

INVITATION

**Institute for the protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (IPCHS),
Restoration centre Ljubljana and Regional office of Nova Gorica,
The Slovenian Society for Conservation-Restoration (DRS)
and
University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI)**

IS ORGANISING

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP: CONSOLIDATION OF WALL PAINTINGS

GRADIŠČE 2022

Alberto Felici, SUPSI

The workshop will be held in two parts

Part one – online:
31st August to 2nd September 2022

Part two – on site (Gradišče near Divača – Church of St. Helen):
3rd to 7th October 2022



Introduction

The first part of the workshop will run for 3 days in August and September 2022 together with the Student's Summer school 2022. Through on-line presentations the attendees will get the basic information about the site and history of the church, wall painting monuments of the Karst region and Slovenia as a whole, techniques and materials of Slovenian wall paintings. The lectures will include the methodological and interdisciplinary approach for the conservation of wall paintings, data collection and data management, scientific research for the study of wall paintings, environmental monitoring and conditions of the church as well as some Slovenian, Swiss and Croatian Case studies.

The second part of the workshop will take place on site in the first week of October 2022. The main methods used in the recent past and those resulting from the latest research will be illustrated, with particular reference to treatments using inorganic materials and to the salts issues. Practical activities, such as consolidation trials and their assessment, will be held by Alberto Felici, with the collaboration of the conservators-restorers of IPCHS: Anka Batič, Marta Bensa, Katja Kavkler, Andrej Jazbec and Anita Kavčič Klančar. This activity will be closely linked to theoretical lectures and diagnostic investigations. During the week, excursions to the neighboring churches with precious medieval frescoes (Famlje, Vremški Britof, Dolenja vas) will be organized.

The Church of Saint Helen

At its core, the church of St Helen (Sveta Helena) in Gradišče is an example of early gothic architecture, probably built in the late 14th century. In the middle of the 16th century, a significantly larger presbytery was added, and thus, accordingly, the nave's walls had been risen. As the inscription "1653" on the front portal documents and witnesses, a last major renewal and upgrade occurred in the middle of the 17th century; it was in fact during that time that the current rectangular windows in the presbytery and nave, as well as the bell-cote, were added.

The nave is richly decorated with wall paintings. The iconographic composition is conventional for a smaller medieval church. On the triumphal arch one could once admire the *Annunciation*, which it is not preserved; on the nave's south wall there are scenes from the *Passion of Christ*, while on the nave's north wall the *Adoration of the Magi* is depicted, supplemented by scenes of people's daily lives of the period as well as some animal anecdotal motives. Although the author of the wall paintings is unknown, similarities in style and iconography of other wall paintings found in the nearby church in Hrastovlje, dated to 1490, allow us to make an undoubtable connection with the painter Johannes from Kastav (Janez iz Kastva). Most probably the church in Gradišče was painted by one of Janez's assistants or associates with whom he might have already worked in Hrastovlje. A feature of significant interest of the church in Gradišče is the graffiti found on the frescoes, which can be placed into the first half of the 16th century.

Deterioration phenomena

The wall paintings, at first visual inspection, show major signs of decay phenomena like:

- decohesion of the pictorial surface;
- abrasion of the pictorial surface;
- damages due to the presence of salts on the surface.

The big losses of the cycle, particularly in the upper part of the north wall, in the parts near the windows and in the south and west wall, have already been filled and plastered in previous restoration interventions in 1960s. There are no documents regarding applications of protective or consolidating agents in the past restorations.

Renovations

The renovation of the roof's stone tiles was concluded in 2005. Since 2017 the static load of the church has been constantly and systemically monitored. In August 2018, the roof was reconditioned through the installation of a steel reinforcing mesh and bars, while in 2019, windows with a UV protection foil were installed. The church exterior was restored in the Fall of 2021. The restoration of the exterior will be completed in the summer of 2022 and the reconstruction of the ceiling of the nave is also planned at the same time.



Lecturer Alberto Felici

Alberto Felici is a restorer of wall paintings, graduated from the Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence and graduated in art history from the Florentine university. From 1988 to 2000 he worked as a freelancer working on wall paintings and stuccoes in various regions of Italy. Since 2001 he has been a restorer and lecturer at the Opificio Higher Education School, participating in research programs in collaboration with research centers of the National Research Council (CNR) and the University of Florence. Since 2007 he has been teaching in the master in conservation and restoration of the University of Applied Sciences of Italian Switzerland (SUPSI) in Lugano. Since 2010 he has been associated with the Institute for the Conservation and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage (ICVBC) of the CNR. Since 2019 he has been an official of the Superintendence of Archeology, Fine Arts and Landscape (Sabap) of Florence. In his career as a restorer he intervened on works by Giotto, Donatello, Filippino Lippi, Leonardo da Vinci. Author of over 70 publications on executive techniques and methodologies for the restoration of mural paintings and stuccos in specialist magazines.



LOCATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Gradišče near Divača, Slovenija – Church of Saint Helen

Link to the location on Google maps:

<https://www.google.si/maps/place/Cerkvica+svete+Helene/@45.6739109,13.9911428,17.62z/data=!4m13!1m7!3m6!1sox477b38ef37466057:oxdced54coe75fca49!2zNjIxNSBHcmFkacWhxI1lIHByaSBEdaXZhxI1p!3b1!8m2!3d45.6729429!4d13.9913283!3m4!1sox477b39ofboadffb9:ox8f356c4ce7e7732c!8m2!3d45.6737195!4d13.9923747?hl=sl>

ACCOMODATION

The participants are obliged to arrange their own accommodation. Here are some accommodation suggestions in the vicinity of the location of the workshop:

- Zenja Appartments on Karst, Dolnje Ležeče (<https://www.zenja.si/>)
- Hotel Malovec, Divača (<https://hotel-malovec.si/>)

NECESSARY EQUIPMENT

The participants must provide their own personal protective work equipment, including a protective face mask with filter for work with ammonia.

REGISTRATION AND REGISTRATION FEE

Participation at the Workshop (up to 15 participants):

€160 - For members of The Slovenian Society of Conservation-restoration (DRS) with a paid annual membership fee.

€200 - For non-members.

Prior applications are required (form attached) to the email address of the secretary of the DRS association: info@slodrs.si

The application deadline is 20th August, 2022. We are collecting applications until the positions are filled.

The official languages of the symposium are Slovenian and English.

For more information, you can contact the organizing committee:

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Best regards!