
Without borders: Art in the Ore Mountains and religious changes in Bohemia

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Make time in March to see the exhibition 'Without borders: Art in the Ore Mountains' before it closes on Sunday the 13th. The exhibition displays an impressive collection that encapsulates a large geographic area and historical timeline. It fulfils its aim and more.

On display is a collection of 200 exquisitely crafted artefacts of the highest quality from altar retables to chalices. The exhibition spans from the Gothic to the Renaissance allowing visitors to see the gradual aesthetic changes between the periods. The detailed explanations in each section help give a geographic and historic grounding to the artefacts. It brings to life the religious changes that took place over this time period in (Northern) Bohemia and the neighbouring Saxony. The exhibition also makes it clear that the art and artists of the region were heavily influenced by the surrounding Saxony and Franconia region as well as Prague. Lucas Cranach the Elder's (1472-1553) work and workshops had a clear influence on the art of Ore Mountains (Krušné Hory) in the 15th and 16th century. It makes it even more special to see original paintings made by Lucas Cranach the Elder, his workshop or his North Bohemian pupil known as Master IW on display.

The layout allows visitors to explore the exhibition from a geographic perspective allowing them to see artefacts from different prominent towns of the Ore Mountains. For those who may not be familiar with the geography of the Ore Mountains there is a useful map located near the stairs behind the Treasury section. Unfortunately it is easy to miss but well worth a look as it helps put the artefacts into perspective.

The artefacts on display are wide ranging and some of the finest examples still in existence. Many exemplify key characteristics of each art period. For instance the sculptures of the Virgin and Child, in the first room (in particular Virgin and Child from Údlice), have clear curved and elongated body shape reflecting the Beautiful Style or International Gothic of the late 14th and early 15th century.

An unusual but highly interesting item on display in this exhibition are stove tiles which portray different biblical scenes. In the part of the exhibition dedicated to the Royal town of Litoměřice there is even a stove tile portraying Jan Žižka, the famous military leader of Hussite revolution of 1419-1434/36, which reflects a wider shift in religious tendencies in the Czech lands over this period. In Northern Bohemia the Hussite movement (Utraquism or Bohemian Reformation born out of the thoughts of John Huss/Jan Hus) was strong in particular in Louny, Žatec and Litoměřice. Other places remained Catholic until the start of German Reformation. Martin Luther's thoughts influenced almost the whole region of Northern Bohemia, especially the area of the Ore Mountains bordering on Saxony. This is again well illustrated throughout the whole exhibition, the best probably in the final part dedicated to the mining towns such as Jáchymov (Joachimsthal) that gained on importance at the very end of Middle Ages.

The exhibition 'Without borders: Art in the Ore Mountains' is highly informative but tells the story through beautifully crafted artefacts preventing the visitor to become bored or disenchanted with the display. It should also be mentioned that the entry is free of charge for all Charles University students and employees as the Faculty of Arts of CU is one of the organisers of the exhibition.

Details

Location: Valdštejnská 3, Prague 1.

Getting there: Metro Line A – Malostranská, Trams 12, 18, 22 - Malostranská

Price:

Basic – 180 CZK

Reduced – 90 CZK

Family – 350CZK

School Group – 20 CZK per person

FREE for Staff and Students of Charles University.

Opening times:

10-6pm daily, except Mondays

Margot Abbott studies Anthropology at Durham University and here at the Faculty of Education. Margot's interests are in the arts, entrepreneurship and exploring. Whilst in Prague she hopes to learn the language, make the most of her

travel pass and meet new people from all over Europe and the world. She looks forward to sharing her experiences, via the iForum, with you.