

What is Elsa-Fluid? It is known. Eugen Viktor Feller – pharmacist and investor

AUTHOR:

MARTIN KUHAR

The Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts recently commenced a cycle of lectures *Science in Focus*, whose purpose is to present in an accessible form the research conducted by its scientific research units, as well as its museums and galleries. As part of the aforementioned cycle, on May 17, 2023, Stella Fatović-Ferenčić (Division for the History of Medical Sciences) and Jasenka Ferber Bogdan (Cabinet for Architecture and Urbanism with the Archives of Fine Arts) held a lecture entitled *What is Elsa-Fluid? It is known. Eugen Viktor Feller – pharmacist and investor*.

The audience was welcomed by Marko Pečina, the Head of the Croatian Museum of Medicine and Pharmacy, who presented the lecturers and their most important contributions to their respective fields. He also greeted the members of the Academy (General Secretary Dario Vretenar, Ivan Gušić, Stjepan Gamulin and Mislav Ježić), members of the Feller family – great granddaughter Marta and great grandson Nikola Zdenković – as well as everyone in attendance. Pečina emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of

the presented research, which was the result of a particularly fruitful collaboration between the Academy's two prominent research units. Finally, he informed the audience that the lecturers will alternate throughout the presentation.

The lecture started with the beginnings of the manufacturing process in Donja Stubica, which also represent the beginnings of the pharmaceutical industry in Croatia. The protagonist of the story was a Ukrainian pharmacist Eugen Viktor Feller (1871–1936), who came to Croatia from Lviv at the end of the nineteenth century and built a factory in Stubica for the production of the pharmaceutical specialty named Elsa-Fluid. The factory transformed Donja Stubica into a rather powerful transportation and financial hub which positively affected the economy of the region, while Elsa-Fluid made Feller a pioneer of pharmaceutical industry in Croatia. In the next several decades, his pharmaceutical specialties successfully broke into international market due to a carefully planned communication with consumers and a well-thought-out marketing strategy.



As a successful and wealthy entrepreneur Feller invested into real estate in Zagreb, where he relocated from Donja Stubica in 1904. There, he became known for his architectural production, thus contributing to the development of Croatian architecture. All the buildings he invested in were constructed and designed according to the contemporary stylistic norms, such as historicism, secession and Jugendstil, which speaks volumes not only about Feller's financial might, but also his sense for zeitgeist. House Feller on the King Tomislav Square, Europe House in Jurišićeva Street and

Villa Feller in Jurjevska Street all contributed to the formation of modern Zagreb. It is no wonder, then, that this pharmacist was also a promoter of art, architecture, design, painting and sculpture at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 2021, the lecturers published a book entitled *What is Elsa-Fluid? It is known. Eugen Viktor Feller – pharmacist and investor*, which was the result of a decades-long research about a topic previously only covered in folk legends. At the end of the lecture the book was given to the interested members of the audience free of charge.

