

PREFACE

When the project *Art and the State in Croatia from the Enlightenment to the Present* was conceived in 2017, the central dissemination activity was planned to be an international conference, which would, on the one hand, present the work of the researchers on the project, and on the other hand, bring together other researchers whose interests revolve around the relationship between art and the state in Central Europe in the modern period. At that moment, no one from the project team could begin to imagine the many challenges they were about to face during both the realisation of the project and the organisation of the conference. The conference was originally supposed to be held in the summer of 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the two earthquakes that hit Zagreb that same year, it was impossible to hold the conference in the planned period. Despite all of the challenges and limitations, the conference was eventually held in a hybrid form in the summer of 2021 with strict anti-pandemic measures in place, and in the spaces that clearly showed the consequences of the damage caused by the earthquakes. Nevertheless, despite the existing fear of COVID-19, 44 out of a total of 74 participants delivered their presentations in person at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb.

Researchers from numerous European countries and the United States of America presented their new, original research on the most diverse aspects of the relationship between art and the state. More than half of them – forty-five in total – decided to publish their papers in the book of proceedings that is in front of you.

The book contains nine sections arranged according to the topics covered in the papers. The first section, *Aesthetic Powers of and for the State*, brings together the contributions by Chiara Mannoni, Sára Bárdi, Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, Silvija Lučevnjak, Josipa Alviž and Jasmina Nestić. The papers explore ways in which the state has protected its heritage (providing examples from Italy and Croatia), and how national history has been presented in painting (in Hungary during World War II) and through university education (at the University of Zagreb).

The second part, titled *Political Transformation, Artistic Change*, consists of papers by Dubravka Botica, Nikola Tomašegović, Viktoriia Myronenko and Heidi A. Cook. The common thread in all of them is their perspective on the turning points in the political history of Central and Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, and their influence on art. They delve into a variety of contexts and works, from the visit of the Habsburg Emperor Francis I to Croatia, including events in Croatian *fin-de-siècle* art, Ukrainian art in the 1990s, immediately after the fall of communism and the collapse of the Soviet

Union, and the unusual (and so far unrecognized) triptych by Maksimilian Vanka created during World War I.

The following section, *The Politics of Competitions and Exhibitions*, explores diverse exhibitions and competitions for public artworks that in the 20th century played a key role in presenting the state and its ideologies to both professionals and the public. The essays here were authored by Antonija Tomić, Sanja Žaja Vrbica, Irena Kossowska, Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić and Giovanni Rubino. The first two articles touch upon the political dimension of exhibitions organized on the eve of World War I, all of which included the participation of Croatian artists. Two of the texts in this section focus on the interwar period – the first deals with the way in which Austrian and Hungarian art was presented in Warsaw in the 1930s, while the second examines the competition for the interior design of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's National Assembly in Belgrade and the artworks with which it was furnished in the 1930s. The last text, which deals with the chronologically latest period, analyses Italian-Croatian relations through the exhibitions organised in the 1960s and 1970s when, owing to a series of exhibitions called *New Tendencies*, Zagreb became an important site of key developments in the international art scene.

The relationship between the state and the artist is not always that of a good shepherd and his peaceful flock. Quite the contrary – in both democratic or non-democratic regimes, artists often come into conflict with public institutions. Therefore, a special section of this publication, entitled *Art(s) of Resistance*, contains papers that examine the ways in which artists reacted to situations in the state administration or society in general that they considered unacceptable. This section also constitutes a welcome, if implicit, comparison between two regions racked by violent political transformations in the 20th century: the Baltics and the Balkans. A group of authors from the Baltic region (Lina Birzaka-Priekule, Sniedze Kāle and Agita Gritāne) give an insight into the artistic developments in Latvia from the end of World War I to the present day. Authors from the countries that formed part of Yugoslavia during most of the 20th century (Dragan Čihorić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Frano Dulibić, Dorotea Fotivec Očić and Ivana Janković from Croatia) provide diverse insights into how artists made do in non-democratic regimes – how they dealt with nationalism and social issues in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, the strategies they used in caricature to circumnavigate censorship of the Yugoslav communist regime, and how Czechoslovakian, Polish and Hungarian artists, faced with the political disapproval of the regime in their countries, cooperated with Yugoslav institutions on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain.

The section *Sites of Artistic Politics* is undoubtedly the most diverse in our collection. The papers by Ivan Kokeza, Vanja Stojković and Patricia Počanić deal with the furnishing of public and sacred buildings in the 19th and 20th

centuries: in the Habsburg Empire in the 1840s (the Piarist chapel of St. Stephen in Zrenjanin), during World War II in the pro-fascist Independent State of Croatia (a fresco in the former building of the Department of Religion and Education in Zagreb) and in communist Yugoslavia (the furnishing of Villa Zagorje, the residence of the Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito in Zagreb, with works by contemporary artists). In his paper, Marcus van der Meulen investigates the multiple transformations of St. Alexander's Church in Warsaw over two centuries, while Matea Brstilo Rešetar writes about the origins of the coats of arms commissioned in the last years of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by Colonel Marshal Radovan Gerba for the commanders of the Croatian-Slavonian Military Frontier.

"I am the state, and the state is me" is probably one of the most famous sayings in the history of world politics. It was ascribed to the French king Louis XIV, the Sun King, and although this particular saying and its author are not the specific topic of any of the papers in this collection, many of them address the plethora of ways in which the state is personified in the image of the ruler. Essays by Jan Galeta and Tomáš Valeš, Marina Bregovac Pisk, and Jovana Milovanović form the section *Personifying States*. In their papers, they explore representations of rulers from Central and Southeastern Europe in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, including depictions of the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand V, the role of public monuments in celebrating the first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, and the commemoration of Petar I Karađorđević as the first king of Yugoslavia with a monument in Dubrovnik.

Throughout history, most states have built monuments to immortalise important historical events, great personages, most often statesmen, and nameless heroes who died in wars and revolutions. The papers in the section *Monumental Challenges* present large-scale public monuments that remained partially or entirely unrealized, as well as monuments that have succumbed to ruination in the wake of regime change. They explore colossi (Francesco Del Sole), the design for the monument to King Alexander in Ljubljana (Franci Lazarini), monuments in Horthy's Hungary (Zoltán Suba), and Vojin Bakić, Berislav Šerbetić and Igor Toš's monumental memorial on Petrova gora in Croatia, erected in the last decades of socialist Yugoslavia but now in a state of disrepair (Silva Kalčić).

The segment titled *Political Architecture, the Architecture of Politics* explores the issues related to the legal framework of architectural and civil engineering activities (Darko Kahle, Borka Bobovec), architectural education (Igor Marjanović and Katerina Rüedi Ray), the state's commissioning of architectural designs and organisation for construction projects in the Habsburg Empire in the years leading to World War I, as well as in interwar Austria and Czechoslovakia (Richard Kurdiyovsky, Anna Stuhlpfarrer and

Vendula Hnídková), and state support for sport and tourism infrastructure on the northern edge of socialist Yugoslavia (Raimondo Mercadante).

The final segment of the collection, titled *The City as a Political Canvas*, consists of two articles, by Carmen-Ionela Sârbu and Sandi Bulimbašić, in which the authors focus on the transformation of two cities through state investments for reasons of propaganda. One is Split, on the shores of the Adriatic Sea, which was transformed into one of the most important ports in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during the 1930s, while the other is Bucharest, which witnessed significant urban development in the 1950s, organized by local communist authorities, related to its hosting of the World Youth Games.

The authors of the papers in *Art and the State* come from many different countries in Europe and throughout the world, and have their professional homes in various institutions – mainly universities, but also research and conservation institutes, museums, and private organisations. Despite this diversity, however, they are connected by similar interests and research methodologies. This shared sensibility creates opportunities for a broader discussion on different topics, even when the authors draw on specific national examples. Additionally, many of our articles are thematically related – they deal with the same or related artists and art historians, or stylistic approaches. The main areas of the authors' research interest in terms of geography are the former Habsburg Empire, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the socialist Yugoslav state, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. This is not surprising – not only do most of the authors come from the areas that used to be part of these political formations, but these areas are also extremely suitable for research on the relationship between art and the state. The political instability during the 20th century – especially the fragmentation of bygone empires and the ascendancy of nation-states – as well as the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional nature of these territories make them particularly suitable for studying the relationship between art and the state, transitional periods, political iconography, social and/or national relations, the influence of globalization, the phenomenon of *damnatio memoriae* and the like. This is precisely why everyone interested in modern and contemporary art history from the Baltic to the Mediterranean will find something to pique their interest in this collection.

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