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## The Genius of Lviv. Lviv as an Art Centre and its Art Collections



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The Genius of Lviv

Lviv as an Art Centre and its Art Collections

October 6, 2023 - February 21, 2024

The Royal Library

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***There's no point in talking, say whatever you want. There's nothing like Lviv!*** – said the pre-war hit song. Instead of talking, the exhibition *The Genius of Lviv* depicts testimonies of the legendary uniqueness of this city. We invite you on a fascinating journey through the world of artistic treasures of the Galician capital,

**covering painting and sculpture from the 17th century to the 20th century, including works by masters such as Grottger, Malczewski, Matejko or Siemiradzki, as well as lesser-known pearls of Western European art.**

The uniqueness of Lviv as a centre of artistic and cultural life over the centuries was determined by the fact that it was located on one of the main trade routes connecting Europe with the East. The city was therefore a cultural melting pot, where the influences of different nations and religions mingled. It was inhabited by Poles, Ruthenians/Ukrainians, Jews, Armenians, Tatars, Germans, Czechs and others. It was at the meeting point of many traditions that the unique syncretism of forms and means of expression characterising the art created in the sphere of Lviv's influence, especially in the era of Mannerism and Rococo, could develop.

Making of:

A particularly vivid representation of this specificity are Rococo sculptures - bursting with expression, manifested in bold deformation, thanks to which the figural representations gained a dramatic feature not found in contemporary European sculpture.

The genius of Lviv was also manifested in an atmosphere conducive to the creation of outstanding collections. Some of them were created by art enthusiasts coming from aristocratic families residing in the sphere of cultural influence of Lviv: the Rzewuski, Ossoliński, Lubomirski, Mniszch or Lanckoroński families. Their collections included custom-made portraits as well as outstanding specimens of European painting, such as *The Adoration of the Magi* by Peter Coecke van Aelst or *Pearl and Coral Fishers* by Jacopo Zucchi, both present at the exhibition.

No less impressive are the collections gathered before 1939 by Lviv public institutions, most notably the Lviv City Gallery, which in time became known as the National Gallery of the City of Lviv. It is the largest permanent collection of 19th- and 20th-century Polish paintings outside of Poland, and includes works by such major figures as Grottger, Malczewski, Matejko, Sielska-Reich and Siemiradzki, which can also be seen at the exhibition.

The objects on display are from two of the city's most important museums - the Borys Voznytskyi Lviv National Art Gallery and the Lviv Historical Museum.

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