

Medium-term Strategic Plan of the Institute of Art History of the Research Centre for the Humanities (2020–2023)

1. Analysis of the external environment and review of the internal capacities

The Institute of Art History is currently the most important core institution of Hungarian art history writing. Above all, the Institute studies the history of art in Hungary – i.e. in the historical territory of Hungary – from the Arpadian Age till the present day. The history of art – be it of any country – is always universal, thus the research carried out at the Institute always interprets Hungarian art history in a broader context. Regarding the Middle Ages, this context incorporates the whole of Europe, in the Early Modern Age mostly Central Europe, and later on the framework of investigation zooms out again. The research profile has become more complete and more proportionate, and research into old art has begun to thrive. The Institute of Art History is the only place where institutional research is conducted into Hungarian art and art in Hungarian territory; neither art history departments, nor museums are capable of performing this task. The institutional research of Hungarian art and art in Hungary is of national interest.

The Institute of Art History traditionally helps the functioning of the HAS Scientific Committee on Art History, and it has provided a firm background for the international relations of the profession. The Institute takes an active part in the International Committee of the History of Art (CIHA) and the International Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art (RIHA), including its participation in the editorial works related to the RIHA online journal.

The Institute of Art History has been a member of the Research Centre for the Humanities since 2012, i.e. ever since the foundation of the latter. This has had an essential effect on the situation of the Institute. The Institute can cooperate more tightly with those institutes whose historical interest and research practice are close to those of art historians, such as the Institute of History, the Institute for Literary Studies, and the Institute of Archaeology. We have taken part in joint programmes (“Lendület” [Momentum] research teams, NRDIO programmes, conferences, etc.). We will continue to cooperate in the future, and we will strengthen our institutional relations.

Ever since its foundation, the Institute of Art History has been a priority site of research on art history; and its scientific role has become more important since the reshuffling of the professional tasks of museums and the transformation of the structure of historic preservation. Its regular professional partners include the museums of national collection and other public collections (Hungarian National Museum, National Széchényi Library, Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest History Museum, Museum of Fine Arts – Hungarian National Gallery, Museum of Applied Arts).

The professional activities of the Institute can – to some extent – support the research and scientific tasks of historic preservation. In fact, this cooperation had started earlier (research on Budapest and Lipótváros). There was a big topography project at the Institute in the past, and there is one running currently (with NRDIO funding) which is working on the assessment of the art history and historic monuments of the town of Kőszeg. Medium topographical endeavours have also been successful in the past at the Institute (Székesfehérvár, Fejér county). The research staff of the Institute is not numerous enough to begin a systematic

topographical endeavour, and without substantial external sources, such works cannot be carried out.

The Institute maintains good working relations with higher educational institutions – most of all, with the three university departments of art history in Hungary (ELTE, PPKE, KRE): the fellows of the Institute perform educational tasks, hold courses, supervise theses, and take part in doctoral defences. There is an ongoing cooperation with the art historian training programme of Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj, Romania. The supply of young scholars has been connected to the Young Researcher Scholarship scheme, in the framework of which we could provide young and talented graduates with a three-year and a four-year (2+2) scholarship. The Institute expects scholarship holders to begin their PhD studies during the time of their scholarship. Currently, all of our young scholarship holders are PhD students (in Budapest or in Vienna); and we do our best to support their studies financially as well (by paying their tuition fees).

The professional situation of the Institute is further reinforced by the fact that the Institute is in charge of the edition of two national journals of art history – *Acta Historiae Artium* and *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* [Art Historical Bulletin], and it is also this scholarly staff that prepares *Új Művészet* [New Art] as well as *Enigma*, the latter being an important press organ of historiographical research. The Institute will continue to support this kind of editorial work.

Drawing on professional cooperation and in order to overview art historical research and disseminate the results as widely as possible, we will reach out to the general public in September 2020 with a new and unique genre: we will organize an art history “festival” (Látkép 2020), which will bring together Hungarian art historical research within Hungary and beyond its borders, with the participation of all generations and research organizations (universities, museums and libraries). Released on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute’s foundation, the envisaged publication will offer a complete overview of art historical research, and will constitute a significant achievement in Hungarian art history writing.

2. Mission statement of the Institute

As it follows from our mission statement that the Institute is supposed to do research on each segment, *or the full scope* of Hungarian art and art in Hungary, our research interest is diverse both in time and in space. Spatially speaking, it does not only cover present-day Hungary but also the territory of historic Hungary and the Central European and universal contexts, while chronologically, it runs from the Middle Ages up to our days.

We would like to strengthen and develop those main professional trends that we have been working on (to be listed in the next point). Moreover, we are planning to further boost certain areas in order to diversify our research profile and make it more balanced. This is true for areas such as medieval fine arts and the arts of the second half of the 20th century. Besides aiming for the highest professional level in our activities, we believe in the diversity of opinions and the *raison d’être* of different narratives.

Our mission and tasks also include looking after and enriching *our repositories and collections*. Keeping up with the expectations of our age, our aim is to digitize as much of this material as possible and make it available on the Internet. The bulk of our collections have been successfully digitized, as will be presented in the next point. In addition to that, we have

to maintain a research service in certain repository collections.

3. Setting strategic objectives for the Research Centre/Institute in close correlation with the aims of the organizational units and groups

The establishment of the Institute was a milestone in the institutionalization of Hungarian art history writing and the social recognition thereof, and today it is undertaking an increasing number of tasks.

One of the most important scholarly duties of the Institute is the continuation of the art historical handbook series. Following the publication of the three double volumes, works were abandoned on the earlier (monumental) series for a long period of time (mostly for financial reasons). Launched with a completely modified concept and layout, the first volume of the new series presents the architecture and applied arts of the 19th century, whereas the second studies 19th-century painting and sculpture. (As a progressive initiative, the first volume was published in English as well, at the prestigious Birkhäuser publisher in Switzerland.) The next volume is being prepared at the Institute and will present Renaissance art in Hungary, in the same set-up. The volume – on hundreds of pages, with many pictures – is expected to come out in 2021. We have started arrangements for the next volume, presenting the second half of the 20th century as well.

Scientific work at the Institute is distributed according to chronological and thematic research teams. Concerning research into medieval and early modern art, Arpadian-age architecture and stone-masonry have been and will remain in focus; the comprehensive corpus of medieval shrines is approaching the finish line. Research on the relics of late medieval book painting is especially remarkable: the Institute acts as a hub for the research of early humanist libraries and research on the Corvina Library. One of the editors and several of the authors of the collection of studies presenting Hungarian medieval art in English, published at Viella, Rome, are the fellows of the Institute; and we take part in the planned Hungarian-language edition of the volume as well. The corpus of shrines is also being collected from the early modern period, and another important programme is research on the history of the collection of artworks in Hungary in the early days. The monograph of György Bocskay, the most famous late-Renaissance calligrapher is about to come out. The main research focuses of the 19th and 20th centuries are, on the hand, architecture, especially the architecture of Historicism (a fellow of the Institute is writing the monograph on Parliament), the educational system and museum network of architecture and applied arts, and on the other, the iconographic questions of historical painting. Monographic research is pursued regarding the 20th century, and the above-mentioned handbook of the 1945–1990 period is also under preparation. Research on the science history of art history is aimed primarily at the investigation and publication of sources (our publication forum is the journal *Enigma*). One of our fellows is writing a monograph (which will also constitute a Doctor of the Academy dissertation) about the history of the Hungarian art history writing in the early 20th century.

The scientific collections of the Institute

The Institute safeguards and handles the two biggest domestic data collections of the Hungarian art history writing. One of them is *Adattár* [Data Repository], the other is a bibliographical collection, *Magyar Művészek Lexikona* [The Encyclopaedia of Hungarian Artists]. The material contained in *Fotótár* [Photo Repository] is also significant, and other important units are *Levéltári Regesztagyűjtemény* [Archival Excerpts Collection] and

Pecsebmásolat-gyűjtemény [Collection of Seal Copies]. The Institute places a special emphasis on looking after and processing the above, and making them available for research. The fonds inventory of *Adattár* and *Levéltári Regesztagyűjtemény* came out in print as well (2000, 2001). At the new location, the storage conditions of materials are quite favourable, and the research service also operates smoothly. These materials are consulted continuously and to a great extent.

The digitization of the archived sources of the archives and data repository has been carried out systematically ever since 2012. All of the above improves the accessibility of the material, which is our priority task. The complete material of *Levéltári Regesztagyűjtemény* is available on the website, including its indices. Drawing on certain fonds of *Levéltári Regesztagyűjtemény*, the Institute has published art historical data in series (*Urbaria et Conscriptioes* 1–8, *Acta Cassae Parochorum* 1–7, *Documenta artis Paulinorum* 1–3). These series continue to be extremely useful guides (indices) for research.

The digitization of *Fotótár* has been finished, and currently, the entire database is searchable on the website with preview. The old material of *Fotótár* has been essentially turned into closed archives; the new records – continuously produced – are digital, and will be made available for the general public in this new system.

The digitization of *Lexikongyűjtemény* [Collection of Encyclopaedias] has also begun. This is a heterogeneous material composed of millions of notecards (including numerous small printed documents). The collection has been closed; following complete digitization, the material will continue to be preserved as closed archives. Up until the moment of complete digitization and online accessibility, we will ensure research service for the collection – it is used by many and continuously. In addition to that, the Institute also takes part in the Hungarian editing of the international artist encyclopaedia (Saur, and De Gruyter), supplying it with Hungarian data and entries.

The Institute's *library* is an important specialized library and an essential research tool. Its importance has only been amplified by its relocation under the same roof with four other specialized libraries of the RCH, which facilitated connectivity – physically speaking as well – between the various disciplines. Its enrichment must be ensured in the future as well – adjusted, however, to the collecting practices of the other libraries of the RCH.

Artistic collections operating with the Institute's professional surveillance

The Institute is in charge of the professional administration of two collections of the Academy: one of them being the *Művészeti Gyűjtemény* [Art Collection] (or *Képtár*) [Art Gallery], and the other the *Pszichiátriai Művészeti Gyűjtemény* [Psychiatric Art Collection].

As regards its material, the *Pszichiátriai Művészeti Gyűjtemény* is an artistic collection, whereas regarding the quality and special importance of the works, it is a scientific one. Thanks to the latest move, it is now under the same roof as the other collections of the Institute, which has created new circumstances for its safeguarding and handling. These conditions have been set up ideally. The collection is continuously visited by researchers and those interested. In 2018 an entire number of *Ars Hungarica* was dedicated to the presentation of the scholarly work carried out at the collection. In 2020 we are envisaging to hold a joint exhibition with the Janus Pannonius Museum of Pécs and a collection of the Pécs Psychiatry in the same genre, which will present the fruit of the professional cooperation between Irén

Jakab, psychologist (whose legacy is an important part of our collection) and Ferenc Martyn, painter.

The tasks related to the *Művészeti Gyűjtemény* safeguarded in the HAS headquarters are traditionally carried out by the Institute of Art History. As a founder, the Institute has the right to do so: it was the research fellows of the Institute (back in the days of Júlia Szabó's direction) who collected and recorded the artefacts preserved in the palace of the Academy and in its institutions. Accumulative and processing work took a long time; the filing system currently in use was created and has been operated by the fellows of the Institute. We will continue to perform this task – the changed legal circumstances (and the owner's intentions) do not exclude this. We wish to take part in the planned reconstruction of the central HAS building, the Palace. The Institute boasts excellent professionals who are experts in the history of 19th-century architecture and historic preservation. The fellows of the Institute have made an inventory of the building's values to be preserved, and they have arranged for comprehensive examinations by restorers. The restoration of the richly adorned Ceremonial Hall is a serious task requiring responsible professional control.

The Institute has organized highly successful exhibitions at the Headquarters of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At present, our possibilities are rather limited as the Art Collection had to be removed from its rooms due to static problems. It is still possible to organize scientifically established exhibitions, albeit at different locations. It is essential that a serious scientific catalogue be prepared for the exhibitions, as these will preserve and make public the research results. The catalogue of the exhibition organized for the 150th anniversary of the HAS Palace has won the Opus Mirabile Prize, awarded by the HAS Scientific Committee on Art History for the best collective work of the year.

4. Setting up a system of performance indicators adapted to the profile of the Research Centre/Institute, which will ensure that the implementation of the strategy could be monitored and directed

The apparently exact, albeit somewhat mechanical measurement of research achievements is provided by the stocktaking of the *publications registered* in the MTMT (Hungarian Repository of Scientific Works). This practice originates from outside the Institute, and there are some drawbacks to it (e.g. it does not distinguish between items such as short statements and thick monographs). The new version is not easier to use, either. All in all, it still makes sense to monitor numerically the production trends of the individual fellows, naturally keeping an eye out for their professionally outstanding achievements.

The organization of exhibitions and conferences, and the editing of the accompanying publications should be particularly appreciated as the direction and outcome of *collective work*. As there are only a few of those per year, their registration does not pose a problem.

The enrichment of the *data repositories and collections*, so important for the Institute, can be tracked by presenting the additions in a growing fonds inventory. The digital processing thereof can also be monitored, and in their final phase, they can be displayed on the Institute's website.

5. Determining the strategic action plans: the planning of research centre/institute-level programmes and projects in a yearly distribution

2020: *Fülep Lajos összegyűjtött művei*, Volume 5; exhibition and conference about 19th-century artefact replicas, organized jointly with the Lutheran National Museum
2021: *A reneszánsz* (a volume of the series entitled *A magyarországi művészet története*)
2022: *Henszlmann Imre levelezése III–IV*.
2023: The corpus of the shrines of medieval Hungary

Ars Hungarica, the Institute's journal has been published since 1973. In 2011 it was completely renewed inside and out. Four numbers are published per year. According to the new concept, nearly all the numbers are thematic issues. The reason for that is that the edition of the other two national art historical journals follows the classical order, and they reflect and shape the current course of science. *Ars Hungarica* is a perfectly adequate forum for publishing conference proceedings, and provides publicity for the new scientific achievements. In 2020 an issue analyzing the cooperation between Irén Jakab, psychologist and Ferenc Martyn, painter will be published.

The Institute releases some essential scholarly publications each year, which are important for Hungarian art history writing. These are partly the works of the Institute's fellows, and partly those of external experts. Scholarly book publishing has been the success story of the RCH: in cooperation with the editing unit of the Institute of History, we have published several volumes of art history. These efforts will be much needed in the future as well; best practices must be continued.

In connection with the publications, we must highlight the highly successful digitization programme of the Institute, which has created and has been operating the only scientific database of the art history profession. We have managed to digitize all of the earlier and new publications of the Institute of Art History and its predecessors, and we have made available a significant amount of historical archive sources. These volumes are freely accessible for anyone on the website. In the future, we wish to further facilitate research by integrating print and archive materials into a new and uniform database.

For each of the above listed items, the existence of external funds is paramount, for the basic subvention allocated to the Institute is not sufficient for the implementation of these projects. We have been trying to obtain the necessary funds by tendering and other methods, and in doing so, we also count on the coordinating role of the Research Centre for the Humanities.

6. Planning of the economic background of the Institute's action plans (business plan)

As the Institute is not an independent economic organ, its operation is ensured by the funds allocated to it in due proportion by the Research Centre for the Humanities. In addition to the basic subvention, we continuously apply for funds available for research, publication and digitization.

7. Monitoring the measures following from the strategy (feedback); measuring and verifying the implementation of the strategic actions

This is partly related to the contents of Point 4), within that, the figures of the MTMT (including citations) among others, as well as to any eventual media echo, the opinion and feedback of the interdisciplinary partners, and the evaluation of the Research Centre for the Humanities.

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