

Find out more:
zgodovinska-mesta.si/en/joze-plecnik-in-slovenias-historical-towns

Architect
**JOŽE
PLEČNIK**
in HISTORICAL
TOWNS



Jože Plečnik (1872–1957) was one of the most important architects of the 20th century. In 2021, his human-centred approach to urban planning in Ljubljana was recognized as an outstanding contribution to the heritage of humanity and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The inscription includes some of his greatest masterpieces, among them **Triple Bridge, the National and University Library, the Central Market, the churches of St. Francis and St. Michael, and the embankments along the Ljubljanica River.**

In addition to his best-known works in Ljubljana, Prague, and Vienna, Plečnik also created numerous works across Slovenia. Many of them can be found in Slovenia's historical towns, including Radovljica, Kamnik, Kranj, Škofja Loka, Jesenice, Celje, Ribnica, Novo Mesto, and Šentjur, as well as in many other places throughout the country. Among the most remarkable is the unique Church of the Ascension in Bogojna, celebrated for its harmonious blend of modern architecture and local craftsmanship.

A distinctive feature of Plečnik's architecture was his ability to combine **classical forms – columns**, monumentality, and symmetry – with folk motifs and local traditions. He primarily used **natural materials sourced from the local environment**, such as brick, wood, stone, artificial stone, and ceramics.

He also introduced the reuse of materials and traditional craft elements, always respecting the character and context of the space in which he intervened. As a result, his symbolically rich architecture felt close and familiar to people. Plečnik was able to transform ordinary materials into architecture that was not only functional, but also carried deep **spiritual and cultural value**. For this reason, he is often referred to as the **“architect of spirituality.”**

Cycling Route PLEČNIK'S GORENJSKA REGION



Master Plečnik created his greatest works in Ljubljana, which are today inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. However, a large part of his legacy can also be found in the Gorenjska region. This three-day cycling route takes you along the trail of Plečnik's works in the historical towns of Gorenjska, including Kamnik, Kranj, Tržič, Jesenice, Radovljica, and Škofja Loka. Alternatively, the route can begin in Ljubljana, where you can discover Plečnik's Ljubljana.

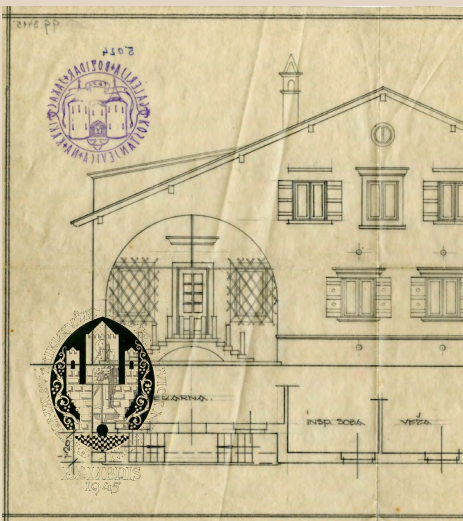
Candle Painting Workshop Hiše Stele, Kamnik PAINTING PLEČNIK MOTIFS ON CANDLES

Master Jože Plečnik also left his creative mark in the field of design. During the workshop, participants will explore decorative motifs inspired by nature and symbolism, which often served as inspiration for Plečnik, and transfer them onto candles. Through the creative process, you will discover the richness of Plečnik's ornamental expression while developing a sense of precision, attention to detail, and artistic expression.



ALONG PLEČNIK'S TRAIL

The twenty-five-year correspondence between Jože Plečnik and pharmacist Emilija Fon from Kostanjevica na Krki, published in the book *Prijateljstvo je najvišja oblika ljubezni* (Friendship Is the Highest Form of Love), offers a rare glimpse into their profound and deeply sensitive relationship while revealing Plečnik's remarkable literary talent. The trail through Kostanjevica na Krki brings their story to life through excerpts from their letters, Plečnik's visionary designs for the town, and fascinating local accounts. Following the route from the Ministerial Mansion and the former pharmacy to the Tourist Information Centre, visitors uncover the story of a friendship that transcended convention and concludes with a film celebrating this extraordinary bond.



Restoration Workshop for Children LEARNING FROM MASTER PLEČNIK

Master Jože Plečnik was known for his strong sense of local tradition and his use of natural materials, which he incorporated into his work in close connection with the local environment, while balancing aesthetics and functionality. During the workshops, children will build, assemble, and create using stone, brick, and wood – just as Master Plečnik did – and, in a fun way, put their creativity to the test.



Pottery Workshop, Ribnica Handicraft Centre LET'S MAKE A PLATE

Clay, as a basic natural material, was often used by Master Plečnik, both as brick in construction and for decorative ceramic objects. Various clay products, such as plates, majolica ware, and vessels, were used as decorative elements in his architecture. At the pottery workshop, you will get to know clay, learn about the process of shaping and modelling it, and create your own plate, which can serve either as decoration or for everyday use.



SELECTED PLEČNIK'S WORKS in Historical Towns

Celje, renovation of the Slovenian People's Theatre

During the extensive renovation of the building, especially the northern and eastern façades designed by Franc Korent, Plečnik's conceptual sketches for the cylindrical tower of the medieval town walls were used.

Črnomelj, plans for the churches in Dragatuš and Preloka, chalice and chandeliers in Preloka

The only elements that were ultimately realized were the chandeliers and pews in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Preloka. As always, Plečnik wove numerous symbolic messages into them.

Jesenice, doors of the Church of St. Leonard

The Church of St. Leonard, built in 1523 and renovated several times, features not only rich Baroque stucco decoration, but also church doors with evangelists and apostles by France Kralj, created according to Plečnik's designs.

Kostanjevica na Krki, urban planning designs, pharmacy furnishings, Fon family tombstone

Plečnik's connection with Kostanjevica na Krki was shaped by his long-standing friendship with the distinguished pharmacist Emilija Fon. He designed the pharmacy interior, the Fon family tombstone, and an urban plan for the town.

Metlika, chalice and plans for public buildings

Together with his student, architect Gizela Šuklje, he designed plans for nine new public buildings. The Parish of Metlika preserves a replica of a chalice decorated with an unexpected ornamentation of old Austrian silver coins bearing the image of Franz Joseph.

Novo mesto (Velika Bučna vas), National Liberation War Monument

The monument, designed in the form of a column with inscriptions and a garland topped by a stylized urn, is dedicated to 48 fallen fighters and victims of Fascist violence from Velika Bučna vas and the surrounding area.

Novo mesto, monument to the hanged partisans on Seidlova cesta

The monument was designed by Plečnik's student Špelka Valentincič Jurkovič; part of the original iron fence, the site of retaliation against the partisans, has been preserved within the memorial.

Radovljica (Begunje na Gorenjskem), **Brezjanka Pavilion**

Brezjanka is a light and open viewing pavilion that Plečnik designed as part of the Katzenstein Castle Park. It once stood next to a birch avenue that inspired its name.

Radovljica (Brezje na Gorenjskem), **renovation of the square in front of the pilgrimage centre**

The square in front of Slovenia’s central pilgrimage shrine was designed ceremonially and adapted to accommodate large numbers of pilgrims. It emphasizes sacred and national symbolism. In the Nativity Scene Museum, visitors can also see Plečnik’s wooden nativity scenes.

Šentjur, **renovation of the Ipavec House**

Plečnik participated in the extensive renovation of the birthplace of the Ipavec composers and proposed the construction of a fountain and arcades in the garden, which today bears his name.

Tržič, **furnishings in the Church of St. Catherine in Lom pod Storžičem**

Master Plečnik designed the tabernacle doors and the cover for the baptismal font.

Kamnik, **baptistery in the Church of the Immaculate Conception of Mary**

The renovation included the redesign of the baptistery beneath the choir loft. Two of Plečnik’s students, Erna Tomšič and Majda Neřima, worked on the project.

Kamnik, **furnishings of the Franciscan Monastery Library**

In the library dating from 1627, which boasts a rich collection of more than ten thousand works, including valuable incunabula, Plečnik designed plans for the spatial arrangement and furnishings.

Kamnik, **bridge over the Nevljica River**

The bridge, featuring an elegant railing and concrete lanterns decorated with stylized antique vases, was designed according to Plečnik’s concept by his student and assistant Anton Bitenc.

Kamnik, **tombstones at Žale Cemetery**

The old cemetery contains several family tombstones designed by Plečnik, representing high-quality architectural and sculptural works. Look for the tombstones of the Potočnik, Terpinc, Frölich, Wietschling, Von Franch, and Šubelj families.

Kamnik, **Kamnik-Mesto railway station**

The building is the result of cooperation between Plečnik and his student Vinko Glanz. Plečnik contributed the concept for the exterior façade and the benches.

Kamnik, **furnishings and candle design for the Stele candle workshop**

Hiša Stele tells the story of a long family tradition of candle-making and honey-bread craftsmanship, as well as the close friendship between the owner Janko Stele and the architect. Plečnik designed the furnishings of the family room in his recognizable style, as well as the concept for the unique Plečnik candles, offered exclusively at Hiša Stele. Workshops on painting Plečnik candles are also available.

Kamnik (Zgornje Stranje), **renovation of the Church of St. Benedict**

The church renovation was designed together with Plečnik’s student, architect Majda Neřima, and also reflects the mastery of the local craftsmen who participated in the restoration.

Kamnik (Mekinja), **cemetery**

At the cemetery, Plečnik designed the tombstone of the Golob family.

Kamnik (Nevlje), **baptistery in the Church of St. George**

The transformation of the side altar of the Virgin Mary into a baptistery is one of Plečnik’s earliest works of this kind.

Kamnik (Kamniška Bistrica), **King Alexander’s hunting lodge**

The hunting lodge was built in 1934 on commission from the Yugoslav royal court. It stands in the idyllic Kamniška Bistrica Valley beneath the Kamnik-Savinja Alps.

Kranj, **Bežek Villa**

The villa was built according to a joint design by Plečnik and architect Nikolaj Bežek. The exterior is distinguished by pronounced stone rustication on the ground floor, while the estate is enclosed by Plečnik’s characteristic carefully designed stone fence with vases.

Kranj, **renovation of the façade of the Prešeren Theatre**

The renovation remained unfinished due to the war. It focused on redesigning the façade and the emphasized entrance portal, enriched with decorative elements designed by Plečnik’s student Vladimira Bratuž.



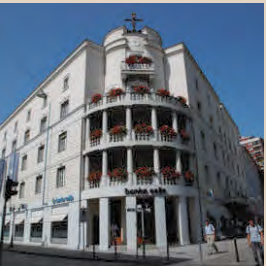
Begunje na Gorenjskem, **Jožamurka Pavilion** (1937-1938)

The Jožamurka viewing pavilion was conceived as both a chapel and a murka – a small holiday retreat. Its columns are made of brick and rough stone, while the flooring is paved with pebbles. Plečnik intended the pavilion as a place for prayer and meditation.



Kamnik, **Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre in the Church of St. James** (1956)

The Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre in the Church of St. James (Franciscan Monastery) is considered one of Plečnik’s finest creations. He masterfully transformed the chapel and infused it with rich symbolism expressed through the tabernacle, the ceiling with metal lamps, the door handles, and numerous other details.



Celje, **People’s Loan Bank** (1928-1930)

The corner design of the building is accentuated by columned balconies rising vertically toward the roof. The façade is enriched with details such as a vertical termination featuring a crucifix and antique-style heads by sculptor Božo Pengov. Plečnik’s student Vinko Lenarčič also worked on the design.



Kamnik, **façade of the house at Maistrova 2** (1954)

The redesign of the façade at Maistrova 2 formed part of Plečnik’s vision for the comprehensive arrangement of Kamnik’s Main Square, later completed by his student and assistant Anton Bitenc. The distinctive façade is executed in the sgraffito technique.



Kranj, **arcades and fountain by the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary** (1953-1954)

At the entrance to Kranj’s old town, beside the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, Plečnik emphasized the space with double tufa-stone arcades alongside a broad staircase with a fountain. The fountain, topped with a bronze rooster, symbolizes vigilance and heralds the arrival of new times, while the water flowing into the stone basins represents purification and renewal.



Ribnica, **bell tower of the Church of St. Stephen** (1956)

The renovation of the imposing Neo-Romanesque Church of St. Stephen is best recognized by its twin bell towers and twelve column capitals symbolizing the twelve apostles as the pillars of the temple. It was one of Plečnik’s last major works before his death; the church was completed according to his plans by his student Erna Tomšič.



Škofja Loka, **baptistery and furnishings of the Church of St. James** (1951-1960)

Together with his student Anton Bitenc, Plečnik designed the baptistery, crystal chandeliers, and cross for the Late Gothic church, while also redesigning the presbytery and enriching the church with his distinctive architectural style.

Find out more: zgodovinska-mestasi/en/joze-plecnik-in-slovenias-historical-towns



LEGEND

- Ptuj Historical town
- Dolenja vas Site with Plečnik’s Works
- Škofja Loka Historical Town with Plečnik’s Works
- Plečnik’s Ljubljana



Published by: Association of Historical Towns of Slovenia, December 2025 / Photographs: Archives of the Members of the Association of Historical Towns of Slovenia / Map: Kartografija, Ljubljana, 2025.

