



Creative environment assessment form

**Applicant:**

Department of Theory and History of Art, The Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Trnava University in Trnava.

Unit of assessment:

A visual art and relevant sciences.

Context, mission and scientific profiling:

The Department of History and Theory of Art at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Trnava in Trnava is the only academic institution in Slovakia that currently provides education and scientific research in the field of history and theory of fine arts at all three levels of university study, i. e. bachelor's, master's and doctoral. It is also the only accredited workplace in Slovakia where habilitation and inauguration procedures (HIK) in the field can be held and the scientific and pedagogical titles of associate professor and professor can be obtained.

The Department of History and Theory of Art embarks on a vibrant scientific mission to engage with both stable and evolving global methodologies in the field. The scholarly and research staff is to delve into art and visual culture through an interdisciplinary lens, thereby enriching the understanding of Central European and domestic art's rich material and theoretical foundations. The department members offer a diverse range of courses, lectures, and seminars in Art and Cultural History. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, they actively engage in research, publishing, and public lectures. They aim to share their research with the professional community and the general public, fostering a broader understanding and appreciation of the field.

Most of the department's publication outputs are monographs, theoretical and material studies, scientific works published in edited volumes, conference proceedings, and exhibition catalogues. The staff are frequently invited to develop concepts for permanent and thematic short-term exhibitions in museums and galleries. The scientific studies and journal articles written by the department members are frequently accepted by the editorial boards of leading periodicals and editors of monographic works that focus on the history and theory of art in neighboring countries, particularly the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, and Poland. As a result, these works are often included in major databases such as WoS and Scopus. The research and publication quality of the scientific and pedagogical staff at the Trnava Department of History and Theory of Art is also validated by the latest VER evaluation, which indicates that the department submitted the highest percentage of publication outputs recognized for their global and international quality among all institutions in the same field.

Strategy:

The Department of History and Theory of Art plans to continue this high set trend in the next five-year period (2025 – 2029). To this end, it plans to further streamline and internationally consolidate its scientific and research, publication and practice-related lecture, consultation and curatorial activities. Strengthening the international reputation of the department through high-quality publication and presentation of its research can be achieved by obtaining national grants (VEGA, KEGA, APVV) and projects funded by the European Union (e.g. Horizon 2020, Erasmus+ KA220-HED). The department's strategy is to make every effort to obtain such resources to cover its scientific and research, pedagogical and socially beneficial activities, in which not only scientific and pedagogical staff, but also students of the department will be involved.

The department's strategy focuses on three main areas: research, education and social impact.

Research. The Department of History and Theory of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Ljubljana has naturally developed its personnel composition and scientific and research activities in a broad-spectrum humanitarian manner, following the current wider scholarly field of the Arts and Culture Sciences. It focuses its teaching and research activities on the wider scientific field of art as a humanitarian discipline or as a natural part of historical cultural events, literature, philosophy, contemporary scientific discourse, political and other social events. More than a material focus to the history and personalities of art itself, the scientific research and the resulting publication outputs of the department's staff relate to theoretical questions of the functioning of images and visual culture as such, or rather to the application of these internal principles and functionalities of visual culture to visual material from our region.

It can be stated that this strategy has become a hallmark of the workplace. As this research strategy of the workplace has been forming and consolidating for at least two decades (although perhaps most intensively in the last ten years), it has become part of the internationally perceived and recognized "scientific identity" of the workplace. This reputation of the department relates mainly to the following research topics and areas:

Theoretical issues related to images. The unique common interest of the department's staff is the issue of pictorial representation and meaningful communication of works of art with viewers across their various types, media and purpose of creation. Thanks to the specific specializations of the department's staff in visual art, image science and contemporary cultural discourses, a tandem of researchers was created based on an interdisciplinary understanding of the essence of art research, taking into account, for example, broader bridges with literary and musical culture, psychology and neuroscience, philosophical discourses, the nuances of contemporary written and unwritten rules of social contact, etiquette and conversation, as well as everyday culture. One of the main themes that the department plans to explore over the next four years is "representation", "rhetoric", and "dialogue" in early modern paintings (approx. 1500 to 1800). All "senior" researchers/scientific-pedagogical staff of the department are involved in the project planned for 2025-2028. They have already published several significant studies and monographs on the issue, also accepted abroad, and they see the potential to bring the topic of representation, dialogue and rhetoric of images closer to our scientific environment.

Portrait. Within the pictorial representation and dialogue through images, the department's unique research specialisation is the history of the portrait genre and related theoretical concepts. In this theme, the department is considered highly relevant in international surroundings. For many years, the department members have been preparing publications, professional television and radio shows, podcasts, popularising articles for the daily press, scientific and popularising lectures, curatorial exhibition projects, and related exhibition catalogues.

Emblematics, which flourished in the 16th to 18th centuries, represents a phenomenon that fundamentally shaped the form of visual culture in Slovakia. The Trnava department is the only department in Slovakia that is dedicated to this specialisation with international reach and recognition.

Theoretical concepts of aesthetic categories. For a long time, one of the unique pillars of the department's research and publication activity has been the interdisciplinary approach to the display and performance of art (illusion, emotions, ideological concepts) through neuroscience and psychology. Just like the previous specialisations of the workplace, here too, there is an evident positive interest of foreign and domestic colleagues from academic and collection-creating institutions in discussing their findings at international scientific conferences organised by the department in recent years. The interest of students in participating in similar topics in international student conferences at

home ("Sandrart", organised by the department) and at partner universities in Brno and Olomouc is also evident.

□ **Research, exhibition and publication activities oriented towards connection with practice.** Among such areas connected with practice, in which the workplace has built its reputation, are the topics of artistic crafts and design in Slovakia, museology and curatorial studies, professional cooperation in the restoration of works of art at the Department of Restoration of the VŠVU in Bratislava, research projects and consultations for the needs of collections and other cultural institutions (SNM, GMB, TTSK - agency Trnava region of experiences, etc.). The outputs from this area are lectures, seminars, exhibitions, professional and scientific publications (usually freely available on faculty websites) aimed at acquiring professional skills and competencies of students for their future work in museums, galleries, monuments and scientific practice. We cannot forget the numerous requested lectures, seminars, exhibition curations, professional and scientific publications (including university textbooks and scripts, usually freely available on faculty websites), which are professionally reflected, cited and visited by the professional public.

Education: The department continuously modernises study subjects with a focus on familiarising oneself with the latest methods and areas of artistic research in seminars. An important part of the educational process is the active participation of students in professional practice in the chosen institution, in the preparation of curatorial exhibition assignments as part of participation in weekly excursions at home and abroad, in the processing of art-historical descriptions of restored works of art, etc. The department effectively uses contracts within the Erasmus+ program, supporting not only the sending of students and teachers abroad but also the arrival of foreign teachers and students to the university. The university's membership in the KreativEU consortium, which deals with the topics of cultural heritage protection, strengthens international cooperation and the attractiveness of the department for foreign students and teachers.

Collaboration and contribution to the research field, economy and society:

The Department of Art History and Theory of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prague cultivates long-term cooperation and partnerships with several scientific and professional institutions in Slovakia and abroad. Partner universities with which researchers often research similar topics are the Seminar of Art History at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno and the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Arts of Palacký University in Olomouc. In 2022, our department was invited as a co-organiser and co-guarantor to the Erasmus BIP project of four European universities (Palacký University in Olomouc, Leiden University, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and University of Trnava) focused on early modern art collections in Europe ("Collections in Early Modern Era"). Output from the event – an edited monographic book was published at the end of 2024. Currently, mobility from the University of Ostrava in Ostrava and the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague is also significantly intensifying within the framework of Erasmus+.

The department's cooperation with public collection-forming institutions (museums and galleries) is also excellent and has been proven over many years. The department's researchers are engaged in the research of collection objects within the scope of their own scientific topics and problems, but they are also called upon as consultants in scientific councils, acquisition commissions, as reviewers of the concepts of upcoming new exhibition installations and accompanying publications, as well as for other assignments.

Among the gallery and museum institutions, these are primarily: Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava City Gallery (GMB), SNM - Historical Museum in Bratislava, SNM - Červený Kameň Museum, SNM - Bojnice Museum, Liptovská Galéria Petr Michal Bohúň in Liptovský Mikuláš, Ján Koniarek Gallery in Trnava, West Slovak Museum in Trnava (ZSM).

Also important is the pedagogical and research partnership with the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava: with the Centre for Art Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences and Arts. Cooperation and partnership concern both projects in which some of our employees also participate, but also research activities of doctoral students accepted within the joint doctoral program of FF TU and CVU SAV.

The Department of History and Theory of Art of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Slovak Academy of Sciences also actively participates in the research of works continuously restored in the studios of the Department of Restoration of the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. This is primarily in the role of professional consultants - art historians in the restoration survey, research, the restoration itself and the final evaluation of the artistic, meaningful and qualitative contexts of these works. The department has been actively participating (with the involvement of its B.Sc. and M.Sc. students in the course Art Historian in the Restoration Process) in art-historical research of restored works of art, but also in publishing research conclusions in scientific periodicals and proceedings at home and abroad.

Employees:

Research at the workplace is currently provided by 6 full-time and one 50%-time scientific and pedagogical staff. The department's staffing is stable, structured to cover various areas, topics and fluid time frames of visual culture. The department is staffed by a team of experts with rich experience: 3 researchers with the scientific-pedagogical title of professor, three with the scientific-pedagogical title of docent and one employee who is 3 years after completing her PhD. in the internal study program History and Theory of Fine Art and Architecture of the FF TU at the home workplace. She currently works in the position of assistant professor. However, she is perceived as a prospective scientific and pedagogical reinforcement within the framework of the strategy of long-term personnel provision of the workplace. Prof. PhDr. Ivan Gerát, PhD., is responsible for the quality of the study program, and the head of the department is Assoc. Mgr. Ingrid Halászová, PhD. and the secretary is Assoc. Mgr. Peter Megyeši, PhD. Internal employees also include Prof. PhDr. Adam Bžoch, CSc., doc.

The department emphasises stable personnel and systematic support for the professional growth of employees and doctoral students. One of the main topics that the department plans to research over the next four years is "representation", "rhetoric", and "dialogue" in early modern paintings (approx. 1500 to 1800). The department has prepared an application for funding for a project formulated in this way for the years 2025 - 2028, in which all "senior" researchers / scientific and pedagogical workers of the department are involved. They have already published several supporting studies and monographs on the issue, which have also been accepted abroad, and they see the potential to bring the topic of representation, dialogue and rhetoric of images closer to our scientific environment. The principles of visual representation (representation by and in images) have become one of the most inspiring theoretical topics in image science in the last three decades. However, it is much more widely studied abroad, where a huge number of relevant publications have been published on this issue.

The department has always paid attention to the high-quality staffing of the department and also to the related regular improvement of the qualifications of its employees. Also in the Department of History and Theory of Art, internal doctoral students are an important part of it, who are involved in the pedagogical and research process, and participate, for example, in processing the department's library collection, as well as in the organisational running of the department. The department supports the participation of employees in international and domestic conferences, trainings, but above all, scientific and research stays at home and abroad. The department also systematically supports doctoral studies and offers the opportunity to participate in significant research projects, financed from VEGA, KEGA or Erasmus+ grants.

The support staff of the workplace consists of a staff member of the First Contact Center, who provides service for the department's staff, especially contact with students, confirmations, technical and administrative and communication-organizational matters related to the facilitation of administrative tasks.

Doctoral studies:

The department has accredited PhD studies in full-time and part-time form, both in an independent study program of the Faculty of Arts of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Trnava, as well as in a joint study program with the Institute of Art History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. In both of these programs, based on the fulfillment of the strict conditions of the call from the Renewal Plan, we have accepted two internal PhD students (one for each department), who participate in the research program and projects of the department, engage in lecturing activities, actively participate in conferences and, under the supervision of their supervisors, prepare their articles and studies for peer-reviewed and databased domestic or foreign periodicals and proceedings.

Selection from defended dissertations for the years 2020-2024:

1. Master Martina Vyskupová: Maria Theresa in portrait representation (1740–1780). Visual language as a means of creating her public identity.

<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=7950E184AA7EAF4CBF89F043086F>

2. Mgr. Eva Hasalová: Historical clothes and textiles: at the interface between image, text and real object of "material culture". Ideal and real fashion norm in women's clothing in the second half of the 19th century in Slovakia.

<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=9CB04A0EB3E2DA9143918D0E204E>

3. Mgr. Orviská, Katarína: Possibilities and limits of iconology on the example of the main altar of St. Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava by G. R. Donner.

<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=F5F5797E7D011AB16394E138F23A>

Income, infrastructure and facilities:

1. Describe the material and technical facilities available to the institution to support research or artistic activities and to enable or contribute to its societal impact.

Word limit: max. 400 words

2. Indicate the amount of funding received for science and research from the state budget allocation during the assessed period 1.1.2020 - 31.12.2024. (EUR) - *to be filled out by the respective department of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic*
3. Please indicate the amount of funds received for science and research in a competitive way (grants) during the evaluated period 1.1.2020 - 31.12.2024 from the state budget or from the European Union sources. (EUR) - *to be filled out by the respective department of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic*
4. Indicate the amount of funding received during the assessed period 1.1.2020 - 31.12.2024 from other than state and public sources. (EUR) - *to be filled out by the respective department of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic*