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SUMMARY

RUDOLF VALDEC (1872-1929) – PLAQUES AND MEDALS IN THE HOLDINGS OF THE MODERN GALLERY IN ZAGREB

Rudolf Valdec, together with Robert Frangeš-Mihanović, was a sculptor of the Zagreb circle in the late 19th and early 20th century. Medal art in Croatia began with those two leading Croatian sculptors at the time of Art Nouveau. Right from the beginning their commemorative works were on par with contemporary European medal-making. Rudolf Valdec's medals are completely in the Art Nouveau style, which implies that the plaque was the dominant form of art expression. He was an excellent portraitist, and his plaques are technologically perfect. He made small portraits and compositions in shallow relief, with meticulously rendered decorative details in curving lines.

The Collection of Medals and Plaques in the Modern Gallery in Zagreb has fifty-five works by Rudolf Valdec. Twenty plaques and two medals were made after posters, in several techniques and struck in a variety of materials. They date from 1905, when Valdec started his work on medals, to 1923, when he made the last plaque. The Dragutin Mandl Collection of Medals and Plaques has all the fourteen works by the artist, a total of forty-nine specimens, and six specimens were acquired from other sources. This article for the first time gives a comprehensive and detailed presentation of all the medal works of Rudolf Valdec, enabling the public at large, and also experts, to get to know his complete opus in medals in the Modern Gallery in Zagreb. The commemorative work by this Croatian sculptor must be seen in the context of the art medal. Rudolf Valdec is one of the pioneers of the modern Croatian medal, with masterpieces in this branch of sculpture. Outstanding is the portrait plaque of J.J. Strossmayer (1905) and the plaque with the figural composition Military Casino (1911).