge of overseeing the Paris exhibition, »the great Masters of Sopoćani, Nerezi, and Mileševo, with their monumentality and combativeness, somewhat overshadowed Johannes de Laybaco and the gracefulness of his school.«¹³⁹ These were not particularly outstanding in terms of quality, and they were also difficult to integrate into the narrative about the anticipation of the new Yugoslavia in the Middle Ages. Therefore, they were not sufficiently and appropriately included in the texts that the organisers used to contextualise the exhibition, so the public more or less overlooked them. The situation at the subsequent spin-off fresco exhibitions during the 1950s was similar: there, the Slovenian frescoes also unsuccessfully "competed" for attention with Serbian and Macedonian ones until the organisers decided to refine the concept and excluded the Slovenian copies from the more recent versions of the otherwise very successful exhibition.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ STELE 1953.

¹³⁹ CANKAR, PILON 2015, p. 46.

¹⁴⁰ In addition to research programme P6-0061 and research project J6-2587, stated in the colophon, this chapter is also a result of the research project "Exhibiting of Art and Architecture between Artistic and Ideological Concepts. Case Study of Slovenia, 1947–1979" (J6-3137), financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

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**SLOVENSKE FRESKE NA JUGOSLOVANSKIH RAZSTAVAH SREDNJEVEŠKE UMETNOSTI
V PETDESETIH LETIH 20. STOLETJA**

Povzetek

Socialistična federativna republika Jugoslavija je umetniške razstave v tujino pošiljala v okviru formaliziranih programov kulturne izmenjave, ki je igrala pomembno vlogo v kulturni diplomaciji in pozicioniranju države v mednarodnem prostoru. Eden od najpomembnejših razstavnih projektov in hkrati prva tovrstna predstavitev Jugoslavije na Zahodu po drugi svetovni vojni je bila razstava Jugoslovanska srednjeveška umetnost (*L'art médiéval yougoslave*) v Parizu leta 1950, med letoma 1953 in 1956 pa je bila organizirana še vrsta manjših razstav, osredotočenih na jugoslovanske stenske poslikave, ki so gostovale v nekaterih najpomembnejših umetnostnih središčih zahodne Evrope. Na vseh omenjenih razstavah so bile tuji publiki predstavljene tudi umetnine iz Slovenije. Šlo je za kopije gotskih stenskih poslikav, ki so bile po večini izdelane prav za ta namen.

Navedene razstave odpirajo vrsto raziskovalnih vprašanj, in sicer od njihove organizacije, koncepta, recepcije in vloge v kulturni diplomaciji do vpliva na razvoj medievistike in (sodobne) likovne umetnosti. Doslej so se raziskovalci osredotočali le na analizo uvodnika Miroslava Krleže k pariški razstavi v kontekstu razvoja koncepcije jugoslovanske kulture in umetnosti, vsa preostala vprašanja pa so ostala odprta. Pričujoča razprava se zato osredotoča na nekaj pomembnih izhodišč za nadaljnje raziskovanje, pri čemer jemlje pod drobnogled razstave, ki so vključevale umetnine iz Slovenije. Opira se predvsem na vire iz fonda Zvezne komisije za kulturne zveze s tujino Arhiva Jugoslavije, iz Informacijsko-dokumentacijskega centra za dediščino pri Ministrstvu za kulturo Republike Slovenije, iz Francoskega nacionalnega arhiva in Arhiva Galerije fresk v Beogradu. Obravnava zlasti tiste aspekte, ki so za razumevanje umestitve slovenskih del na razstave jugoslovanske srednjeveške umetnosti najbolj relevantni: prinaša vpogled v projekt kopiranja srednjeveških fresk v povojni Sloveniji, natančno predstavi razstavo v Parizu z vidika njene organizacije, zasnove in izvedbe, identificira razstave jugoslovanskih srednjeveških fresk, ki so vključevale tudi slovenska dela, in na podlagi analize medijskih odzivov nanje ovrednoti mesto slovenskih stenskih poslikav znotraj obravnavanih projektov.