

**BAROQUE CEILING PAINTING IN CENTRAL EUROPE****Declaration of the multilateral international cooperation in  
the research on Central European baroque ceiling and wall paintings of  
the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries**I. Introduction

Baroque culture represents an important and rich part of the cultural heritage of Central Europe. The cultural monuments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have had a remarkable influence on the formation of the environment in the countries of Central Europe.

The ceiling and wall painting have been strong cultural expressions of human creation in baroque era and represent a significant component of baroque visual arts. Since the early modern era, monumental painting has been appreciated greatly for its technical complexity and power of expression. It became an inseparable integral part of the decoration of the interiors and exteriors of both sacral and secular architecture, transmitting important messages about the skills, experiences and ideas of the epoch.

This declaration refers to paintings created on inorganic supports, especially brick, stone and plaster. Ceiling and wall paintings are an integral part of monuments and sites and should be preserved in situ, as specified in the chart *ICOMOS Principles for the Preservation and Conservation/Restoration of Wall Paintings 2003*.

II. General Reasons for the Research on Baroque Ceiling Painting in Central Europe (BCPCE)

The ceiling and wall paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth century attract our attention for the way in which they complete the character of baroque architecture, and because of their often complex message, speaking to us about the context of the creation of the paintings, about mentalities of the period and cultural maturity of the society that commissioned the art works and was its recipient. The entire sphere of baroque ceiling and wall painting offers numerous themes for art historical research, cultural history, history of religion, history of art techniques as well as for other branches of the humanities.

Interest in baroque ceiling and wall painting is all the more in order because so many of art works have not yet been studied in sufficient depth. Existing scholarship may also need revision on the basis of the results of recent wider study of the related spheres of culture: political, social, cultural, economical or religious history, history of everyday life, art techniques etc. In the past, this problematic has often been studied only from the limited perspective of enclosed, particular territories. There has not been sufficient engagement with evident overlaps and relations (migration of the artists, transmission of the concepts and ideas, relationships and differences in the structure of the society, political, social and cultural relations within the commissioners of the art works) between the historical countries and regions of the Central European space, because of the political boundaries, economic and language limits and other reasons during the important part of the twentieth century.

Another reason for documentation and research on the baroque ceiling and wall paintings – in the sense of the above mentioned chart *ICOMOS Principles for the Preservation and Conservation / Restoration of Wall Paintings 2003* – is the enduring danger of their damage and destruction not only in consequence of the poor technical condition of many historical monuments, but also because of the possibility of improper use and treatment of the original structures of historic buildings during alterations, renovation and reconstruction, lack of maintenance, climatic changes and even sheer

deterioration through age. The making of lists and inventories of monuments, international exchange of experiences and cooperation in art history research and the protection of historical monuments are necessary approaches for a better understanding of the cultural heritage in Central Europe and consequently its preservation.

### III. Activities of the Research Group Baroque Ceiling Painting in Central Europe and the Multilateral International Cooperation

In October 16, 2006, the Research Group for Baroque Ceiling Painting in Central Europe was established after series of previous professional meetings, workshops and conferences, in which the specialists from different research centers and universities of Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United States of America declared the importance and necessity of multilateral international cooperation within European projects regarding baroque monumental painting.

The members of the Research Group for BCPCE share the interest in the research of baroque ceiling and wall painting. They understand the need to accelerate and give further specific concrete form to cooperation within the projects focused on the research into the baroque ceiling and wall painting in Central Europe. The Research Group for BCPCE was established to create a basis for the further development of the multilateral cooperation between the members in research into baroque ceiling and wall painting in long-term perspective.

The Research Group for BCPCE promotes particularly the following activities:

- systematic documentation, classification and building lists, inventories, catalogues and databases of the ceiling and wall paintings of the early modern era, especially of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
- collecting and analyzing written and other historical sources related to the baroque painting
- stimulation of the research focused on art historical interpretation of the baroque ceiling and wall paintings
- creation and development of the strategy and methodology for research into baroque ceiling and wall painting
- facilitating communication between researchers, establishing a frame and mechanism for bilateral and multilateral cooperation and exchange of information and experience between different members
- building an international research team participating on research of the different specific tasks
- supporting participation in bilateral and multilateral joint research projects
- consulting questions of cultural heritage and its protection and preservation (monuments of art and architecture)
- developing multidisciplinary cooperation with historian, archive workers, specialists from different branches of humanities, technologists, restorers, architects and other professionals dealing with early modern culture, monuments and ceiling and wall paintings
- organizing professional meetings like workshops, seminars, colloquies and conferences focused on baroque painting and culture
- publication of the results of the research in the form of both printed and electronic articles, books, catalogues and other form of publications
- education in the field of art history with special focus on early modern art

#### IV. Organization and Membership of the Research Group for Baroque Ceiling Painting in Central Europe

The Research Group for BCPCE acts as a free non-profit association of the academic and university research institutes and individual researchers. The membership does not establish any juridical relations between the members.

The membership in the group functions on the voluntary basis. The official membership arises with the signature of this Declaration and with participation in the activities of the Research Group for BCPCE. The membership of a new member has to be approved by current members of the Group.

The President is the official head representing the Research Group for BCPCE. The President is elected by and among the Members. The term of office of the President is two years and can be prolonged if agreed by the President and by Members.

The Secretary is responsible for practical functioning of the activities and information within the Research Group. The Secretary is elected and recalled by the Members. The term of office of the Secretary is two years and can be prolonged if agreed by the Secretary and by Members.

Individual Members of the Research Group for BCPCE can establish boards of Advisors and cooperate with external Contributors specialized in early modern ceiling and wall painting.

Members meet annually within the plenary sessions. Members take decisions regarding the activities of the Research Group for BCPCE. The decisions of the Members regarding the activities of the Research Group, elections (or recalling) of the President and Secretary, is to be effected during the annual plenary session or *per rolam*. The agreement of more than fifty per cent of all members is necessary for the positive result of any decision or election regarding the Research Group for BCPCE.

The members agree with the content of this declaration and undertake to contribute to the functioning of the Research Group for BCPCE and its activities mentioned above to the extent possible.