



Art and Adversity: Patrons, Masters and Works of Art

Date: September 16-17, 2021

Deadline for proposals: 15 July 2021

Grave adversities, like natural disasters, infectious diseases, earthquakes, conflagrations and floods, as well as minor ones, more personal, like death or illness of a family member, that afflicted large and small communities in the same measure, urban and political centres as well as their periphery during the early modern age, were important incentive for commissioning works of art. Such commissions, whether made by individuals or various social groups such as religious orders, confraternities or the state institutions, were often primarily an expression of piety and devotion or they had various purposes of commemorating the victims, displaying political or social prestige and power, affirming corporate identity or civic pride. Sometimes they were just the fulfilment of a vow or the demonstration of personal or collective resilience, be it spiritual, social or economic.

We are interested in proposals for papers that address any aspect related to the commissioning and production of works of art during the early modern period, instigated by adversities like natural or human-caused disasters and epidemics. The conference will be focused on the Adriatic area and its surroundings, that is, primarily on the territory of the Serenissima and the Habsburg Empire, although the papers discussing other European centres and political entities are also very welcome. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- The state, its representatives, the Church and Church orders as donors or promoters of votive commissions
- Confraternities and contagious diseases: commissions and artists
- Personal tragedies and individual devotion: patrons, artists and votive art
- The images of the plague and the representation of death
- Devastating earthquakes and conflagrations: the damage and the role of the community and individuals in renovation and urban modernisation
- The commissions of votive altars, chapels, works of art and altar ware such as reliquaries, monstrances and vestments
- Visual interpretation and reinterpretation of myths connected to cataclysms: deluges, conflagrations, earthquakes, epidemics
- Representing fear, irony and sarcasm, loss and regaining hope in great adversities and perils
- Building lazarettos, representing isolation and quarantine
- Patron saints and personal protectors: Sts. Roch and Sebastian, Sts. Cosmas and Damien, Our Lady of Health, St. Emygdus, St. Florian, St. John Nepomuceno
- Commemorative inscriptions, memories, tombs and tombstones

The conference is organized by the Sub-department of Early Modern Art (Dept. of Art History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, Croatia) and the team of the research project ET TIBI DABO: Commissions and Donors in Istria, Croatian Littoral and North Dalmatia from 1300 to 1800 (<http://donart.uniri.hr/>) supported by Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ).

Given the sanitary situation the conference will take place on line.

Please send a 300-word proposal and a short C.V. in English or Italian to baroknarijeka@gmail.com by 15 July 2021. Decisions will be announced no later than 15 August 2021. We intend to publish the proceedings of the conference both online and in print.

