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Museum of Folk Architecture in Sanok. Photo: Roksolana Kosiv.

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## FOREWORD

The focus of the current *Baltic Journal of Art History* is centred around symbiosis and the meeting of cultures, which in the turbulence of today's Europe remind us of an important fact – in the best-case scenarios the convergence of different cultural traditions, religions and beliefs does not result in conflicted opposition or collision but in a diverse and rich heritage that is reflected in architecture and works of art. It seems astonishing to think that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century museums and theatres are being bombed to ruins, which on the one hand raises questions, for whom and why do we write about art history, when it can be destroyed in an instant. On the other hand, today inspires us increasingly to talk and write about Europe's artistic heritage and its points of contact with different cultures of the world – just as difference enriches the world, cultural contacts enrich the human mind and its creations.

The opening text of the journal 'Why Is There a Trefil Motif from Karja Church in Pikk Street in Tallinn?' introduces the historical Tallinn Old Town – a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which stands out among other European capitals with its unusually well-preserved medieval milieu and street network. The author of the article Risto Paju (curator and collector at the Tallinn City Museum, Estonia) reveals the history of the city district through small details and focuses on the restoration story of one particular stone portal of a medieval residence in Tallinn. While this article deals with the symbiosis of history and modernity, the subsequent articles focus on religion and art.

Mahnaz Shayestehfar (Tarbiat Modares University, Iran) has studied the scope of influence of Christianity and European architectural history on the culture of the Safavid era, based on the example of the Saint

Stepanos Monastery in Iran. The author concludes that materials, rocks, décor elements etc. used by Europeans reached Iran as a result of the travels of the Portuguese Christians.

The next two articles concentrate on the Ukrainian cultural space, the first one – 'Migrant Church: Icons and Wall Painting of the Wooden Temple of St Nicholas in Hradec Králové deals with a 17<sup>th</sup> century wooden church in Hradec Králové (Königgrätz in German) in Czechia, which is one of the oldest surviving wooden churches in the three states of a formerly common cultural region – Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine. The author Roksolana Kosiv (Lviv National Academy of Arts, Ukraine) gives a thorough and competent overview of the architectural uniqueness of the church as well as of the icons and the wall paintings on the church walls in the context of the activity of their authors.

'Ukrainian Iconography of the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries: Trends and Leading Schools', co-authored by Ihor Kovalchuk (director of the Dmytriy Blazheiovsky Museum of Embroidered Icons), Roksolana Patyk (Lviv National Academy of Arts) and Nataliia Beniakh (Lviv National Academy of Arts), takes a look at sacral art in Ukraine today. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Christian and Protestant churches and denominations were active in Ukraine, in addition to Judaism and Islam, and religious painting developed through different styles in different regions as a consequence. The authors provide an overview of the contemporary trends and character of the long-standing icon painting tradition.

The final text of this issue is 'Colour of the Past: Considerations on Photographic Colourisation of Archival Photographs', an essay-style article by Eduard-Claudiu Gross (Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania), where he poses an intriguing question about the modifications of archive materials, especially photos – does the automatic colouring of black-and-white photos with the help of artificial intelligence simplify our perception of history or does it go against the rules of preservation of historical heritage.

**Kadri Asmer**, editor-in-chief

*Articles*

