

# Art

and  
**the State**  
in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

EDITED BY:

**Josipa Alviž**  
**Dragan Damjanović**  
**Jasmina Nestić**  
**Jeremy F. Walton**

Zagreb



Filozofski fakultet  
 Sveučilište u Zagrebu

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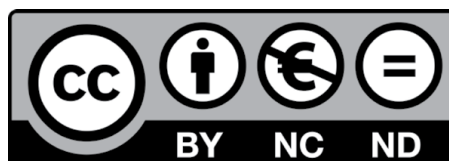
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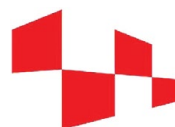
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## PREFACE

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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>

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 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Kurdiovsky, 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

Josipa Alviž

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# Aesthetic Powers of and for the State

**Chiara Mannoni**

“MIRRORING THE MOST CULTURED STATES OF EUROPE”. ARTISTIC SCHOLARSHIP AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HERITAGE PROTECTION IN THE AGE OF REASON

**Silvija Lučevnjak, Jasminka Najcer Sabljak**

THE COMMISSION FOR THE COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS AND ANTIQUITIES AND ARISTOCRATIC ART COLLECTIONS IN EASTERN CROATIA

**Sára Bárdi**

POLITICAL ICONOGRAPHY IN HUNGARIAN ART BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS: A CASE STUDY ON KÁROLY LÁSZLÓ HÁY'S FRESCO PLAN *HISTORY* (1942)

**Josipa Alviž, Jasmina Nestić**

NATIONAL ART AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE 1970S IN THE CONTEXT OF STATE AND POLITICAL CHANGES

**Chiara Mannoni**

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**“MIRRORING THE MOST CULTURED  
STATES OF EUROPE”.  
ARTISTIC SCHOLARSHIP AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF HERITAGE  
PROTECTION IN THE AGE OF REASON\***

**Keywords:** Europe,  
Enlightenment, heritage,  
protection, legislation

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**Abstract**

*The present essay offers an overview of the heritage protection regulations that were issued in a number of European States in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of the discussion is to demonstrate that the innovations of the Enlightenment had profound implications on the construction of new practices for safeguarding what was thought of as “heritage” in each relevant context. As will be argued, diverse factors contributed to a widespread increasing awareness of the need to protect “juridically” the treasures of the state, including, most significantly, the launch of excavation campaigns across Europe and models offered in bordering countries. In this context, it will become evident that these early elaborations constituted the ground for the modern understanding of the concepts of “heritage” and “protection” in Europe.*

15

**INTRODUCTION**

To understand the process of genesis and expansion of the first heritage protection systems, it is fundamental to acknowledge the fact that, although humans have always produced artefacts, their recognition that these goods constituted “heritage” requiring safeguarding practices arose at a later stage. In Europe, the territories that established the earliest and most solid tradition in this regard were the Papal States. The Catholic pontiffs produced the first regulation on the defence of the public assets of Rome as early as 1425, issuing more than 30 further directives on the supervision of ancient monuments, statues and paintings over the following four centuries.<sup>1</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, other countries in Europe began to have concerns regarding the defence of their local heritage, notably the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Sweden and

\* This research is financially supported by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No. 837857 (The origins of the heritage legal protection. Legislation on the safeguard of monuments and artworks issued in 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe [LawLove]).

1 For more on this topic, see Simonella Condemi, *Dal ‘Decoro et Utile’ alle ‘Antiche Memorie’. La tutela dei beni artistici e storici negli antichi Stati Italiani* [From ‘Ornamental and Beneficial’ to ‘Ancient Mementoes’. Protecting Historical and Artistic Heritage in the Old Italian States] (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1987); Valter Curzi, *Bene culturale e pubblica utilità. Politiche di tutela a Roma tra Ancien Régime e Restaurazione* [Cultural Heritage and Public Benefit. Protection Policies in Rome Between Ancien Régime and Restoration] (Roma: Minerva, 2004); Andrea Emiliani, *Leggi, bandi, provvedimenti per la tutela dei beni artistici e culturali negli Antichi Stati Italiani 1571–1860* [Laws, Announcements, Provisions to Protect Artistic and Cultural Heritage in The Old Italian States, 1571–1860] (Bologna: Alfa, 1978), 55–115.

Denmark.<sup>2</sup> In spite of these earlier cases, however, it can be argued that the first comprehensive laws on the protection of artefacts in Europe were conceived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, following the methodological and theoretical innovations of the Enlightenment. The scope of the present study is to examine some of these regulations, which can be identified as the most relevant in terms of their contents, evaluating both their origins and implications for the protection of what was thought of as “heritage” in each relevant context.

## ENLIGHTENED EUROPE

To contextualise the establishment of shared practices for the preservation of local artefacts in European countries, the wide-ranging innovations that the Enlightenment introduced within culture, philosophy, juridical knowledge and the art system should be taken into account. Indeed, the scholars and theorists of the Age of Reason were not concerned exclusively with the role of “reason” in the functioning of human existence. The growing importance of Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie* in Europe (**fig. 1**) sanctioned the acceptance of three elements in the intellectual life of the time: reason, as already mentioned, as well as imagination and memory<sup>3</sup> – which can be associated respectively with the attributes of discernment, vision of the future, and recollection of the past. The reciprocal interaction of these three factors was to play a significant role in the developing awareness of the need to protect “juridically” what was thought of as “collective heritage” – that is to say, safeguarding the treasures created by the ancestors for the benefit of their descendants. In this respect, it should be acknowledged that the modern concept of the “state” also matured in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the increasing influence of earlier philosophers such as Spinoza and Locke, and the new elaborations of Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau (**fig. 2**).<sup>4</sup> This was supported by the growing conviction that new juridical reforms were required within each country to establish modern sets of rules specifically adapted to local needs, breaking the thousand-year old prominence of Justinian’s law in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

A further significant aspect of 18<sup>th</sup>-century erudition concerns the interaction of two conflicting tendencies in the definition of the concept of heritage. First of all, the “cosmopolitanism” of the scholars in Europe, particularly referring

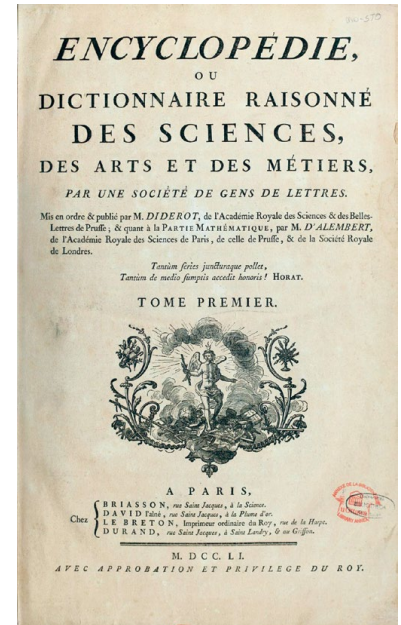


Fig. 1. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D’Alembert, *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751–1772), first volume, cover page.

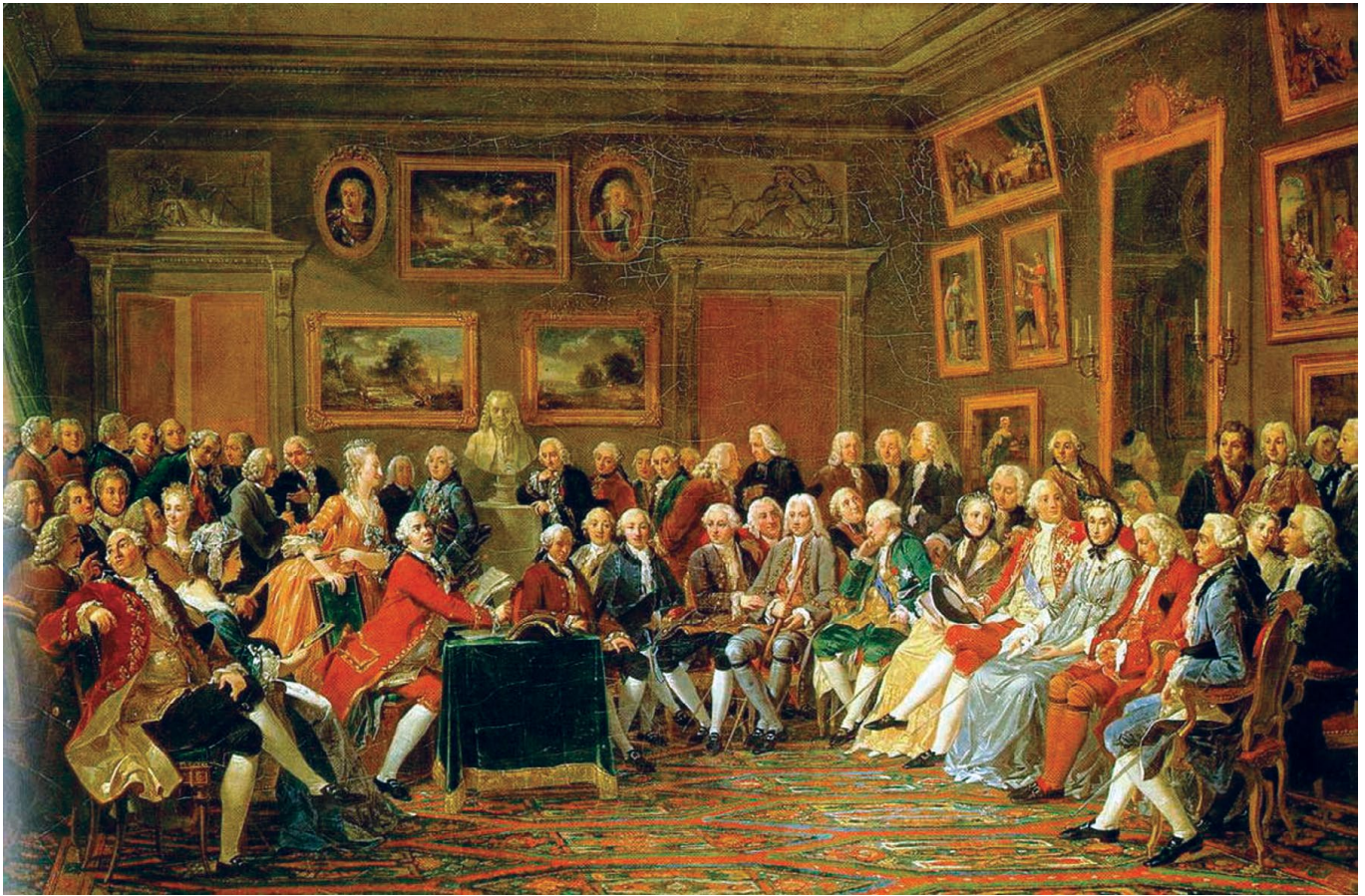
2 For more on these countries, see Emiliani, *Leggi, bandi*, 23–53; Thomas Adlerkreutz, “The Royal Placat of 1666. Briefly about Background and further Importance,” in *Historical Perspective of Heritage Legislation. Balance between Laws and Values*, eds. Riin Alatalu, Anneli Randla, Laura Ingerpuu and Diana Haapsal (Tallin: Icomos, 2017), 6–15; Chiara Mannoni, “Tutela del patrimonio in età barocca. Tra Svezia e Stato Pontificio, il Placat per la protezione delle antichità scandinave” [Protecting Heritage in the Baroque. Between Sweden and the Papal States, the Placat to preserve the Scandinavian Antiquities], *Il Capitale Culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, no. 23 (2021): 309–331; Chiara Mannoni, *Art in Early Modern Law. Evolving Procedures for Heritage Protection in 15<sup>th</sup>- to 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2022), 7–53.

3 Vincenzo Ferrone, “Conoscenza e Immaginazione. L’*Encyclopédie* e la critica della rivoluzione scientifica nel Seicento” [Knowledge and Imagination. The *Encyclopédie* and the Critique on the Scientific Revolution in 1600s], in *Illuminismo. Storia di un’idea plurale*, eds. Massimo Mori and Salvatore Veca (Roma: Carrocci, 2019), 37–58.

4 For more on this topic, see Antonio Padoa Schioppa, *Storia del diritto in Europa. Dal medioevo all’età contemporanea* [History of Law in Europe. From the Middle Age to the Present] (Bologna: il Mulino, 2016).

5 Ibid.





**Fig. 2.** Anicet Charles Gabriel Lemonnier, *Reading of Voltaire's "L'Orphelin de la Chine" in the salon of Madame Geoffrin, with Rousseau, Montesquieu, Diderot, and D'Alembert*, 1812, oil on canvas, Castle of Malmaison, Rueil Malmaison.

to the intellectuals involved in the debates within the Republic of Letters,<sup>6</sup> and second, the “territorialism” implied in the urgency to preserve antiquities, monuments and paintings within each pertinent state.<sup>7</sup> From this perspective, it can be affirmed that such a conflict gave rise to the contemporary concepts of heritage. In fact, nowadays the material products of the past are considered global resources worthy of protection for the universal advancement of culture and knowledge. On the other hand, there is widespread agreement that these assets should remain in the place where they were created, or where they have been transferred on the basis of a legal arrangement.

## THE PAPAL STATES

Following a centuries-long tradition, at the beginning of the 1700s the Papal States established a set of four new regulations aiming to reduce the outflow of ancient materials – the so-called *Edicts Spinola* by Pope Clement XI.<sup>8</sup> The second of these edicts, issued in 1704, prescribed specifically that “Mural

6 Marc Fumaroli, *The Republic of Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); Orietta Rossi Pinelli, *Le arti nel Settecento Europeo* [The Arts in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe] (Torino: Einaudi, 2009).

7 Massimo Mori, “Le tradizioni cosmopolitiche” [Cosmopolitan Traditions], in *Illuminismo. Storia di un'idea*, 173–196.

8 For a study on Papal legislation in English, see Chiara Mannoni, “Protecting antiquities in Early Modern Rome: the Papal Edicts as Paradigms for the Heritage Safeguard in Europe,” *ORE Open Research Europe*, no. 1:48 (2021): 1–12; Chiara Mannoni, *Artistic Canons and Legal Protection. Developing Policies to Preserve, Administer and Trade Artworks in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Rome and Athens* (Frankfurt: Max-Planck Institute, 2023).



Paintings, Stuccos, Floors, Figures, or other works in Mosaic, Monuments, or Sepulchres<sup>9</sup> must be declared and registered at the central offices of the state. Evidently, its aim was to control the growing number of illegal excavations in and exports of antiquities from Rome.

A subsequent refinement of the concept of “heritage protection” occurred in 1733, in the *Edict Albani* by Pope Clement XII. At the outset, this edict reissued the older 15<sup>th</sup>-century prohibition on the trade of “things (...) altered and counterfeit,”<sup>10</sup> described as small forged items which were usually sold to foreigners. It also introduced the protection of “Paintings, Mosaics, and Pictures (...) both ancient and modern,”<sup>11</sup> thereby attributing value to transportable paintings after a longstanding exclusive interest in antiquities. These significant developments can be contextualised in relation to the European art market and scholarship of that time. Indeed, the trade of forged antiquities had expanded in Rome during the last decades of the 1600s, caused both by European collectors’ increasing demand for artworks, and by a serious economic crisis which affected local artists.<sup>12</sup> In addition to antiquities, increasing exports of paintings responded to a growing interest in Italian Renaissance art on the part of European collectors and scholars. As already mentioned, movable paintings had been excluded from supervision before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thus making their exportation from the Papal States exceedingly easy. Seeking to respond to these new trends, in 1733 the pope included both paintings on wood and canvas under the protective umbrella of law in order to minimise the outflow of pieces that were considered significant for the state.

Papal legislation on the subject of heritage reached a peak with the *Edict Valenti Gonzaga* issued by Pope Benedict XIV in 1750 (**fig. 3**). This can be seen as the first regulation that not only corrected omissions in previous laws, but also aimed at full execution. To achieve this, two innovative prescriptions were established. The first involved the concept of “heritage.” The inclusion of an open-ended clause at the end of the list aimed to incorporate objects that were not explicitly mentioned: “any other work (...) which is in Rome, and outside Rome.”<sup>13</sup> This could indicate that the definition of an “artefact” had begun to be seen as an evolving concept, impossible to define *a priori*, but to be verified according to each case. For the first time, the definition of “artwork” also included artefacts that were located “outside Rome,” that is, in the provinces of the state.

The second innovation involved the appointment of three assessors to carry out the procedures of inspection and control of heritage, supporting the work

9 “Pitture, Stucchi, Pavimenti, Figure, o altri lavori di mosaico, Monumenti, o siano Sepolcri.” Emiliani, *Leggi, bandi*, 67. If it is not stated otherwise, the translations of the quotations are made by author.

10 “Cose ... alterate e falsificate.” *Ibid.*, 73.

11 “Pitture, Mosaici, e Quadri ... opere tanto antiche, quanto moderne.” *Ibid.*, 72.

12 For a wider perspective on these and the next observations, see Condemi, *Dal 'Decoro et Utile'*, 35–64; Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters. A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963).

13 “Altre opere ... esitenti in Roma, o fuori Roma.” Emiliani, *Leggi, bandi*, 76.

**Fig. 3.** Giovanni Paolo Pannini, *Gallery of views of ancient Rome*, 1758, oil on canvas, Louvre Museum, Paris.



of the main commissary.<sup>14</sup> The major shortcoming of earlier papal regulations, in fact, was that they did not establish any extensive system of administration throughout the territory of Rome.<sup>15</sup> The laws, therefore, had generally remained quite abstract lists of provisions, impossible to implement. The three new assessors instituted with the *Edict Valenti Gonzaga* were expected to take care of, respectively, painting, sculpture and “Cameos, Medals, Engravings, and any other kinds of Antiquity.”<sup>16</sup> The main position of commissary, for its part, began to be filled soon after 1750 with exceptionally knowledgeable appointees such as Johann Joachim Winckelmann and Filippo Aurelio Visconti.<sup>17</sup>

Shifting our focus away from the Papal States, it is worth examining the wider politico-cultural panorama in Europe during this era. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century major excavations and survey campaigns were launched in different areas of the central and southern parts of the continent.<sup>18</sup> In 1738 the site of Herculaneum was first discovered and excavated; ten years later excavations in Pompeii also began. In 1744 informal digs were launched in the Etruscan sites of Tuscany. At the same time, local excavations and landscape searches began in the northern regions of Germany. In 1734, the so-called *Resolution of Drenthe* was issued in the Netherlands to protect the *hunebeds* – megalithic prehistoric dolmens – from removal and destruction, with the aim of fostering local

14 The Commissary of Antiquity was first appointed in 1534, but it was clearly impossible for a single person to administer and supervise the full extent of the Arts in Rome. Ronald Ridley, “To Protect the Monuments: The Papal Antiquarian (1534–1870),” *Xenia Antiqua*, 1 (1992): 118–154.

15 Ibid.

16 “Camei, Medaglie, Incisioni, ed ogni altra sorte di Antichità.” Emiliani, *Leggi, bandi*, 77.

17 Ridley, “To Protect the Monuments.”

18 For the history of archaeological research, see Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology* (London: British Museum Press, 1996).



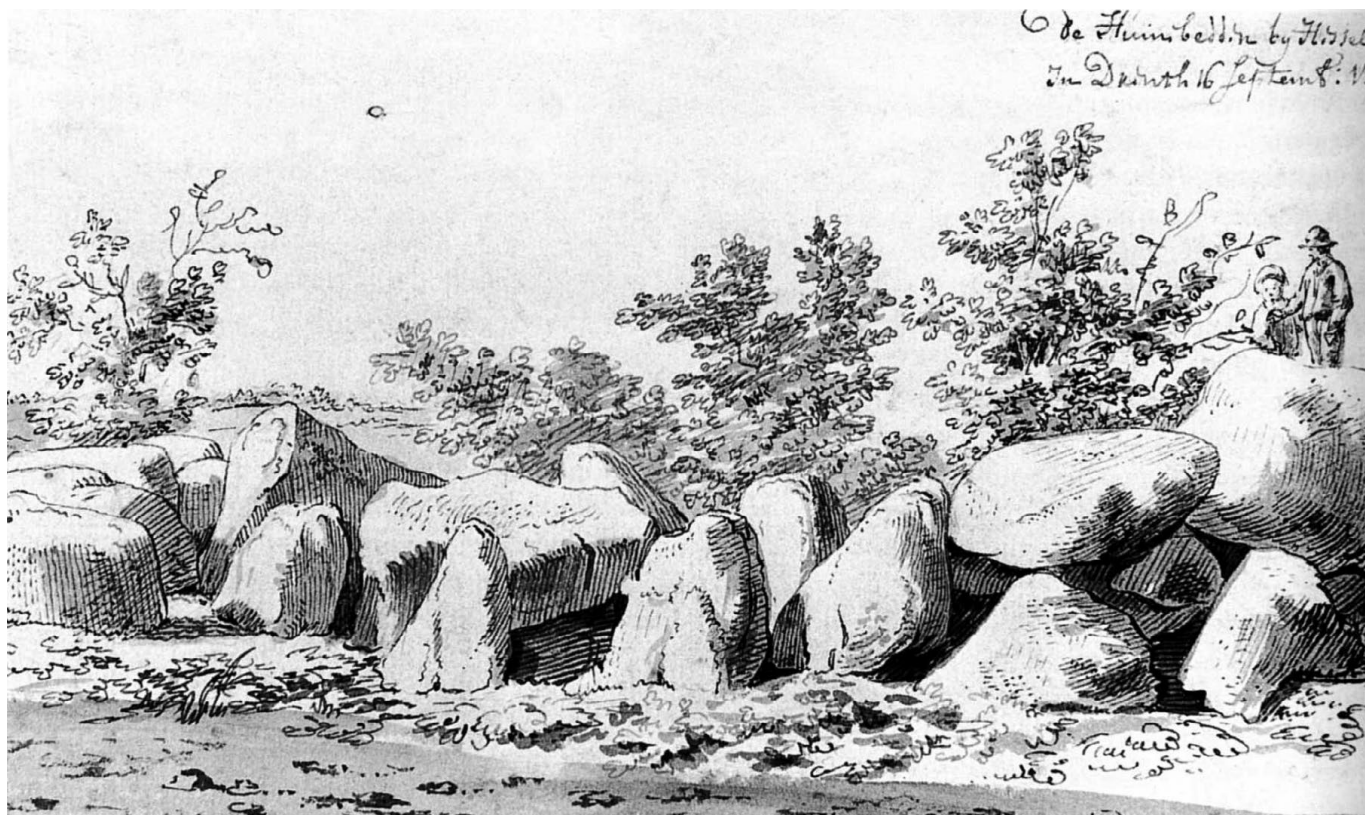


Fig. 4. Cornelis Pronk, “Hunebed” of Havelte, 1737, printing, from: Roel Sanders, *Schilders van Drenthe* (Zuidwolde: Het Drentse Boek, 2003).

explorations and surveys (fig. 4).<sup>19</sup> These and further initiatives would have permanent effects on the protection of heritage all over Europe, prompting new legislation not only in the states which were directly involved, but also in other countries that acknowledged the importance of such innovations. In this regard, it can be affirmed that the laws issued in the Papal States throughout the early modern period were a model for other countries – or to be more specific, they set an example for the launch of prescriptive frameworks to approach heritage preservation in terms of both the law and collective responsibility.<sup>20</sup>

## THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES

The Kingdom of Naples did not have any regulations on the protection of the local heritage before the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1755, Charles III of Bourbon issued the *Prammatica LVII* and the *Prammatica LVIII*, explicitly quoting the model of “the most cultured States of Europe”<sup>21</sup> for the measures he set up. The two new regulations were intended to encompass any kind of antiquity under supervision, as well as “ancient paintings, made on

19 Jean Albert Bakker, *Megalithic Research in the Netherlands (1547/1911)*. From ‘Giants Beds’ and ‘Pillar of Hercules’ to *Accurate Investigations* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2010); Chiara Mannoni, *Art in Early Modern Law*, 7–53.

20 On the model of papal legislation in the Old Italian States and Europe, see Mario Speroni, *La tutela dei beni culturali negli Stati Italiani preunitari* [Protecting Cultural Heritage in the Old Italian States] (Milano: Giuffrè, 1988); Mannoni, “Protecting Antiquities in Early Modern Rome.”

21 “Stati più culti d’Europa.” Speroni, *La tutela dei beni culturali*, 81. For legislation issued in the Kingdom of Naples, see Paola D’Alconzo, *L’anello del Re. Tutela del patrimonio storico-artistico nel Regno di Napoli, 1734–1824* [The King’s Ring. Protecting the Historic and Artistic Heritage in the Kingdom of Naples, 1734–1824] (Firenze: Edifir, 1999).

canvas, panel, wood, copper, and silver.”<sup>22</sup> However, not all such items were automatically banned from export, but only those that “for their excellence (...) or other rarity, deserve to be valued,”<sup>23</sup> that is, considered top-quality according to 18<sup>th</sup>-century Neapolitan scholarship. Interestingly, safeguards for “ancient paintings cut off the walls”<sup>24</sup> were also recommended in response to the practice of removing frescoes from buildings, which had become a pioneering technique in archaeology after the unearthing of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The law also introduced the first form of protection of ancient instruments, understood as domestic and common items found during digs, which went from being generally ignored by antiquarian scholarship to being designated worthy of protection. It is clear that the discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii disclosed new ranges of materials and introduced innovative studies, classifications, and models related to the idea of antiquity and protection within the Enlightenment. Together with these conceptual innovations, the *Prammaticae* also touched on the practical implications of heritage protection by establishing a body of three administrators, who were responsible respectively for statues and monuments, paintings, and quarries and marbles, and carried out all attendant supervision and inspection procedures.

## SPAIN

The country that seemed to best acknowledge the outcomes of the new archaeological innovations was Spain, probably because King Philip V of Spain was the father of Charles III of Naples. It is likely that the introduction of new measures regulating the excavation and protection of antiquities in these two countries were interconnected. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that Philip V – a fine collector of ancient relics and statues – launched the first provisions on the protection of Spanish artefacts in 1738, exactly when excavations in Herculaneum started.<sup>25</sup> In that year, he founded the first institution dedicated to the preservation and study of ancient monuments in Spain: the Royal Academy of History.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, in a wider perspective, Spain followed an individual path in elaborating a particular definition of “state heritage,” which implied that public monuments and artefacts were properties of the royal crown.

Looking at the Spanish definitions of “heritage protection,” in 1753 King Ferdinand VI prescribed safeguards specifically for ancient movable items.

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22 “Pitture antiche, o in tele, o in tavole, o di legno, o di rame, o d’argento.” Emiliani, *Leggi, bandi*, 172.

23 “Per eccellenza ... o per altra rarità, merita di essere tenuto in pregio.” Speroni, *La tutela dei beni culturali*, 82.

24 “Pitture antiche tagliate dai muri.” Ibid.

25 My analysis is based on the interpretations of Paola D’Alconzo, “Guardando Roma da una prospettiva decentrata: spunti di riflessione su norma e prassi della tutela del patrimonio storico-artistico nella seconda metà del XVIII secolo, tra il Regno di Napoli e la Spagna” [Observing Rome from a Decentralised Angle: Considerations on Rules and Practices for Heritage Protection in the Second Half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, between the Kingdom of Naples and Spain], in *Il Laboratorio del Settecento. Legislazione, tutela, pubblico e mercato nella seconda metà del XVIII secolo*, eds. Susanne Adina Meyer and Serenella Rolfi Ožvald (Firenze: LibroCo, 2011), 16–22.

26 For a history of heritage protection in Spain, see Miguel Ángel López-Trujillo, *Patrimonio. La lucha por los bienes culturales Españoles, 1500-1939* [Heritage. The Fight for Spanish Cultural Heritage, 1500–1939] (Gijón: Trea, 2006). See also Chiara Mannoni, *Art in Early Modern Law*, 7–53.

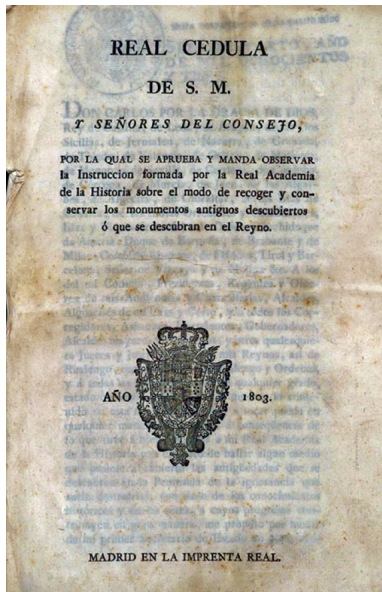


Fig. 5. *Real Cédula*, de S.M. y Señores del Consejo (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1803), cover page.

Shortly afterward, in 1761, King Charles III assigned public “paintings and sculpture of famous dead artists”<sup>27</sup> to the care of the Royal Academy of San Fernando, which was called upon to provide for their custody and, most importantly, their restoration. In the subsequent years, the post of restorer of the royal collections was assigned to illustrious artists such as Anton Raphael Mengs and Francisco de Goya. Interestingly, the dispatches of the Academy in 1761 also stated the intention to “comply with the practices of Naples, Rome and all the enlightened communities,”<sup>28</sup> in taking action against the outflow of artefacts from Spain.

Spanish efforts in the defence of the local heritage reached a peak with the issuing of the so-called *Real Cédula* in 1803 (fig. 5). Although it was conceived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this directive offers a clear reflection of the cultural background of the Enlightenment, providing one of the most precise definitions of antiquity of that time:

Statues, busts, bas-reliefs in any material, temples, sepulchres, theatres, amphitheatres, circuses, naumachias, arenas, thermal baths, avenues, roads, aqueducts, gravestones or inscriptions, mosaics, coins of any class, cameos, pieces of architecture, milestones, musical instruments, such as sistrums, liras, castanets; sacred objects such as praefericulum, simpulum, lituus; knives for sacrifices, axes, aspersorium, vases, tripods, weapons of any kind, such as bows and arrows, lead bullets, shells, shields; civil [objects], such as weighing scales and their weights, roman scales, sundials or mechanical clocks, bracelets, collars, crowns, rings, seals; all sort of utensils, instruments of liberal and mechanical arts; and finally anything that is still unknown but considered ancient, whether it be Punic, Roman, Christian, Gothic, Arabic, or Medieval.<sup>29</sup>

This list not only demonstrates an interest in systematising archaeological materials according to typological classifications derived from the Enlightenment, but also an advanced knowledge of the ancient history of the Mediterranean. It also reveals the strong influence of the recent archaeological

27 “Las pinturas y esculturas de artífices famosos difuntos.” Claude Bédard and Enrique Lafuente Ferrari, *La Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (1744–1808). Contribución al estudio de las influencias estilísticas y de la mentalidad artística en la España del siglo XVIII* [The Royal Academy of San Fernando (1744–1808). Contributions to the Study of the Stylistic Influences and Artistic Mentality in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Spain] (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1989), 432.

28 “En conformidad de lo que se practicaba en Nápoles, Roma y todos los pueblos cultos.” *Ibid.*, 438.

29 Estatuas, bustos, bajo relieves, de cualesquiera materia que sean, templos, sepulcros, teatros, anfiteatros, circo, naumaquias, palestras, baños, calzadas, caminos, acueductos, lápidas o inscripciones, mosaicos, monedas de cualquiera clase, camafeos, trozos de arquitectura, columnas miliares, instrumentos músicos, como sistrum, liras, crótales; sagrados como profericulum, simpulum, lituus; cuchillos sacrificatorios, seguros, aspersorios, vasos, tripodes, armas de todas especies, como arcos, flechas, glandes, carcaxes, escudos; civiles, como balanzas y su pesas, romanas, relojes solares o maquinales, armilas, collares, coronas, anillos, sellos; toda suerte de utensilios, instrumentos de artes liberales y mecánicas; y finalmente, cualesquiera cosas aún desconocidas, reputadas por antiguas, ya sean púnicas, romanas, cristianas, ya godas, árabes y de la baja edad. *Real Cédula de S.M. y Señores del Consejo* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1803).



discoveries – for instance, *praefericulum*, *simpulum*, and *lituus* were vases, cups and wands used in the Etruscan society. Yet, the time frame was extended to include the Spanish artefacts of the Arab and Punic occupations, drawing interest to the local history. Besides reassigning the supervision of antiquities to the Royal Academy of History, this law promoted a very broad “catch-all” clause at the end of the list – “anything that is still unknown” – embracing the attitude of curiosity and inclusivity of the late Enlightenment.

## PORTUGAL

Portugal, for its part, set a significant example of the promotion of local interests through the protection of its heritage. The first Portuguese regulation on this subject was issued by King John V prior to the launch of excavation and survey campaigns in Europe. Before John’s accession, Portuguese kings had been more concerned with their overseas colonies than with furthering their cultural and political prestige in Europe. However, John V was exceptionally enlightened and resourceful in terms of his patronage of the arts – he was called “the Sun King” – as well as particularly loyal to the pope and eager to gain international diplomatic recognition.<sup>30</sup> He attracted several Italian artists to contribute work to his new palaces and artistic collections in Portugal.<sup>31</sup> In such a stimulating cultural environment, he was induced to issue the so-called *Alvará de Lei* on the protection of Portuguese antiquities as early as 1721.<sup>32</sup> He appointed the Royal Academy of History to take care of and study a wide range of artefacts, including “buildings, statues, blocks of marble, milestones, slabs, foils, medals, coins and other artefacts”<sup>33</sup> that were in a state of disrepair. Through the establishment of safeguards for several works connected to “the glory of ancient Lusitania,”<sup>34</sup> John V intended to promote local arts, history and culture, launching and reconnecting Portugal to the diplomatic environment of Europe as a whole.

## THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE

Venice can be seen as one of the epicentres of the art market in 18<sup>th</sup>-century central Europe. In this wide-open context, to control the exports of the old masters’ “most valuable works,”<sup>35</sup> the *Serenissima* established an early model for a general catalogue of paintings based on systematisations derived from

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30 For further readings on John V, see Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Reis de Portugal: D. João V* [Kings of Portugal: Don John V] (Lisbon: Temas e Debates, 2009).

31 See Jay Levenson, *The Age of the Baroque in Portugal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

32 I am grateful to Dr. Madalena Costa Lima from the University of Lisbon for providing me with the original text of this law, which I have used for the following quotes.

33 “Edifícios, estatuas, mármore, cippos, laminas, chapas, medalhas, moedas e outros artefactos.”

34 “Gloria da antiga Lusitania.”

35 “Quadri più degni.” Chiara Piva, “Anton Maria Zanetti e la tradizione della tutela delle opere d’arte a Venezia: dalla critica d’arte all’attività sul campo” [Anton Maria Zanetti and the Tradition of Artwork Protection in Venice: From Artistic Critique to Active Practices], in *Il restauro come atto critico. Venezia e il suo territorio*, ed. Chiara Piva (Venezia: Edizioni Ca’ Foscari, 2014), 101.

Enlightenment scholarship. In 1773, the library keeper Anton Maria Zanetti submitted a memorandum to the Tribunal of the Inquisitors complaining about the lamentable state of neglect of the local paintings, particularly those that were kept in the public buildings of the city.<sup>36</sup> He called for the creation of an “exact inventory” of paintings, with a twofold purpose: to monitor the state of preservation of each artwork with a view to planning future restorations, in consideration of the damp climate of the city; and to prevent illegal trade on the European art market, which had already caused the loss of several Venetian paintings. Zanetti was promptly appointed Inspector of Public Paintings and started drafting the catalogue. By 1774 he had already recorded the items of all the civic and ecclesiastic institutions in Venice, including information regarding the author, the subject and the location of each piece.<sup>37</sup> Even though the criteria for selecting the “most valuable works” worthy of protection were entirely based on Zanetti’s personal judgement, this early inventory proved to be a reliable tool of documentation and control for avoiding the loss of further paintings. For this reason, it can be considered one of the pioneering models for the contemporary notion of a catalogue.

## CONCLUSION

24 Developments in several European countries after the Enlightenment can be seen as the gradual reception of the idea of the need to safeguard artistic heritage, adapted and re-elaborated each time to fit local characteristics and demands. To give but a further example, the Margraviate of Brandenburg-Bayreuth and the Langraviate of Hessen-Kassel in central Europe were the first districts in the German area to publish regulations on the protection of local monuments in 1780.<sup>38</sup> The majority of the other Old German regions started issuing similar legislation only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup> It is also significant that major countries that might be expected to lead the innovations of the Enlightenment, such as France or England, did not issue any rules on the safekeeping of their heritage at this stage.<sup>40</sup> Evidently, their interests in the arts responded to paradigms that were different from the questions about the legal safety of precious artefacts that arose in the regions examined here. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the confiscations carried out by

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36 Speroni, *La tutela dei beni culturali*, 135–188.

37 For a more extensive account of Zanetti’s role, see Piva, “Anton Maria Zanetti,” 83–114.

38 For more on legislation issued in these countries see Chiara Mannoni, *Art in Early Modern Law*, 7–53.

39 Joachim Reichstein, “Federal Republic of Germany,” in *Approaches to the Archaeological Heritage*, ed. Henry Cleere (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 37–47.

40 England issued the *Ancient Monuments Protection Act* in 1882. France issued the decree *Sur la conservation des monuments et objets d’art ayant un intérêt historique et artistique* in 1887. See Christopher Chippendale, “The Making of the First Ancient Monuments Act, 1882, and Its Administration Under General Pitt-Rivers,” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, no. 136:1 (1983): 1–55; Paul Leon, *La Vie des Monuments Français. Destruction, Restauration* [The life of French Monuments. Destruction, Restauration] (Paris: Picard, 1951).

Napoleon throughout Europe were to inspire new forms of protection from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, based on the belief that artefacts should be retained within their relevant contexts of production.<sup>41</sup>

To conclude, throughout this essay for the sake of clarity I have deliberately used the contemporary term “heritage” retrospectively to refer to past concepts and ideas. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to associate our current understanding of this concept to the theoretical constructions that spread across Europe during and after the Enlightenment. As reported in the Oxford dictionary *Lexico*, “heritage” refers to “valued objects and qualities, such as historic buildings and cultural traditions, that have been passed down from previous generations (...) and are preserved for the nation.”<sup>42</sup> Indeed, an early characterisation of these current values also constituted the basis of the heritage protection regulations that were issued in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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41 For more on this aspect, see the fundamental volume Quatremère de Quincy, *Lettres sur les préjugés qu'occasionnerait aux arts et à la science le déplacement des monuments de l'art de l'Italie (Lettres à Miranda)* [Letters on the Prejudices which the Removal of the Monuments of Art from Italy would cause to the Arts and Science] (Paris: Crapelet, 1796). See also Édouard Pommier, “La Rivoluzione e il destino delle opere d'arte” [The Revolution and the Destiny of the Artworks], in *Più antichi della luna. Studi su J.J. Winckelmann e A. Ch. Quatremère de Quincy*, eds. Eduard Pommier and Michela Scolaro (Bologna: Minerva, 2000), 227–277.

42 Oxford dictionary *Lexico*, accessed July 30, 2021: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/heritage>.





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## THE COMMISSION FOR THE COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS AND ANTIQUITIES AND ARISTOCRATIC ART COLLECTIONS IN EASTERN CROATIA\*

### Abstract

*The work of Komisija za sakupljanje i očuvanje kulturnih spomenika i starina (The Commission for the Collection and Preservation of Cultural Monuments and Antiquities; KOMZA) was important for salvaging aristocratic art collections in eastern Croatia after World War II. The salvaged artworks were listed and stored in the local collection centre in Osijek, and after the confiscation were mostly granted to the Museum of Slavonia. This paper describes the basic principles of the Commission's work and how a large part of former aristocratic collections entered museum collections. The importance of the Commission's archives is particularly emphasized, especially in the light of research of the provenance of artworks that were deliberately kept secret during the communist regime. Without researching this material, it would not be possible to establish the origin, authorship, content or historical and artistic value of many artworks in our museums.*

27

### INTRODUCTION

Even during World War II, decisions were made within the anti-fascist movement in Yugoslavia with far-reaching consequences for the attitude of the future state authorities towards artistic heritage. Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije (Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia; AVNOJ) decided on November 21, 1944, that the property of "state enemies, absentees and property alienated by the occupying authorities"<sup>1</sup> would become state property. This process was managed by members of Komunistička partija Jugoslavije (the Communist Party of Yugoslavia), who, in accordance with communist ideology, conducted a radical programme of violent and undemocratic confiscation of private property. The owners of the most valuable art collections before World War II were representatives

\* This paper was co-funded by the Croatian Science Foundation within the project IP-2018-01-9364 *Art and the State in Croatia from the Enlightenment to the Present*.

1 "Odluka o prijelazu u državno vlasništvo neprijateljske imovine, o državnoj upravi nad imovinom neprisutnih osoba i o sekvstru nad imovinom koju su okupatorske vlasti prisilno otuđile" [Decision on the transfer of enemy property to state ownership, on state administration over the property of absent persons and on the sequestration of property forcibly alienated by occupying authorities], *Službeni list DFJ*, no. 2, 6 February 1945, 13–14. All translations are by the authors.

of the social elite (nobility, wealthy citizens, members of the church hierarchy, etc.) who were considered opponents of the regime, i.e. *state enemies*, in post-war Yugoslavia. During the war and in the post-war period, many of these collections were destroyed, looted or abandoned. This was especially true for collections owned by the Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust, and for those of wealthy bourgeois and aristocratic families, most of whom emigrated.

The authorities were aware that the post-war situation with artworks had to be resolved quickly, and Komisija za sakupljanje i očuvanje kulturnih spomenika i starina (the Commission for the Collection and Preservation of Cultural Monuments and Antiquities; KOMZA)<sup>2</sup> played a key role in preserving private collections in Croatia. The Commission was established on June 28, 1945, by Ministarstvo prosvjete Federalne Države Hrvatske (the Ministry of Education of the Federal State of Croatia; renamed Narodna Republika Hrvatska / the People's Republic of Croatia / after November 29, 1945). The establishment and operation of the Commission were based on the legal framework of the new Yugoslav state, and followed the attitude of the communist authorities towards private property. The property taken and catalogued by the members of the Commission belonged mainly to wealthier civil families, industrialists, officials of the former Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia), nobility, missing Jewish families and those considered to be enemies of the regime. After the Commission brought its activities to an end in 1950, the competent authorities allocated the material mainly to museum institutions and declared it state property. In this paper, the focus is on the circumstances of the establishment, work and results of the Commission's activities in eastern Croatia regarding the collecting of artworks from former aristocratic collections.

The research of the Commission's work in this paper is primarily based on archival material kept in several institutions. For the Commission's work on the level of the Republic of Croatia, the most important files were kept in the archives of today's Ministarstvo kulture i medija Republike Hrvatske (the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia).<sup>3</sup> For the Commission's work in eastern Croatia, the archival material kept in Muzej Slavonije (the Museum of Slavonia) in Osijek is also important. The results of research on legal and organizational framework of the Commission's work at the national level were first published in 2019 in a paper by Iva Pasini Tržec.<sup>4</sup> The activity of the Commission has recently been the subject of research conducted

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2 The name varies slightly in historical sources. The term Commission is used in the rest of the paper.

3 Files of the Commission for the Collection and Preservation of Cultural Monuments and Antiquities (KOMZA) from No. 1/45 to No. 84/50, Central Archives, Collection of Old Materials, Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb (hereafter cited as KOMZA).

4 Iva Pasini Tržec, "Osnutak, organizacijski ustroj i djelovanje Komisije za sakupljanje i očuvanje kulturnih spomenika i starina" [Establishment, Organizational Structure and Work of the Commission for the Collection and Preservation of Cultural Monuments and Antiquities], *Peristil: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 62 (2019): 123–138.

by several art historians in the context of discovering the provenance of works of art in the holdings of Croatian museums.<sup>5</sup> Questions of provenance are within the focus of interest of the international community, especially in the light of research into the fate of Jewish heritage during the Holocaust. The experiences of foreign experts in research of this type are gradually being implemented in Croatia as well. As an example, we highlight the participation of Croatian experts in the project *Transfer of Cultural Objects in the Alpe Adria Region in the 20th Century* (TransCultAA).<sup>6</sup>

The Commission's work in eastern Croatia has been researched and published (since 2013) in papers by Jasminka Najcer Sabljak and Silvija Lučevnjak in the context of salvaging the art collections of noble families after World War II.<sup>7</sup> On February 17, 2015, the Scientific and Specialist Conference *Dr. Danica Pinterović – rad i djelovanje* (Dr. Danica Pinterović – Work and Activities) at the Museum of Slavonia provided a better understanding of the Commission's impact. Most of the topics at the conference dealt with the Commission's work, and J. Najcer Sabljak especially elaborated the attitude of Danica Pinterović towards artworks from the collections of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>8</sup>

## FOUNDING OF THE COMMISSION AND THE BEGINNING OF ITS WORK IN EASTERN CROATIA

After the Commission's founding, Professor Vladimir Tkalčić (1883–1971), a Croatian museologist and cultural worker with a lot of experience in the field of cultural heritage protection, was appointed its head.<sup>9</sup> During the war, he headed Muzej za umjetnost i obrt (the Museum of Arts and Crafts) in Zagreb and led large operations to save materials from Orthodox churches in Croatia. Based on a large amount of the saved material, Muzej Srba u Hrvatskoj (the

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5 Bartol Fabijanić, "Slike u Strossmayerovoj galeriji starih majstora iz nekoliko međuratnih plemičkih zbirki kontinentalne Hrvatske" [Paintings in the Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters from Several Noble Art Collections of the Interwar Period of Continental Croatia], *Peristil: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 64 (2021): 115–128; Iva Pasini Tržec, "O sudbini pet privatnih zbirki zagrebačkih židovskih obitelji za vrijeme i nakon sloma Nezavisne Države Hrvatske" [Five Private Jewish Art Collections and Their Fate during the Independent State of Croatia and after Its Collapse], *Peristil: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 64 (2021): 97–113; Ljerka Dulibić and Iva Pasini Tržec, "Musealisation Process of Dispossessed Artworks in Croatia during and after the Second World War," in *Transfer of Cultural Objects in the Alpe Adria Region in the 20th Century*, eds. Christian Fuhrmeister and Barbara Murovec (Wien & Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2022), 405–423; Iva Pasini Tržec, "So-Called Private Collections of Public Interest in Zagreb and Their Destiny During Socialism," in *Transfer of Cultural Objects*, eds. Fuhrmeister and Murovec, 425–441.

6 This research project is the first attempt to investigate the transfer of cultural assets in the Alpes-Adria area in the 20th century. In an unprecedented transnational and collaborative way, it engaged a multinational team of scholars to analyse "Uses of the Past", in particular historical and current conflicts of ownership, patrimony, and cultural heritage. See TransCultAA, accessed December 11, 2022, <http://www.transcultaa.eu>.

7 The most important works of these authors on this topic are cited in this text. A complete insight into their work can be obtained by searching the website of the Croatian Scientific Bibliography CROSBIB, accessed May 18, 2022, <https://bib.irb.hr/index.html>.

8 Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, "Danica Pinterović i muzealizacija zbirki slavonskog plemstva" [Danica Pinterović and the Musealization of the Collections of the Slavonian Nobility], *Osječki zbornik*, no. 34 (2018): 99–106.

9 "Tkalčić, Vladimir," *Hrvatska enciklopedija Online* [Croatian Encyclopaedia Online], accessed May 30, 2022, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=61533>.



**Fig. 1.** Danica Pinterović (on the left) with her colleagues, photograph, Archaeological Museum, Osijek.

Museum of Serbs in Croatia, Zagreb) was founded in 1946.<sup>10</sup> Organizing the salvage of this heritage prepared Tkalčić and his associates for the extremely important work that they performed within the Commission after the end of the war. On November 23, 1945, the Ministry of Education ordered him to organize the operation of Zemaljski sabirni centar (the National Collection Centre) in the Museum of Arts and Crafts, where the Commission planned to house the collected material from various locations. The local collection centre for eastern Croatia was organized at Državni muzej u Osijeku (the National Museum in Osijek), which was renamed the Museum of Slavonia in 1947.<sup>11</sup> The first appointed member of the Commission in Osijek became the museum's curator, Danica Pinterović (1897–1985), an eminent archaeologist and historian (**fig. 1**).<sup>12</sup> The then director of the museum in Osijek, the historian Josip Bösendorfer (1876–1957) was also responsible for the Commission's work. He headed the institution until his retirement in 1949.<sup>13</sup> Pinterović and Bösendorfer were aware that in their field of work they had several extremely valuable collections owned by the nobility that required special attention. These were the collections of the Odescalchi family in Ilok, the Eltz family

10 Ljiljana Vukašinović, "Gdje je nestala muzealizacija srpske kulture. Povodom sedamdesete godišnjice jedne zaboravljene kulturne institucije Srba u Hrvatskoj" [Where Did the Musealization of Serbian Culture Disappear? On the Occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of a Forgotten Cultural Institution of the Serbs in Croatia], *Prosvjeta: novine za kulturu*, September 2016, accessed May 10, 2022, <http://casopis.skd-prosvjeta.hr/gdje-je-nestala-muzealizacija-srpske-kulture/>.

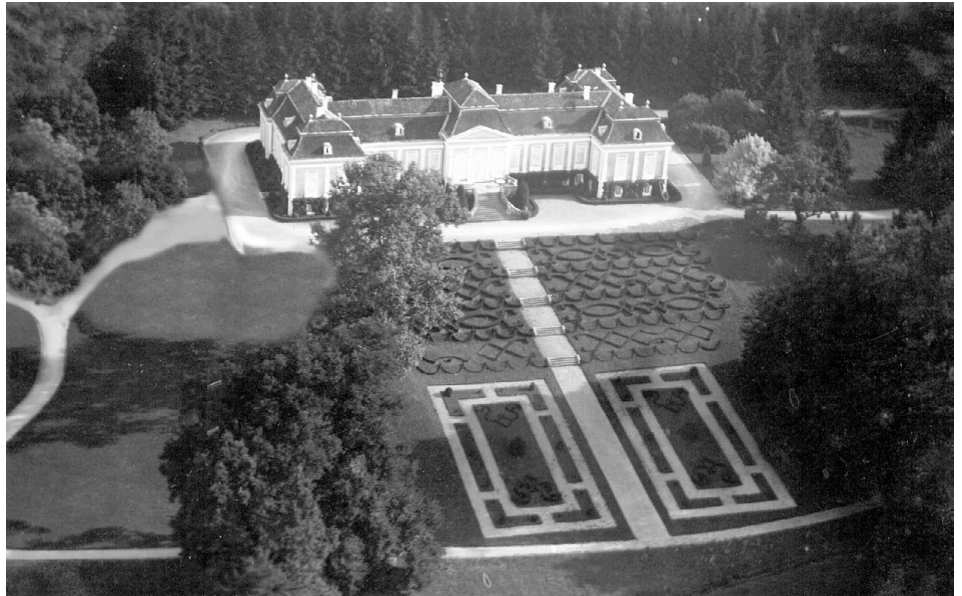
11 Vesna Burić, "Stotinu godina muzeja u Osijeku" [One Hundred Years of the Museum in Osijek], *Osječki zbornik*, no. 17 (1979): 5–15.

12 "Pinterović, Danica", Hrvatska enciklopedija Online [Croatian Encyclopaedia Online], accessed May 10, 2022, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=48302>.

13 Ante Grubišić, "Zasluge dr. Josipa Bösendorfera u spašavanju kulturne baštine tijekom i neposredno nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata" [Josip Bösendorfer's Contribution to Saving Cultural Heritage During and Immediately after WWII], in *Zbornik radova s Desničinih susreta 2012.*, eds. Drago Roksanđić and Ivana Cvijović Javorina (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet, 2013), 487–508; "Bösendorfer, Josip," Hrvatska enciklopedija Online [Croatian Encyclopaedia Online], accessed May 19, 2022, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=8912>.



Fig. 2. Small Manor in Našice, photograph, Našice Local History Museum.



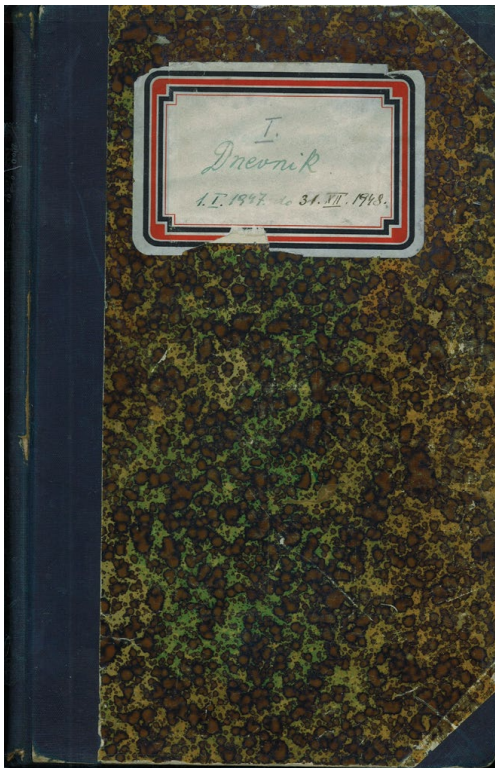
in Vukovar, the Khuen-Belasi family in Nuštar, the Norman-Ehrenfels family in Valpovo and the Pejačević family in Našice. The collections contained exceptional works of fine art and were the pinnacle of private collections in the area.<sup>14</sup> After the end of the war, most members of the nobility emigrated from Croatia, leaving behind their property that was looted, i.e. intentionally or unintentionally destroyed.

Initially, the Commission's work in eastern Croatia was limited to the work of Danica Pinterović, who faced a number of obstacles, from unreliable and unsafe means of transport between Osijek and nearby places to the unfavourable situation in the Osijek museum, which lacked space, staff and finances. In such circumstances, on October 31, 1945, she managed to visit the Valpovo Manor for the first time, which housed the Children's Home at the time. After inspection, she stored those items that she found artistically, culturally and historically valuable in a second-floor room of the manor and catalogued them.<sup>15</sup> She first came to Našice on November 20, 1945.<sup>16</sup> She determined that the collection of the Pejačević family, which before the war was held in the so-called Great Manor from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Small Manor from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was dislocated around the city (**fig. 2**). The material was devastated and looted at the end of the war. The Small Manor, which housed a boarding school at the time, was chosen as a temporary storage place, while the Great Manor was inaccessible since the army was stationed there. In January 1946,

14 Jasminka Najcer Sabljak and Silvija Lučevnjak, "State Authorities and the Heritage of Noble Families of Eastern Croatia," in *Art and Politics in the Modern Period*, eds. Dragan Damjanović, Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić, Željka Miklošević and Jeremy F. Walton (Zagreb: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, 2019), 221–229.

15 Izvještaj D. Pinterović o putu u Valpovo [Report by D. Pinterović on her Visit to Valpovo] (December 31, 1945), Documentary Collection, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.

16 Izvještaj D. Pinterović upraviteljstvu Državnog muzeja u Osijeku [Report by D. Pinterović to the Management of the Museum of Slavonia] (November 23, 1945), Documentary Collection, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.



**Fig. 3.** Danica Pinterović's Work Register, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.

Pinterović returned to Našice and found the previously-collected items in a disarray since the rooms were accessible via a window, and concluded that some items had probably been stolen.<sup>17</sup>

At the start of 1946, the Commission's leaders in Zagreb found the situation in eastern Croatia extremely unfavourable, since none of the items from the aristocratic art collections had been transferred to the local collection centre in Osijek. In order to intensify activities, they organized the visit of the Commission's representatives from Zagreb from April 4 to April 13, 1946.<sup>18</sup> The Secretary of the Commission, Ivana Vrbanić, arrived from Zagreb and visited several places in eastern Croatia (Donji Miholjac, Našice, Nuštar, Požega, Vinkovci, Vukovar, Trenkovo). Her visit to Osijek and the National Museum was especially significant. She found a very complicated situation in that institution because its director Josip Bösendorfer had just obtained permission from the city authorities to move the museum to Tvrđa, the historical core of Osijek. The museum moved into the former City Hall building on the main square, and two rooms were earmarked as the Commission's local collection centre. Ivana Vrbanić stated that the material examined in the field had not yet been transported to Osijek and that the museum in Osijek had been in an unenviable position due

to a lack of employees, major problems with moving museum materials, and inventory backlogs.<sup>19</sup> However, her visit brought positive changes, and from April 1946 onwards, Pinterović began sending regular monthly reports on her work to the Commission in Zagreb, which testify to accelerating activities to save cultural heritage. Her rich correspondence and her work diaries, kept in the Museum of Slavonia – especially those kept until 1950 – are important for creating a complete picture of the Commission's activities (**fig. 3**).<sup>20</sup>

## THE MUSEUM IN OSIJEK AS THE COMMISSION'S COLLECTION CENTRE (1946–1948)

After the relocation of the Osijek Museum to Tvrđa, the minimum conditions for transporting the items to Osijek were met. Intensive collection of materials from the abandoned manors and their transport to the Commission's local collection centre in Osijek took place from the end of 1946 until 1948. Although most of the Commission's efforts were focused on salvaging material from aristocratic collections, some significant collections owned by wealthier

<sup>17</sup> Renata Bošnjaković, Silvija Lučevnjak, "Danica Pinterović i Našice" [Danica Pinterović and Našice], *Osječki zbornik*, no. 34 (2018): 115–123.

<sup>18</sup> KOMZA 214/46, 216/46, 277/46, 307/46.

<sup>19</sup> KOMZA 135/46.

<sup>20</sup> *Dnevnik rada Danice Pinterović I.* (1. siječnja 1947. – 31. prosinca 1948.) [Danica Pinterović's Work Register I] (January 1, 1947 – December 31, 1948); *Dnevnik rada Danice Pinterović II.* (1. siječnja 1949. – 13. lipnja 1948.) [Danica Pinterović's Work Register II] (January 1, 1949 – June 13, 1948), Documentary Collection, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.

citizens of Osijek were also catalogued.<sup>21</sup> In September 1946, a group of experts consisting of Prof. Tihomil Stahuljak (assistant at the Conservation Institute in Zagreb), Prof. Zdenko Vojnović (librarian at the Museum of Arts and Crafts) and Predrag Grdenić (secretary of the Museum of Arts and Crafts) arrived from Zagreb to Osijek. On September 26, 1946, they found two unlocked rooms in Našice (in the Small Manor) with items catalogued by Pinterović, and on the same day they inspected items in the Valpovo Manor, which has also been stored and catalogued by Pinterović. They made a new list of items in the Valpovo Manor since they did not consider the existing inventory sufficiently precise.<sup>22</sup> On September 30, 1946, they made an important review of items in Vukovar, which will be discussed more in the next chapter. Following their visit, the Commission's work in this area intensified. Pinterović was occasionally helped by other Osijek museum employees. The field inspection of collections and their transport to Osijek began at the end of 1946. Unfortunately, Osijek museologists arrived too late in some places since materials had already been destroyed during the war or in the immediate post-war period, especially the collections of the Odescalchi family in Ilok and Khuen-Belasi in Nuštar.<sup>23</sup> In 1947, the Commission managed to ensure the transport of only six items from Ilok to Osijek.<sup>24</sup>

The heritage of the Khuen-Belasi family met a similar fate, as their manor in Nuštar (**fig. 4**) served as a military hospital at the end of the war, and later housed war invalids. Prior to the final military operations, the family evacuated most of their collection to Zagreb and abroad. Some of the archives and artworks are today housed in the University Library in Zagreb. Although Ivana Vrbanić collected some items during her visit in April 1946 and stored them in the manor, that same year in July, Prof. Marko Samardžija from Vinkovci informed the Commission that these items had disappeared. On August 12, 1946, at the persistent request of the Commission, the Slavonski Brod authorities informed them that the Khuen-Belasi family archives had burned and that some paintings had been destroyed as they depicted “an aristocratic way of life.”<sup>25</sup> The paintings were destroyed by the current inhabitants of the Nuštar Manor, mostly war invalids.<sup>26</sup>

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21 These are, for example, collections of families Brlić, Govorković, Hengl, Krešić, Pfeiffer, Povišil, Reisner, Šeper, Šmucer.

22 KOMZA 354/46, 355/46, 407/46.

23 Dopis upućen upravitelju Narodne imovine od D. Pinterović (5. lipnja 1946.) [A Letter sent by D. Pinterović to the manager of the National Property (June 5, 1946)], Documentary Collection, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.

24 File K-11/47 and File K-16/47, Archive, MS; Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, “Tragom kolekcije kneza Livija Odescalchija – od Rima do Iloka i Zagreba” [Tracing the Collection of Duke Livi Odescalchi – from Rome to Ilok and Zagreb], *Serinia Slavonica*, no. 15 (2015): 57–87; Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, *Likovna baština kneževa Odescalchi – od Lombardije i Rima do Iloka* [The Artistic Heritage of the Dukes Odescalchi – from Lombardy and Rome to Ilok] (Osijek: Muzej likovnih umjetnosti; Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske; Ilok: Muzej grada Iloka, 2015).

25 KOMZA 214/46.

26 KOMZA 277/46, 307/46.





Fig. 4. Drawing room, Khuen-Belassi Palace in Nuštar, photograph, Khuen Collection, Salzburg.

In December 1946, Pinterović inspected subsequently-found items in the Forestry Administration building in Našice, and the evacuation of that material to Osijek finally began. In total, about a hundred artworks (paintings and prints) were transported from Našice to the local collection centre in Osijek. In addition to artworks, about 70 pieces of antique furniture (cabinets, dressers, armchairs, mirrors), about 90 pieces of porcelain and glassware, and about 100 other items (e.g. photo albums, textiles, fans, samovars, etc.) were transported. Thanks to the Commission's work, especially to the work conducted by Pinterović, a part of the cultural heritage of the Našice branch of

the Pejačević family has been successfully preserved.<sup>27</sup>

Danica Pinterović often pointed out in her reports that the members of the Commission lacked funds and time, and the lack of museum staff was especially acute. Once again, she had to hurry the Commission to provide sufficient funding for transport, and she encouraged the Commission's headquarters in Zagreb to ensure the transport of the collected material to Osijek, which did not happen.<sup>28</sup> Soon, the premises intended for the local collection centre in Osijek became insufficient, so additional space had to be rented to house the items.<sup>29</sup>

In a letter from early 1948, the Zagreb Commission warned the local collection centres that during that year the final cataloguing of the collected materials and inventory should be sent to the Ministry of Education in Zagreb, so that the items could be finally allocated.<sup>30</sup> On June 22, 1948, an extremely important meeting, attended by the President of the Commission from Zagreb, Vladimir Tkalčić, was held in Osijek. It was followed by the Commission's work

27 Renata Bošnjaković, Silvija Lučevnjak, "Danica Pinterović i Našice" [Danica Pinterović and Našice], *Osiječki zbornik*, no. 34 (2018): 115–123.

28 KOMZA 230/46.

29 KOMZA 365/46.

30 KOMZA 15/48.

from June 11 to 22, 1948, during which Tkalčić and the director of the Osijek museum Bösendorfer worked with curators Pinterović and Josip Leović. They reviewed all of the items and concluded that most of them should become the property of the Museum of Slavonia, while a small portion of the items (only 16 items on the list) should be transferred to Zagreb.<sup>31</sup> In his report, Tkalčić stated that the items collected had been stored in three larger and four smaller rooms in the Osijek museum, and included a total of 1,100 artworks (paintings, prints, sculptures), about 170 “various items of furniture” and more than 500 “ceramic, glass and other small items.”<sup>32</sup> Not included in the list were some items that, according to the Commission, were of no greater value, and could be used as office decorations or for other such purposes. In addition, about 8,500 books were collected.<sup>33</sup> On July 31, 1948, the Museum of Slavonia sent a request that all listed items be submitted to their institution.<sup>34</sup>

Until the change of the socio-political situation with the establishment of the independent Republic of Croatia in 1990, the topic of the confiscated estates and property was politically undesirable, so the provenance of such items was not researched, and in the published material (e.g. exhibition catalogues) was not mentioned. The exhibition *Umjetnost slavonskog plemstva – vrhunska djela europske baštine* [Art of Slavonian Nobility – Masterpieces of European Heritage] shown at the Klovićevi dvori Gallery in Zagreb (April – July 2021) completed the research on the artistic heritage of noble families in eastern Croatia, based mostly on the Commission’s documentation as a starting point for the identification of these works, their attribution and dating, i.e. professional valorisation.<sup>35</sup>

## THE COMMISSION AND SALVAGING HERITAGE OF THE ELTZ FAMILY FROM VUKOVAR

As an example of the Commission’s efforts to save artworks that had been owned by noble families from eastern Croatia, we present the case of the fate of works of art from the Vukovar collection, created in the Vukovar manor by the Eltz family. It is assumed that prior to the war, the Vukovar collection numbered about 500 artworks: at least 165 paintings (mostly oil paintings), some sculptures, reliefs and a large number of prints. The oldest and most valuable artworks in this collection were owned by Hugo Franz Karl Eltz (1701–1779), a priest and collector, and owner of one of the largest European art collections, with 1,231 items. He collected mostly works of major masters

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31 KOMZA 358/48.

32 Ibid.

33 KOMZA 388/48.

34 KOMZA 430/48.

35 Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, Silvija Lučevnjak, “Umjetničke zbirke slavonskih plemićkih obitelji / The Art Collections of Slavonian Noble Families,” in *Umjetnost slavonskog plemstva – vrhunska djela europske baštine / The Art of the Slavonian Nobility Masterpieces of European Heritage*, eds. Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, Silvija Lučevnjak and Valentina Galović (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2021), 8–120.

Fig. 5. Count Ladislav Pejačević, *Vukovar Mansion Salon*, 1846, watercolour painting, Eltz Collection, Vienna.



of Flemish, German and Dutch Baroque art from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and some works of northern Italian Baroque provenance. Compared to other aristocratic collections from today's eastern Croatia, the Vukovar collection occupies a prominent place due to the quantity and quality of the artworks, as well as the wide range of themes and techniques it contains, ranging from old masters from European Baroque centres, Biedermeier and academic realism, to the works of Croatian artists from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 5).

When the war reached eastern Croatia in 1944, the exodus of families of German origin to Austria and Germany began. The Eltz family also found themselves in these circumstances, trying to evacuate part of the property from the Vukovar estate to their German estates. They managed to transfer some of the items to Germany, but during the transport of part of their collection by rail, the train allegedly ran into a mine and many boxes with items from Vukovar ended up at the Zagreb Fair (today the Nikola Tesla Technical Museum on Savska avenue).<sup>36</sup> Some of these items were looted during and after the war, and then transferred to Arheološki muzej u Zagrebu (the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb) where the material was catalogued on October 25, 1945.<sup>37</sup> It is extremely important that the members of the Commission identified all of these items with the same mark. They placed their marks on the back side of paintings' frames, and the Commission's seal was affixed next to them. These markings later allowed unambiguous determination of the provenance of the items.

36 KOMZA 227/45.

37 Ibid.

The Commission sent the compiled list to the Ministry of Education and asked for an opinion on their placement, i.e. their allocation to new owners.<sup>38</sup> In the meantime, the items were transported to the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb, where they were re-examined on November 23, 1945, and the first list was corrected and amended, as recorded in the minutes.<sup>39</sup> As early as the following year, the state declared the Eltz family *enemies of the state* and nationalized their property, including their artworks.<sup>40</sup> The Commission was therefore able to grant their works of art to various institutions and organizations. Some of the items were given to the Museum of Arts and Crafts, and the artworks were transferred to other organizations and institutions in Zagreb, often for furnishing offices or state residences, such as Josip Broz Tito's official residence on the Brijuni Islands, where a number of representative Old Testament scenes ended. Nineteen family portraits from the Vukovar collection were granted to Galerija slika Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Zagrebu (the Gallery of Paintings of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb), but experts from this museum soon realized that the material was more appropriate to exhibit in Slavonia, in the area to which it belonged. In 1948, the Academy gifted the portraits to the present-day Museum of Slavonia in Osijek, as evidenced by the minutes of the consignment of these artworks between the two institutions.<sup>41</sup>

Some of the artworks that the Eltz family did not evacuate from Vukovar were found by the Commission's team, led by Prof. Tihomil Stahuljak, when he arrived in Vukovar on September 30, 1946. They listed the found artworks and stored them in one room of the manor that housed a boarding school at the time, and sealed it until the arrival of the Commission's members from Osijek. They also left a record of the reviewed items,<sup>42</sup> which consisted of 38 paintings, two sculptures and at least 36 prints. Danica Pinterović came to Vukovar a year later. She opened the room, inspected the items and announced her imminent return in order to transport the items to Osijek.<sup>43</sup> Shortly afterwards, on October 30, 1947, the Commission of Savezno Ministarstvo Poljoprivrede i Šumarstva (the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) came from Belgrade to Vukovar and took 19 paintings and some artworks for the decoration of the Belje Manor in Baranja (a state residence).<sup>44</sup> It was not until the end of 1947 that Pinterović organized the transfer of the remaining artworks to Osijek.<sup>45</sup> Thus, due to the slowness of the Commission's work as well as to numerous other reasons,

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38 Ibid.

39 KOMZA 449/45.

40 KOMZA 487/47.

41 Minutes of 21 July 1948, file 557/48, Documentary Collection, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.

42 KOMZA 356/46.

43 Ibid.

44 Minutes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia dated 30 October 1947, Documentary Collection, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.

45 Minutes of 28 December 1947, Documentary Collection, Museum of Slavonia, Osijek.



some of the artworks from the Vukovar collection were confiscated contrary to the existing legal regulations. In their recent research, J. Najcer Sabljak and S. Lučevnjak identified some of this material in the Republic of Serbia, primarily thanks to the Commission's documentation.<sup>46</sup> As a result of the Croatian War of Independence, the new permanent exhibition of the Vukovar City Museum now exhibits over 2,000 items from the museum's holdings and 100 items, mostly family portraits and landscapes from the former Eltz family collection, are now in the holdings of other museums in Zagreb and Osijek.<sup>47</sup> Among them are artworks preserved by the Commission, whose provenance was researched in the doctoral dissertation by J. Najcer Sabljak.<sup>48</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Commission's activities took place in extremely difficult conditions, in particular due to the lack of professional staff, means of transport and adequate storage space for the collected material. The biggest problems that the Commission faced in retrieving the materials were, in addition to the poor physical condition of the items and the absence of security measures, a lack of understanding for the Commission's field activities (especially by local authorities) and a lack of original documentation on the salvaged items. An additional aggravating circumstance was the lack of coordination between cultural heritage protection services at the federal (state), republic, and local levels, due to which part of the material was beyond the reach of the Commission's staff, as is shown in the case of the Vukovar collection.

Thanks to the work of the Commission's members, a significant number of items of artistic, cultural and historical value that represent the heritage of noble families from eastern Croatia were gathered, catalogued and successfully preserved in the holdings of the Museum of Slavonia. Although the work was carried out in unfavourable circumstances, thanks to the efforts of Pinterović and her associates, part of that heritage was saved from looting or destruction and later preserved in the holdings of the Museum of Slavonia. According to the archives of the Commission, it is possible to reconstruct a part of the inventory of the manors, that is, the art collections owned by noble families before World War II. Systematic and accurate recording of the data on salvaged artworks and items by the Commission was the starting point for later research of this material, various exhibitions and monographs. This research is increasingly relevant in the context of establishing the provenance of the material in

46 Jasminka Najcer Sabljak and Silvija Lučevnjak, "Pitanje transfera i provenijencije umjetnina na primjeru zbirki obitelji Eltz i Odescalchi" [The Question of the Transfer and Provenance of Artworks on the Example of the Collections of the Eltz and Odescalchi Families], *Zbornik Matice srpske za likovne umjetnosti*, no. 47 (2019): 121–132.

47 "Muzej u obnovljenom dvorcu" [Museum in a Renovated Manor], Gradski muzej Vukovar, accessed December 11, 2022, <http://www.muzej-vukovar.hr/O%20muzeju/Muzej%20u%20obnovljenom%20dvorcu>.

48 Jasminka Najcer Sabljak, "Umjetničke zbirke vlastelinskih obitelji u Slavoniji i Srijemu" [Art Collections of Aristocratic Families in Slavonia and Srijem], (PhD diss., Filozofski fakultet, Zagreb, 2012).

museum institutions, which is a complex topic at the global level, and touches upon various aspects of artistic, cultural and political history, especially in relation to events during World War II, when Croatian and European cultural heritage suffered significant damage.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Provenance Research Today: Principles, Practice, Problems*, ed. Arthur Tompkins (London: Lund Humphries in association with IFAR, 2020).





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# POLITICAL ICONOGRAPHY IN HUNGARIAN ART BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS: A CASE STUDY ON KÁROLY LÁSZLÓ HÁY'S FRESCO PLAN *HISTORY* (1942)\*

**Keywords:** political  
iconography, propaganda,  
Group of Socialist Artists,  
cult of Miklós Horthy, illegal  
communist movement,  
anti-German orientation

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## Abstract

*The paper focuses on the interpretation of a fresco plan titled History, painted by the Hungarian artist Károly László Háy. Háy created this artwork in 1942, on the occasion of a competition and exhibition called Freedom and the People, organized by the Group of Socialist Artists. Háy's fresco plan, like other artworks shown at the exhibition, was strongly influenced by the political currents of the late 1930s and World War II. The central figure of the History fresco plan evokes an equestrian portrait, a traditional representation of power in political iconography, but not in the traditional sense. According to my hypothesis, the equestrian figure in Háy's painting has a negative connotation, and its interpretation can be connected to the cult of Miklós Horthy (Regent of Hungary between 1920 and 1944).*

## INTRODUCTION

During the interwar period and during World War II, many Hungarian artworks related to historical topics were made with the intent to agitate and to propagate divergent political viewpoints. Such representations were often ideologically charged while reflecting on the era's political events. Many contradictory worldviews defined this period and resulted in different historical approaches. While these viewpoints differ about the common past, they represent the same events or historical figures with different connotations. Frequently, these representations resulted in the rethinking of traditional depictions.<sup>1</sup> Károly László Háy's fresco plan *History* should be examined within this context.

In 1942, the fresco plan *History* (**fig. 1**) was submitted to the exhibition *Freedom and the People*, organized by the so called Szocialista Képzőművészek Csoportja (the Group of Socialist Artists) in Budapest. The layout of the fresco plan can be compared to a triptych's structure. Two sides of the fresco plan,

\* Special thanks to Rebeka Mrázik for her help with the translation of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> For more on this topic, see Anna Kopócsy, "A jelen történelmi értelmezése fa- és linóleummetszet-sorozatokban a két világháború között" [Historical Interpretation of the Present in Woodcut and Linocut Series in the Interwar Period], in *A modern magyar fa és linóleummetszés (1890–1950)*, ed. Enikő Róka (Miskolc: Miskolci Galéria, 2005), 137–158.



**Fig 1.** Károly László Háý, *History*, 1942, tempera on paper, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest. Photograph by Sára Bárdi.

which would be the “wings”, show a dissatisfied woman and man wanting to break out of their circumstances, the style of these figures imitating wood carvings. On the middle panel there is a prancing horse with a caricature-like equestrian. The horse’s and the equestrian’s faces appear almost the same. Together, the equestrian and the horse evoke the iconography of the representation of power familiar throughout art history, the iconography of the ruler or general sitting on horseback. However, this motif does not come to life in the classical sense. In the background, a shadoof and farmhouses recall the idealized, symbolic depiction of the Great Hungarian Plain.

According to my hypothesis, Károly László Háý’s fresco plan reflects the political events of the era. The political content of the fresco plan is determined by the activities of Háý and the Group of Socialist Artists as well as the circumstances of its creation. I seek to briefly present my interpretation of the fresco plan, using political iconography as a methodical framework. My analysis focuses on the middle equestrian figure, the additional layers of meaning, and the iconography of representing power in the context of the so-called Horthy era, the period of Miklós Horthy’s rule in Hungary between 1920 and 1944. A significant element of the cult of Miklós Horthy was his depiction on a white horse, which dated back to the very beginning of his rule. On November 16, 1919, Horthy’s triumphal entry into Budapest (as the commander of the National Army), established the foundation for his visual representation. According to the contemporary narrative, Horthy marched into the capital astride a white horse, arriving to “govern” the country with a strong hand and to bring “faith, reassurance, peace, and national consciousness”<sup>2</sup> in the wake of the losses and traumas of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919).

2 Tibor Dömötörfi, “A Horthy-kultusz elemei” [Elements of the Horthy Cult], *História*, no. 5-6 (1990): 56–59.

## POLITICAL ICONOGRAPHY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETATION

Although there are previous examples of a political approach to the Hungarian fine arts during the Horthy era in art historical literature, often the authors' partiality cannot be ignored. Most of these studies and monographs were written between 1949 and 1989 – therefore their viewpoints were strongly determined by the expectations of the leftist state ideology and cultural policy. In my opinion, the wide-range methodology of political iconography may provide a new reading of the topic.

Political iconography is a sociological and social scientific approach to the field of *Bildwissenschaft* (image science). It proposes that images are not just passive representations, but also active participants in political life that are influenced by various political and social events and phenomena, and vice versa. Its subject consists of political contents appearing in visual form and the functions of images in a political context.<sup>3</sup> Martin Warnke defined the purpose of political iconography in the objective examination of political image-strategies and their inclusion in the field of art history.<sup>4</sup>

The use of art for political purposes and the representation of power is not new – it can be traced back to antiquity. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this became especially significant with the appearance of visual propaganda in the modern sense. The recognition of the effectiveness of visual propaganda and its weaponization can be considered one of the great lessons of World War I. This experience was utilized and further developed in the interwar period and during World War II, an era marked by the confrontations of different ideas and ideologies.

In the Horthy era, Hungary's official cultural policy and its government were determined by a Christian nationalist ideology, while at the same time the political-ideological opposition was active, especially the illegal communist movement.<sup>5</sup> The parallel presence of the worldviews of the official and opposition parties can also be observed in the artworks of the era. An illustrative example of this is the fact that the Group of Socialist Artists, which included László Károly Háy as a member, was initially defined as an alternative to the neoclassical tendencies strongly supported by the state from the 1930s forward.

3 Urte Krass, "Politische Ikonographie" [Political Iconography], in *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft. Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe*, ed. Ulrich Pfisterer (Berlin: J.B. Metzler, 2011), 345–347.

4 Martin Warnke, "Vorwort" [Preface], in *Handbuch der politischen Ikonographie, I*, eds. Martin Warnke, Uwe Fleckner and Hendrik Ziegler (München: C.H. Beck, 2011), 7–15.

5 For more about Christian nationalism, see Csaba Fazekas, "Collaborating with Horthy: Political Catholicism and Christian Political Organizations in Hungary," in *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918–45*, eds. Wolfram Kaiser and Helmut Wohnout (London: Routledge, 2004), 160–178.

## KÁROLY LÁSZLÓ HÁY AND THE GROUP OF SOCIALIST ARTISTS

Háy, after graduating from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, became acquainted with the illegal Party of Communists in Hungary (abbr. KMP) and from 1931 he worked as a draftsman for the illegal press. In 1935, on the instructions of the KMP he joined the Group of Socialist Artists.<sup>6</sup> It was an artist group affiliated with the KMP, and its members carried out movement and artistic work under the direction of the Party. Their organized operation can be traced back to the period between 1934 and 1944, through various legal organizations, mainly with the help of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary.<sup>7</sup> Their aim was to reach as wide an audience as possible, for example they organized lectures and exhibitions for workers in easily accessible locations. Within the group, a unified stylistic image did not develop, but rather their approach to art and popular front-spirited art policy that should be highlighted. The active operation of the group can be divided into two periods, the first spanning from 1934 to 1937, culminating in the exhibition of the *New Realists* in 1936. They wanted to establish “Neorealism” (in the present case, the concept of “Neorealism” can be understood as Socialist Realism and the striving for it) as the opposite of Neoclassicism, that was strongly supported by the Hungarian cultural policy at the time. The second period can be dated between 1940 and 1944, and it is characterized by the fact that the tense war situation and the politics of the era intensified the activities of the organization. It was then that the exhibition of the *Freedom and the People*, the most influential exhibition in the literature, was held in 1942, shortly after Hungary entered in the Second World War with forces in the spring of 1941.

## THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE FRESCO PLAN HISTORY AND THE FREEDOM AND THE PEOPLE EXHIBITION

The exhibition *Freedom and the People* opened on March 29, 1942, in the headquarters of the ironworkers at 5 Magdolna Street in Budapest. The exhibition consisted of three sections: prints and drawings, sculptures, and fresco plans, which were displayed in separate halls. The sections of prints and drawings and sculptures were subtitled *Art for Freedom*, while the fresco plans were submitted under the subtitle *Freedom and the People*.<sup>8</sup>

6 György Theisler, “Háy Károly László” [Károly László Háy], in *Magyar Művészet 1919–1945, I*, ed. Sándor Kontha (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1985), 557–558.

7 György Theisler, “Szocialista Képzőművészek Csoportja” [Group of Socialist Artists], in *Magyar Művészet 1919–1945, I*, ed. Sándor Kontha (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1985), 541–548.

8 Works by Imre Ámos, Béla Bán, Aurél Bernáth, and Károly László Háy submitted by application were included in the exhibition. Anna Oelmacher, “Szabadság és Nép” [Freedom and People], *Művészet*, no. 4 (1962): 37. Republished: Nóra Aradi, “‘Szabadság és a Nép’, A Szocialista Képzőművészek Csoportjának dokumentumai” [Documents of the Group of Socialist Artist] (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1981), 321–322.

The Group of Socialist Artists received a commission by the central leadership of the illegal Party of Communists in Hungary to organize the exhibition as part of the so-called 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1942 action.<sup>9</sup> The action was part of the larger anti-fascist, anti-war movement, the creation and ideological foundation of which had begun much earlier. Beginning in the mid-1930s, the Party considered its task to show the people that the goal of the Hungarian government's policy, military revision of the Treaty of Trianon, would lead to war and threaten the nation's independence. The Treaty of Trianon had formally ended World War I between most of the Allies and the Kingdom of Hungary. It was prepared at the Paris Peace Conference and was signed in the Grand Trianon Palace in Versailles on 4 June, 1920. On the basis of the treaty, the historic borders of Hungary were redrawn, and the country was reduced to a third of its prior territory. The territories of the Kingdom of Hungary affected by annexation on the basis of the Treaty of Trianon belong to the current states of Austria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. This event was experienced as a tragedy and fundamentally shook the national consciousness, and its processing and revision became a central issue in the Horthy era. The first stage of the desired revision was the First Vienna Award (1938), evaluated by government propaganda as a peaceful act. However, the KMP tried to make clear to everyone the danger of war arising as a result of the decision.<sup>10</sup> According to the Party, Miklós Horthy and the Hungarian ruling class could be held responsible, alongside Hitler.<sup>11</sup> As a result, in the spring of 1941, at the exact moment when the Hungarian forces entered World War II against the Soviet Union and its allies, an anti-Hitler independence movement emerged in Hungary.

The *Freedom and People* exhibition was fundamentally a response to these political events.<sup>12</sup> The most important task of its contributors was to implement the principles of the popular front policy, that is to address an even wider audience and to propagate their views on freedom and independence. The importance of the fresco as a medium cannot be ignored, as it has been an essential and effective means of addressing the masses since the beginning of the history of art. A detail of the opening speech of the exhibition echoes this: "The artist should create and send news to humanity, especially to the most humiliated, about a more beautiful, better, more pure, more humane world. Make everyone understand the world. In doing so, the artist best serves human freedom."<sup>13</sup>

9 György Vértes, "Művészek a szabadságért" [Artists for Freedom], in Aradi, "Szabadság és a Nép," 316–320.

10 László Kővágó, "A KMP a revízióról és a nemzetiségi kérdésekről 1936–1942" [The KMP about Revision and Nationality Issues], *Párttörténeti közlemények. Az MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Párttörténeti Intézetének folyóirata*, no. 2 (1982): 49.

11 *Ibid.*, 54.

12 Aradi, *Szabadság és a Nép*, 266–267.

13 Vértes, "Művészek a szabadságért," 318. If it is not stated otherwise, the translations of the quotations are made by Rebeka Mrázik. The opening speech was given by Árpád Szakasits, who was then the editor-in-chief of *Népszava* (People's Voice), and later a decisive politician between 1945 and 1950.



However, the artists of the exhibition did not have much time to achieve the sentiments outlined in this quotation. Three days after the opening, on April 3, 1942, the Minister of the Interior closed the exhibition “due to its tendency and proactive nature.” Many members of the Group of Socialist Artists were arrested and carried off. Anti-Bolshevism in the upper political circles, as well as criticism and pressure from the conservative and far-right press, justified the censorship of *Freedom and the People*. Meanwhile the Hungarian army suffered heavy losses on the Eastern Front at this time, and as a result, anti-Bolshevik propaganda intensified. The most striking example was the *Anti-Bolshevik* propaganda exhibition (it can be classified as *Schandausstellung*) in Vigado in December, 1941. The contemporary press interpreted *Freedom and the People* as opposed to the *Anti-Bolshevik* exhibition.

## HISTORICAL THEMES AND THEIR MOTIVES IN THE ART OF LÁSZLÓ KÁROLY HÁY

We see that when at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Florence Savonarola proclaimed his reactionary mass movement against the new ideals of the emerging bourgeoisie, he considered one of his most important tasks to be to burn the images and statues he professed to be so dangerous preachers of the new mentality. Such an example is known even from recent times, when in 1942 the Horthy-fascists banned the exhibition of the Groups of Socialist Artist, because they recognized the perilous ideas that art, the fine arts, might carry for their reactionary, fascist system.<sup>14</sup>

After the war, in 1947, Háy reflected on this event near the end of the Horthy era with the quoted lines. Identifying with the Marxist viewpoint on art, he saw art as “a branch of the ideological structure of society” and therefore as a factor in the growing social tensions of his own age.<sup>15</sup> In Háy’s view, the arts also serve as the scene of various ideological struggles, and at the same time he attributed a decisive social function to them.<sup>16</sup> Háy’s approach, more precisely the interpretation of exhibitions and art as a battlefield, and the central idea of the social function of art largely determined his artistic activity, including the fresco plan *History*, as well as the linocut series *Between Two Pagans and One Homeland*, which can be understood as an antecedent to the fresco plan.

In 1941 Háy started this linocut series about the struggles of Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664, Croatian and Hungarian military leader, statesman, poet) and the troubles surrounding the Hungarian national independence aspirations, but was interrupted by the preparations for the exhibition *Freedom and the People*. A total of seven of the planned 20 linocuts were executed, and the scenes of the

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14 Károly László Háy, *Képzőművészet és társadalmi haladás. Szemináriumi füzeteket kultúrvezetők számára* [Fine Art and Social Progress. Seminar Booklets for Cultural Leaders] (Budapest: Szikra, 1947), 5.

15 Károly László Háy, “Az 1935–36-os kiállítási szezon” [The Exhibition Season of 1935–1936], *Szocializmus*, no. 5 (1936): 256. Republished: Aradi, *Szabadság és a Nép.*, 48–52.

16 Háy, “Az 1935–36-os kiállítási szezon,” 257.

completed sheets historically proceed until 1686, concluding with depictions of the Siege of Buda and the occupation of Transylvania.

The antecedents of Háy's fresco plan *History* also date back to 1938. On the one hand, the plan related to historical and political events noted before, and on the other hand to a visit he made to Prague, during which he met József Révai, a communist politician and theorist living in exile. During their conversation, Háy received the following guidelines from Révai in connection with the historical events of 1938 (First Vienna Award, *Anschluss*): "Now is the time to focus our cultural work on reviving the centuries-old anti-German traditions of Hungarian culture and history."<sup>17</sup> The "centuries-old" fight for national independence from the Habsburgs included, for example, Zrínyi, who campaigned against the Habsburgs as well as the Ottomans, Rákóczi's War of Independence (1703–1711), and the Hungarian Revolution of 1848.

Following Révai's advice, Háy began research, planning to revive anti-German traditions (mainly in relation to the Habsburg Empire) by depicting events related to Miklós Zrínyi and Ferenc II Rákóczi (1676–1735, Hungarian nobleman, leader of Rákóczi's War of Independence). To achieve this, he studied the literature and the fine arts of Zrínyi and Rákóczi's time for many years. Intending to display the events capturing the political climate, he relied on Baroque engravings. Háy entitled this series as: *Between two Pagans for one Homeland, that is, how Turkish occupation was replaced by German oppression (Habsburgs)*.<sup>18</sup>

As the initiators of the series, Háy marked the linocuts *The Oppressor* (fig. 2) and *The Liberator* (fig. 3), which depict the Turkish occupation of Hungary (1526–1699) and Leopold, I, the new conqueror, and his marching army. In



Fig 2. Háy Károly László, *Between Two Pagans for One Homeland; The Oppressor*, 1941, linocut on paper, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

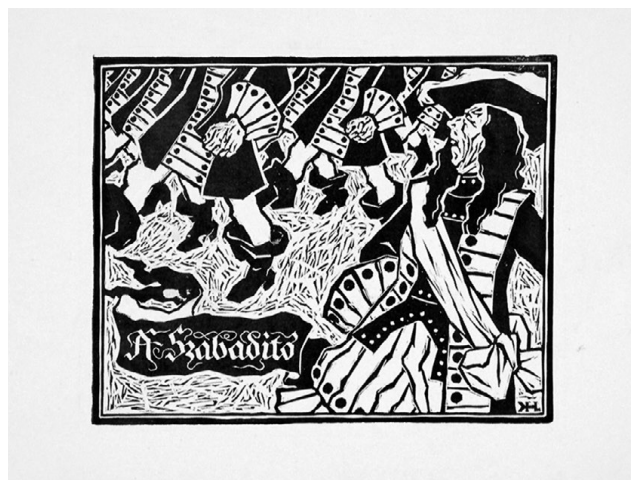
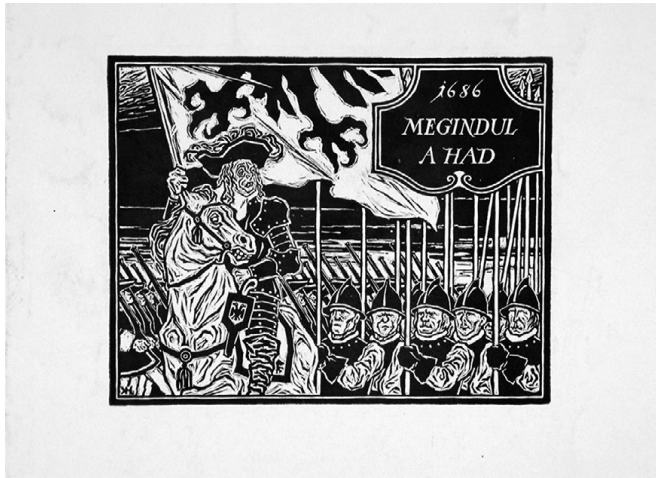


Fig 3. Háy Károly László, *Between Two Pagans for One Homeland; The Liberator*, 1941, linocut on paper, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

17 Károly László Háy, "Egy félbemaradt metszetsorozatról" [About an Unfinished Engraving Series], *Művelt Nép*, April 17, 1955, 4. Reprinted: Aradi, *Szabadság és a Nép*, 303–305.

18 *Ibid.*, 4–5.





**Fig 4.** Háý Károly László, *Between Two Pagans for One Homeland: Occupation of Transylvania*, 1941, linocut on paper, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

a recollection, Háý specifically mentioned that “while creating the sprawling Turkish figure smoking a pipe, he used features of a familiar district administrator and, while walking on the street, he constantly inspected people and collected the typical types of German officers and the men of SS.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the piece called *Occupation of Transylvania* (fig. 4), which includes the sign *1686 The War Begins*, was inspired by a photograph published in a French newspaper about the Nazi invasion of Prague.<sup>20</sup> As Háý wrote, “these past events are, in fact, the most burning problems of our time.”<sup>21</sup>

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## ANALYSIS OF THE FRESCO PLAN HISTORY

On the engraving *The Oppressor*, there is a sprawling Turkish figure smoking a pipe, while in the background are a shadoof and traditional farmhouses, symbolizing the long-standing Turkish occupation of Hungary. This composition is almost identical to the background of the middle “panel” of the fresco plan *History*. Given the circumstances, in my opinion, the ensemble of the equestrian figure and the background should be interpreted in a similar way, as symbols of dependence on Hitler’s Germany and the pressure placed on Hungary. The revisionist successes, which were only possible owing to the Germans and the Anti-Comintern Pact, created serious expectations for Hungary and established a dependent relationship towards the German Empire. In my interpretation, the dissatisfied, wailing peasant figures on the “wings” represent the oppression of the dissatisfied working class, both in relation to the sum of history and the given period.

In the fresco plan, the shape of the horse and its equestrian rider is stylistically extremely similar to the depiction of Leopold I on horseback that appears on one of the pieces of the linocut series. However, in contrast to the motionless figure of the linocut, the fresco design evokes a frequent

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



**Fig 5.** János Pásztor, *The Equestrian Statue of Francis II Rákóczi*, 1937, bronze, Kossuth Square, Budapest. Photograph by Sára Bárdi.

iconographic depiction of the prancing horse. The prancing or rearing horse was a highly popular image in baroque art. These representations aimed to symbolize the depicted person's status, conveying the message that the depicted is glorious and capable of exercising power. There are many known portraits of Miklós Zrínyi atop a prancing horse, and Házy clearly considered him a positive historical figure. However, in my opinion, the middle equestrian figure in the fresco plan has a negative connotation in the context of the images, making him appear as an oppressor. I believe the reasons for the negative role of the equestrian figure are to be found in the statist visual propaganda of the Horthy era.

In May, 1937 Miklós Horthy unveiled the equestrian statue of Ferenc II Rákóczi in Kossuth Square in front of the Hungarian Parliament (**fig. 5**). János Pásztor was commissioned by the Hungarian government in 1935 to make the monument, and the costumers were expecting a Baroque equestrian statue in the style of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which the sculptor achieved, among other elements, by applying the iconography of the prancing horse.<sup>22</sup>

The cult of Rákóczi and the related tradition of independence was not only used by the Party of Communists in Hungary. The dominant political system of the Horthy era used the national past from the beginning as a means of legitimizing power, thus strengthening national self-awareness, and influencing public opinion. It was common to compare Miklós Horthy to the great figures of Hungarian history, thus strengthening his authority. After the First Vienna Award, for example, he was affiliated with Ferenc II Rákóczi, marking Horthy's "nation-saving" efforts as a struggle for independence.<sup>23</sup> An article from 1936 by József Révai is essential for my topic at this point, in which he "called on the members of the communist party to learn to feel the 'great deeds and events of the Hungarian past' as 'their own past' and to use these 'traditions' as weapons in their political struggles."<sup>24</sup> Révai's viewpoint is based on developments at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist International in 1935, in particular the proclamation of a new approach to national pasts. Interestingly, the way in which communists related to the past was deeply "inspired by" nationalist attitudes and expropriations of the nation's past.<sup>25</sup>

22 Ervin Ybl, "Pásztor János újabb szobrai" [Newer Statues from János Pásztor], *Magyar Művészet*, no. 14 (1938): 136–137.

23 Dávid Turbucz, *A Horthy-kultusz 1919–1944* [The Horthy Cult 1919–1944] (Budapest: Research Center for the Humanities, 2016), 54–55.

24 Dávid Kovács, "Hagyomány mint fegyver. Révai József történelemszemlélete" [Tradition as a Weapon. József Révai's View of History], in *Nemzetfelfogás és történelemszemlélet a 20. századi Magyarországon*, ed. Dávid Kovács (Budapest: Károli Gáspár Egyetem, L'Harmattan, 2017), 125.

25 *Ibid.*, 126–128.

From the point of view of the communist interpretation, we can also talk about expropriation in the case of the Rákóczi cult. In 1935, in connection with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Ferenc II Rákóczi we can read about this on the pages of *Czechoslovak People's Voice*.<sup>26</sup> “And now Ferenc II Rákóczi, who died in exile and emigration, is being expropriated by the direct descendants of the *labanc* (expression for pro-Austrian soldiers during the 18th century Hungarian wars of independence) of 200 years ago, who still suppress all the movements of the Hungarian people in Hungary as much as the Austrian reaction and the hated Viennese *camarilla* (court).”<sup>27</sup> These lines also relate strongly to anti-German traditions mentioned above.

## TWO EQUESTRIAN IMAGES OF MIKLÓS HORTHY AND HIS ANTI-BOLSHEVIST ROLE

There are two known equestrian images of Miklós Horthy on a prancing white horse, one on a stamp from 1940 (**fig. 6**), and the other a fresco from 1941 (**fig. 7**). Both works were made shortly before Háy's *History* fresco plan and can be evaluated as visual representations contradicting the opinion of the Party of Communists in Hungary, as well as the socialist way of thinking of the era in general. Both visual representations deal with the following topics: regaining the territories of Upper Hungary (historically the northern part of the Kingdom of Hungary, mostly present-day Slovakia), that is the successful revisions to Trianon achieved with the help of the Germans, and the memory of the Szeged Counter-Revolution (1919), in which Horthy played a key role. From the beginning of Miklós Horthy's career, he openly fought against Bolshevism, which may support my interpretation that the oppressive figure in the fresco plan is drawn from the Regent's cult.

In 1939 Hungary celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Szeged Counter-Revolution, and 1940 was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Horthy's Regency. On the occasion of the latter, a series of three stamps were issued on March 1, 1940, commemorating the liberation of Upper Hungary, the installation of Admiral Horthy as regent, and the Szeged Counter-Revolution. Miklós Horthy appears on the six *fillér* (the smallest Hungarian coin at that time) stamp, with the Votive Church of Szeged and the coat of arms of Hungary in the background along with the inscription “Commander”.

Szeged was the venue for the 1939 anniversary series, and on behalf of the city its mayor greeted the head of state “liberating” Hungary from Bolshevism. Miklós Horthy's character was determined by the struggle against the Communists and the Bolsheviks, and the beginnings of his cult



**Fig 6.** Ferenc Márton and Sándor Légrády, Stamp Series for the Regent's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; denomination of 6 *fillér*, 1940, stamp, Stamp Museum, Budapest.

26 Between 1926 and 1938, the *Czechoslovak People's Voice* was the political weekly of the Hungarian section of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers Party. Mail delivery of the paper to Hungary was banned in the Horthy era.

27 József Tóth, “II. Rákóczi Ferenc halálának 200. évfordulójára” [For the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Death of Ferenc Rákóczi, II], *Csehszlovákiai Népszava*, April 7, 1935, 12.



**Fig 7.** Pál Molnár C., *In Order to Depict the Regent of Hungary, Who Regained Upper Hungary and Enriched Our Country*, 1941, mural, destroyed, Dob Street Post Office, Budapest, from *Tér és forma*, no. 4 (1941), 57.

can be linked to the overthrow of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919). The Anti-Bolshevik content of Horthy's image was further strengthened in the 1940s and the cult of the regent became part of the war propaganda. Participation in the war was proclaimed as a national interest, a "crusade" against the Soviet Union. The formation and production of the image of the enemy and the justification for war were closely connected. Miklós Horthy also personally contributed to the strengthening of the Anti-Bolshevik image, greeting soldiers returning from the Eastern Front on November 17, 1941, quoted as the first article in the Anti-Bolshevik exhibition catalogue.<sup>28</sup>

The exhibition catalogue highlights that Horthy started the fight against Bolshevism in Europe, which the catalogue calls the "crusade" against the Soviet Union in several places. While Hitler and the German Empire were the leader of this "crusade", Hungary also actively took part in it.<sup>29</sup>

The other visual representation of Miklós Horthy on a prancing white horse was the ceiling painting of the ceremonial hall of the Post Office in Dob Street, created by Pál C. Molnár in 1941, called *In Order to*

*Depict the Regent of Hungary, Who Regained Upper Hungary and Enriched Our Country* (the fate of the mural after 1945 is unknown – although it is not visible today, but no sources are known about its removal). The First Vienna Award made it possible for Hungary to achieve revisions to the Treaty of Trianon "in a peaceful way," and thanks to the mass communication of the era, these successes were attributed to Miklós Horthy. On November 6, 1938, and November 11, 1938, the Regent marched on a white horse to Komárom (Komárno) and then to Kassa (Košice). According to some sources, Horthy appeared as a saviour for the Hungarian people in Upper Hungary.<sup>30</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In my interpretation, the depiction of a prancing white horse and its rider on Károly László Háy's fresco plan *History* is imbued with political ideas, as a figure of the oppressor of the people. Knowing Háy's attitudes and ideology, the motif can be considered a symbol of the universal ruling class, which is based on the interpretation of the traditional iconography of the prancing

28 Turbucz, *A Horthy-kultusz*, 248–261.

29 *Az Antibolszevista kiállítás tájékoztatója* [Prospectus about the Anti-Bolshevist Exhibition], ed. Zoltán Bosnyák (Budapest: Stádium Rt. 1941), 1–9.

30 Turbucz, *A Horthy-kultusz*, 199–207.

rider. This element of power and representation of the ruler is put in quotation marks in the fresco plan by the two peasant figures who want to break away, and points to the different motivations for its depiction. Furthermore, the caricatured representation of the figure highlights the possibility of a negative connotation. In addition to the layer of meaning spanning multiple historical eras, the equestrian figure also carries current political references to the period. According to my interpretation, it references Miklós Horthy and the ideas he embodied, from the point of view of the KMP's ideology, the socialist conception of history.



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## NATIONAL ART AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE 1970S IN THE CONTEXT OF STATE AND POLITICAL CHANGES\*

### Abstract

*This paper analyses the representation of themes from national art within art history studies at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb in the period from its establishment (1877) until the 1970s. It also draws conclusions about how the shaping of the content of national art, as well as the study program, were determined by changes in the socio-political system, which were also reflected in the personnel policy and the structure of the Department. Furthermore, the paper describes the contributions made by individual professors of the Department in the formation of the teaching programs in which topics from national art were taught with almost the same importance and in parallel with those from general art overviews. They were given different designations depending on the political period, such as Yugoslav art, national art, our monuments, domestic monuments, or were even more closely related to the official state designation (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Banovina of Croatia, Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia).*

### INTRODUCTION

The first course of study in art history in Croatia was established in 1877, when Izidor Kršnjavi (1845–1927) was appointed associate professor at the newly established *Stolica za povijest umjetnosti i umjetničku arheologiju* (Chair of Art History and Ancient Classical Archaeology) at *Kraljevsko sveučilište Franje Josipa I. in Zagreb* (Royal University of Franz Josef I, 1874). Various researchers from different disciplines have investigated the long and rich history of the course of study, which was founded in the wake of the establishment of the profession throughout the Central European area.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this chapter is to offer insight into the changes that took place in the course of study at (what is today) the Department of Art History<sup>2</sup> of the Faculty

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<sup>1</sup> For example, papers in: *Zbornik radova sa skupa 140 godina podučavanja povijesti umjetnosti na Sveučilištu u Zagrebu* [140 years of Teaching Art History at the University in Zagreb Conference Proceedings], eds. Dubravka Botica and Miljenko Jurković (Zagreb: FF press, 2022), and *Radovi Odsjeka za povijest umjetnosti* [Journal of the Department of Art History], no. 7 (1981).

<sup>2</sup> Although the Department of Art History received its official title, which it carries to this day, in the academic year of 1960/1961, this title will also be used throughout this text for earlier periods in order to avoid additional

of Humanities and Social Sciences, from its foundation up until the 1970s, with special focus on the representation of courses in national art history and the influence of social-political changes on its formation. Research has shown that the personnel policy of the Faculty and the Department influenced the formation of study programs and the position of national art within them. Of course, we cannot observe these changes without reference to the forms of interference by the state, which changed frequently over the course of this period: first, Croatia was a component of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, then briefly the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, then the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (that is, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), the self-proclaimed Independent State of Croatia and, finally, socialist Yugoslavia. In this regard, the definition of national art also changed in meaning, especially in relation to its geographical extent, as revealed by the names of the courses taught at the Department of Art History from its foundation until 1970s and published in the official Lecture Schedule of the University of Zagreb.<sup>3</sup> These schedules, which serve as a key source for this paper, point out the significance that courses in national art had for the personnel policy of the Department, for the education of students, for the formation of future experts and for recognition of the study program and research methods of the Department of Art History in Zagreb.

## IZIDOR KRŠNJAVI AND NATIONAL ART DURING THE FIRST DECADES OF ART HISTORY STUDY IN ZAGREB

The creation of the Chair of Art History and Ancient Classical Archaeology was a matter of national interest, in which the wishes of the main actors, among them bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer, lawyer and publicist Lacko Mrazović, canon of Zagreb's Archbishopric Franjo Rački and Kršnjavi himself, were aimed at the cultural and academic enrichment of the people. This is perhaps most vividly evidenced by Kršnjavi's programmatic text *Kako da nam domovina se obogati* (How to Make Our Homeland Rich, 1874), in which he explained in a visionary manner the idea of developing the artistic craft as one of the factors in the cultural development of Croatia, along with the establishment of an art society, an art school and the Department of Art History in Zagreb.<sup>4</sup> After receiving a professorship at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,

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explanations. In earlier periods, it existed organizationally as the Seminar for the History of Art and Culture, and before that as the Chair for the History of Art and Art-Archaeology.

<sup>3</sup> Lecture schedules at the faculties of the University of Zagreb have been published for each semester of the academic year and are available in the Archives of the University of Zagreb, as well as on website Virtualne zbirke Sveučilišta u Zagrebu [Virtual Collections of the University of Zagreb], accessed November 10, 2021, <https://unizg.eindigo.net/?pr=l&mrx%5B-%5D%5B12903%5D=a>. In order to facilitate readability of the text, it will be referred to in its shorter title version as *Redovi predavanja* [Lecture Schedule] and by indicating the academic year.

<sup>4</sup> Izidor Kršnjavi, "Kako da nam se domovina obogati" [How to Make Our Homeland Rich], *Vienac*, no. 20, May 16, 1874, 317–319, and no. 21, May 23, 1874, 329–331.

Kršnjavi worked there as the only professor of art history for 35 years, with a break of six years (1891–1896) when he served as head of *Odjel za bogoštovlje i nastavu Kraljevske hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinske zemaljske vlade* (the Department of Religion and Education of the Royal Croatian–Slavonian–Dalmatian Land Government).<sup>5</sup> During this long period, he strove to offer students overviews of artistic eras and theoretical and problem-based courses, focusing mostly on the art of ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance. At the same time, he had great freedom in the thematic setting of individual courses, which often corresponded to his research and professional interests. For example, he dedicated as many as 18 courses to Dante, whose personality fascinated him.<sup>6</sup> Although it is, of course, likely that he mentioned national art to some extent in his lectures on general and stylistic reviews of art, only a few titles of his courses reveal an explicit focus on national heritage. These were the four courses on Croatian medieval art that he offered in the 1900/1901 and 1901/1902 academic years: the course *Povijest kulture u srednjem vijeku s osobitim obzirom na Hrvatsku* (History of Culture in the Middle Ages with Special Focus on Croatia; in three parts) and *Vježbe pred sredovječnim spomenicima u Zagrebu* (Exercises in Front of Medieval Monuments in Zagreb).<sup>7</sup> The latter was carried out *in situ*, a practice pioneered by his Viennese professor Rudolf Eitelberger, who was his role model not only in the substantive approach to the material, but also in teaching methodology.<sup>8</sup>

Considering the fact that Kršnjavi taught over 150 art history courses during his long-term teaching activity at the Faculty, the small number of courses dealing with national content, as well as the great freedom in the order of courses throughout the semesters, testify that art history studies did not have a firmly structured program within its first four decades and that there was still no systematic teaching of national art. Although he was extremely involved in the artistic and cultural events in Croatia at the time,<sup>9</sup> Kršnjavi did not express his affection for the national art of his time more strongly in his teaching work at the university. Tihomil Stahuljak, who was also later a professor at the Department of Art History, offered an explanation of this situation by noting that Kršnjavi had been the only professor at the Chair for many years and therefore justifiably focused on the general history of art, but also that he had worked at a time when there were not many written works

5 Olga Maruševski, *Iso Kršnjavi kao graditelj. Izgradnja i obnova obrazovnih, kulturnih i umjetničkih spomenika u Hrvatskoj* [Iso Kršnjavi as a Builder. Construction and Renewal of Educational, Cultural and Artistic Monuments in Croatia] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2009, first edition 1986), 39–44.

6 Josipa Alviž and Jasmina Nestić, “Izidor Kršnjavi i počeci poučavanja povijesti umjetnosti u Hrvatskoj” [Izidor Kršnjavi and the Beginnings of Art History Teaching in Croatia], in *Zbornik radova znanstvenog skupa Iso Kršnjavi – veliki utemeljitelj*, eds. Ivana Mance and Zlatko Matijević (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti; Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2015), 160–161.

7 See *Lecture schedules 1900/1901 and 1901/1902*.

8 Alviž and Nestić, “Izidor Kršnjavi i počeci poučavanja povijesti umjetnosti u Hrvatskoj,” 154.

9 See more papers published in the conference proceedings: *Zbornik radova znanstvenog skupa Iso Kršnjavi*, eds. Mance and Matijević.

and publications about Croatian art.<sup>10</sup> His retirement also had a political dimension: “About ten days after the fateful October, 29 [1918, author’s note] for all of us Croats, the doors of the University suddenly closed to Kršnjavi,”<sup>11</sup> and he retired in November 1918.<sup>12</sup> That “fateful” event was the decision by the Croatian Parliament on the severance of state-law ties with Austria-Hungary and on Croatia’s accession to the new (short-lived) Država Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba (State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs), with the acknowledgement of the supreme authority of the National Council.<sup>13</sup>

## **ARTUR SCHNEIDER AND PETAR KNOLL – THE BEGINNINGS OF SYSTEMATIC TEACHING ON NATIONAL ART AT THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN ZAGREB**

The new state system that came into being with the proclamation of the Kraljevstvo Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, hereinafter cited as the Kingdom SCS) on December 1, 1918 required a completely different approach to teaching content for almost all social, humanistic and artistic subjects at all levels of public education, as well as at the University of Zagreb (renamed Hrvatsko sveučilište / the Croatian University in 1918 and, then again in 1919, Sveučilište Kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca / University of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes).<sup>14</sup> The course of study in art history in Zagreb also followed these requirements in terms of content and organization by including courses related to the art of the newly founded Kingdom of SCS immediately, in the 1919/1920 academic year. Artur Schneider (1879–1946), who had been working at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences since 1913 as a private assistant professor lecturing on the history of Italian Renaissance art,<sup>15</sup> was appointed as an honorary private assistant professor in April 1919 precisely “for lectures on history of art with

10 Tihomil Stahuljak, O studiju povijesti umjetnost [On Studying Art History], 1979, Jura Gašparac Archives.

11 Tihomil Stahuljak, Iz prošlosti nastave povijesti umjetnosti na Sveučilištu u Zagrebu (25. veljače 1978.) [From the Past of Teaching Art History at the University of Zagreb (February 25, 1978)], 10, Jura Gašparac Archives.

12 Tihomil Stahuljak, “O stogodišnjici nastave povijesti umjetnosti na Sveučilištu u Zagrebu” [On 100 years of Teaching Art History at the University of Zagreb], *Radovi Odsjeka za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 7 (1981): 12.

13 Stanislava Koprivica-Oštrić, “Konstituiranje Države Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba 29. listopada 1918. godine” [Constitution of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 1918], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, vol. 25, no. 1 (1993): 45–71.; Hrvatski sabor [Croatian Parliament], accessed November 10, 2021, <https://www.sabor.hr/hr/o-saboru/povijest-saborovanja#no-back>.

14 *Sveučilište Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca u Zagrebu 1874–1924.: spomenica akademickoga senata* [University of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Zagreb 1874–1924: Memorial of the Academic Senate] (Zagreb, Tisak Zaklade tiskare Narodnih novina, 1925), 70. For more about the University of Zagreb in the period after the First World War, see: Hodimir Sirotković, “Sveučilište između dva rata (1918–1941)” [University between the Two Wars (1918–1941)], in *Spomenica u povodu 300-godišnjice proslave Sveučilišta u Zagrebu I*, ed. Jaroslav Šidak (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1969), 125–171.

15 Josipa Alviž and Jasmina Nestić, “Artur Schneider i nastava povijesti umjetnosti na Mudroslovnom fakultetu u Zagrebu” [Artur Schneider and Teaching of Art History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb], in *Artur Schneider: 1879.–1946.: zbornik radova znanstveno-stručnog skupa*, ed. Ljerka Dulibić (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2016), 33.

special regard to works of art, phenomena and monuments on the territory of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.”<sup>16</sup> In the same year, he taught a course on the Art of the Middle Ages on the territory of the Kingdom of SCS, in parallel with the courses on general history of art. Already in 1921, Petar Knoll (1872–1943) was employed at the Faculty as a university teacher of the history of Yugoslav art, as stated in his appointment.<sup>17</sup> A former clerk and adviser to the Croatian Provincial Government,<sup>18</sup> Knoll had studied History of Art from 1909 to 1913 at the University of Vienna, where he had the opportunity to attend lectures by excellent Viennese art historians, among which he had mostly opted for the courses of Max Dvořák and Josef Strzygowski.<sup>19</sup> Through a wide variety of courses in Zagreb on the art of the Kingdom of SCS, he was able to implement the extensive knowledge he had acquired in Vienna, especially from Strzygowski, who was intensely involved in the art of the Balkans.<sup>20</sup> Knoll taught courses on the art of Dalmatia, old Serbian art, early Christian art in Yugoslav countries, the influence of the East on the art of the Balkan Peninsula, the art of Islam in Bosnia, urban planning and the art of old Zagreb, and others, as well as more general courses on the theory of architecture, painting and sculpture, with a focus on local monuments: *Osnovi moderne arhitekture gledom na domaću umjetnosti* (Basics of Modern Architecture with Regard to Domestic Art),<sup>21</sup> *Opća teorija umjetnosti gledom na domaće spomenike* (General Theory of Art with Regard to Domestic Monuments),<sup>22</sup> *Teorija arhitekture gledom na naše spomenike* (Theory of Architecture with Regard to Our Monuments), etc.<sup>23</sup> The already mentioned Stahuljak, who was also Knoll’s former student, highly praised Knoll’s lectures, writing that he “taught with the greatest enthusiasm” about national art and emphasizing that, on “the combination of European and our art (...) Knoll lectured most directly and passionately.”<sup>24</sup>

Over the next two decades, Schneider’s teaching focused mainly on chronological courses in general art history and monographic analysis of

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16 Ibid., 35 (n. 21).

17 *Osobnik Petra Knolla* [Personal File of Petar Knoll], Archives of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb (hereafter cited as AFHSS).

18 For more about Knoll, see Marko Špikić, “Rasprave sveučilišnog učitelja Knolla o očuvanju staroga Zagreba” [Professor Knoll’s Writings on the Preservation of Historical Zagreb], in *Zbornik radova sa skupa 140 godina podučavanja povijesti umjetnosti*, eds. Botica and Jurković, 93–112.

19 Registration forms [Nationalien] of Petar Knoll in the student directories of the Faculty of Philosophy in Vienna (1909–1913), Vienna University Archive.

20 For example: Josef Strzygowski, *O razvitku starohrvatske umjetnosti: prilog otkriću sjeverno-evropske umjetnosti* [On the Development of Pre-Romanesque Croatian Art: Contribution to the Discovery of Northern European Art] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1927), Josef Strzygowski, “Die Stellung des Balkans in der Kunstforschung” [The Position of the Balkans in Art Research], in *Sretna Buliciana. Buličev zbornik: naučni prilozi posvećeni Frani Buliču prigodom LXXV. godišnjice njegova života od učenika i prijatelja*, eds. Mihovil Abramić and Viktor Hoffiller (Zagreb; Split: Zaklada tiskare Narodnih novina, 1924), 507–514.

21 *Lecture schedule*, 1934/1935.

22 *Lecture schedule*, 1933/1934.

23 *Lecture schedule*, 1939/1940, 1941/1942.

24 Stahuljak, *Iz prošlosti nastave povijesti umjetnosti*, 23.



artists<sup>25</sup> with only sporadic courses in national art,<sup>26</sup> whereas Knoll specifically taught courses in national art, which, as a result of the state system at the time, expanded to include Yugoslav art generally. Such course organization laid the foundations for systematically structured studies, the content of which was chronologically based and in which general and national art history were simultaneously taught. This practice has been maintained at this course of study to this day.

It is important to mention that Željko Jiroušek (1911–1997) also worked in the Department of Art History from 1935 onward, initially volunteering as an assistant, but began to give independent lectures in 1946 after he was appointed with the title of private assistant professor.<sup>27</sup> In this context, it is important to highlight his publication *Historijsko-umjetnički spomenici Jugoslavije (Art-historic monuments of Yugoslavia, 1938)*,<sup>28</sup> the first comprehensive review of Yugoslav art edited by his former professor A. Schneider and published in the 5<sup>th</sup> volume of the Almanac of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which was advertised as “a practical encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia that provides our public with the latest authentic information about the entire state system and life.”<sup>29</sup> So, at the same time when P. Knoll taught national art courses at the Department, Jiroušek, then a young assistant, began his training as an expert in domestic heritage, assisting Schneider in his great undertaking of cataloguing and photographing monuments and artistic heritage in Croatia,<sup>30</sup> and also in teaching courses with themes from national art, as evidenced by T. Stahuljak in his records.<sup>31</sup>

## NATIONAL ART AT ART HISTORY STUDIES DURING WORLD WAR II

The political changes that followed immediately before and then during World War II were clearly reflected both in the personnel policy of the Faculty and in the course content itself. In terms of art history studies, this was clearly visible in the very titles of the courses. In the 1940/1941 academic year, Schneider taught seminar courses that included the art of Banovina Hrvatska (the Banovina of Croatia), officially established on the August 26, 1939; in

25 He was appointed full professor for art history and culture in 1922. Alviž and Nestić, “Artur Schneider,” 35 (n. 22).

26 Ibid., 45–52.

27 *Osobnik Željka Jirouška* [Personal File of Željko Jiroušek], AFHSS. See also: Danko Šourek, “Uz zagrebačke teme Željka Jirouška” [Željko Jiroušek’s Contributions on Zagreb Themes], in *Zbornik radova sa skupa 140 godina podučavanja povijesti umjetnosti*, eds. Botica and Jurković, 114–115 (n. 7).

28 Željko Jiroušek, *Historijsko-umjetnički spomenici Jugoslavije (od IX do polovice XIX vijeka): arhitektura i slikarstvo (sa općim pregledom umjetničkih epoha i stilova)* [Historic and Artistic Monuments of Yugoslavia (from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the Middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century): Architecture and Painting (with a General Overview of Artistic Epochs and Styles)] (Zagreb: Nadbiskupska tiskara; reprint from Alamahan Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1938).

29 Ibid. (back cover of the publication)

30 Đuro Vandura, Borivoj Popovčak and Sanja Cvetnić, *Schneiderov fotografski arhiv. Hrvatski spomenici kulture i umjetnosti* [The Schneider Photo Archive. Croatian Monuments of Culture and Art] (Zagreb: Strossmayerova galerija starih majstora Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1999).

31 Stahuljak, *Iz prošlosti nastave povijesti umjetnosti*, 17.

the winter semester the course title was *Seminar (spomenici gotike u Banovini Hrvatskoj)* (Seminar [Gothic Monuments in the Banovina of Croatia]), while in the summer semester it was *Seminarske vježbe. Umjetnički spomenici XIII. do XV. stoljeća u Banovini Hrvatskoj (Seminar Exercises. Art Monuments from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Century in the Banovina of Croatia)*.<sup>32</sup> With the further change of the political situation – the proclamation of Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (the Independent State of Croatia) – the contents and titles of the courses in art history studies lost any trace of the old state. In addition to general courses on the art of the Renaissance and Mannerism, in the 1941/1942 academic year Schneider held courses on artists “born in Croatia, who worked in Italy,”<sup>33</sup> and Knoll taught courses on the art of Dalmatia.<sup>34</sup>

Major personnel changes took place at the Department during the next academic year: Knoll was retired first (October 8, 1942)<sup>35</sup> and Schneider was next (January 26, 1943), after offering courses in general and national Baroque art in the winter semester.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, Josip Matasović (1892–1962) was employed at the Department, together with Schneider’s former students Ivan Bach (1910–1983) and Antun Bauer (1911–2000). Matasović’s and Bauer’s employments, and most likely Bach’s as well,<sup>37</sup> were declared by the decision of the Ministry of Education of the Independent State of Croatia in 1943. Matasović was appointed full professor for the course *Poviest obće i hrvatske kulture* (History of General and Croatian Culture),<sup>38</sup> and Bauer was named a private assistant professor for the course *Poviest novije hrvatske umjetnosti* (History of Modern Croatian Art).<sup>39</sup> The period of their activity at the Department of Art History was extremely short: Matasović and Bach taught for only five semesters, and Bauer for four. With the reversal of the political situation after the end of World War II and the establishment of Federativna Narodna Republika Jugoslavija (the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia; November 29, 1945), Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije (AVNOJ; the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) made a decision on February 3, 1945, that mandated the “cancellation and nullity of all legal regulations passed by the occupiers and their helpers during the occupation; on the importance of the decisions made during that

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32 *Lecture schedule*, 1940/1941.

33 *Lecture schedule*, 1941/1942.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Osobnik Petra Knolla*, AFHSS.

36 *Osobnik Artura Schneidera* [Personal File of Artur Schneider], AFHSS.

37 Bach’s personal documentation has not been preserved in the Archives of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, so the circumstances of his appointment remain unknown, but it is known that he became an assistant professor in March 1943. Tihomil Stahuljak, *Iz prošlosti nastave povijesti umjetnosti*, 21.

38 Odluka (17. ožujka 1943.) [Decision (March 17, 1943)], Box 13, Josip Matasović (1059), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb (hereafter cited as Box 13, Matasović, CSA).

39 Dopis Dekanatu Mudroslovnog fakulteta (17. svibnja 1943.) [Letter to the Dean’s Office of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (May 17, 1943)], *Osobnik Antuna Bauera* [Personal File of Antun Bauer], AFHSS.

time; on the abolition of legal regulations that were in force at the time of enemy occupation.<sup>40</sup> With this decision, all University regulations approved during the Independent State of Croatia were abolished, and those professors who were forcibly retired or dismissed<sup>41</sup> – including Schneider<sup>42</sup> – were reinstated, whereas those who were appointed to teaching positions during that period without the approval of the university authorities – among them Matasović,<sup>43</sup> Bauer<sup>44</sup> and Bach<sup>45</sup> – were dismissed. During their short stay at the Department, national art was taught by Bauer, who dealt with topics from contemporary Croatian art, and sporadically by Bach, whose general courses followed the chronological order of the program, thus continuing Schneider’s work.<sup>46</sup> In the context of this chapter, it is interesting to mention that at the time of their teaching activities, Bauer and Bach were also among the authors of the texts in the two-volume publication *Naša domovina* (*Our Homeland*, 1943), a systematic and comprehensive overview of the history, culture and art of Croatia published by Glavni ustaški stan (the Main Ustaša Headquarters).<sup>47</sup> Bauer contributed texts to both volumes of this propagandistic publication: in the first volume, the text on archaeological monuments (in the context of the presentation of Croatian historical monuments) and archaeology (in the context of the presentation of Croatian science), and, in the second volume, the text on galleries and museums (in the chapter on contemporary cultural life of Croats)<sup>48</sup> – in other words, on topics in which he was an expert. For many years, Bauer was active within the Archaeological Institute of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (1936–1941).<sup>49</sup> He also continued his education at the University of Vienna,<sup>50</sup> and from 1937 onward he was the head (as well

40 Citation according to Anto Milušić, Hodimir Sirotković and Slobodan Lang, “Sveučilište od oslobođenja do uvođenja društvenog upravljanja (1945–1954)” [The University from the Liberation until the Introduction of Collective Management (1945–1954)], in *Spomenica u povodu 300-godišnjice proslave Sveučilišta u Zagrebu I*, ed. Jaroslav Šidak (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1969), 189.

41 Hodimir Sirotković, “Kratka povijest Zagrebačkog Sveučilišta” [A Brief History of the University of Zagreb], in *Sveučilište u Zagrebu*, eds. Davor Delić et al. (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1979), 76.

42 Schneider was reemployed in 1945 and taught in the winter semester of 1945/1946. He died on March 10, 1946. For the certified copy of the decree see in: *Osobnik Artura Schneidera*, AFHSS.

43 *Razrješenje Josipa Matasovića na mjestu redovitog sveučilišnog profesora na Seminaru za povijest umjetnosti i kulture* [Dismissal of Josip Matasović as a Full Professor at the Seminar for the History of Art and Culture], Box 13, Matasović, CSA. Matasović was reemployed in 1946 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, but at the Department of History, where he taught auxiliary historical sciences. Miljenko Jurković, “Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti” [Department of Art History], in *Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, ed. Stjepan Damjanović (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1998), 143–144.

44 Dopis Dekanatu Filozofskog fakulteta (17. srpnja 1945.) [Letter to the Dean’s Office of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945)], *Osobnik Antuna Bauera*, AFHSS.

45 Bach, who was mentioned in documents in 1945 as a former university assistant professor, was probably dismissed in the same way. Zapisnik o primopredaji uprave Seminara za povijest umjetnosti i kulture (27. kolovoza 1945.) [Record of the Handover of the Administration of the Seminar for the History of Art and Culture (August 27, 1945)], Box 13, Matasović, CSA.

46 *Lecture schedule*, 1942/1943, 1943/1944, 1944/1945.

47 *Naša domovina, I*, and *II* [Our homeland], ed. Filip Lukas (Zagreb: Glavni ustaški stan, 1943).

48 *Naša domovina, I*, ed. Lukas, 239–242, 363–364; *Naša domovina, II*, ed. Lukas, 1014–1025.

49 Various documentation, *Osobnik Antuna Bauera*, AFHSS.

50 *Ibid.*

as the founder) of the Gipsoteka<sup>51</sup> (as stated in the publication). Bach's texts appeared in the second volume of the publication, and they focused on old fine arts in coastal Croatia and Bosnian Croatia, as well as the history of applied art in Croatia.<sup>52</sup> Among the authors of individual texts were the then young art historians Marcel Gorenc, Zdenko Vojnović, and Tihomil Stahuljak, all former students of Schneider and Knoll. It is interesting to point out that their involvement in this publication, which has been completely obscured in the historiography of Croatian art history after 1945, was obviously not held against them, since they were all later employed as teachers at the Department of Art History. Moreover, among them was the already mentioned Željko Jiroušek, who was then already working at the Faculty as a university assistant, as stated in the publication itself.

### **“THE ZAGREB SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY” – NATIONAL ART IN STUDY PROGRAMS BETWEEN 1946 AND 1970s**

During the initial post-war years, only two teachers, Željko Jiroušek and Grgo Gamulin (1910–1997), taught at the Department of Art History. However, over the next several years, the Department expanded to include a number of experts who mostly came from the circles of the then left-wing intellectual elite. Among them, Gamulin took a leading place both in the art-historian *milieu* and in the wider academic community. Jiroušek and Gamulin belonged to the same generation of Schneider's students. Although both of them had graduated in 1935, Jiroušek became Schneider's assistant immediately after completing his studies,<sup>53</sup> while Gamulin was “unemployed because of communism since the day of his graduation on February 15, 1935 until August 31, 1940.”<sup>54</sup> In the documents related to Gamulin's employment at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the beginning of 1947, one can read that he had spent the years between 1941 and 1945 in the Jasenovac, Stara Gradiška and Lepoglava concentration camps, and from 1945 he served as the head of Kulturno-umjetnički odjel Ministarstva prosvjete u Zagrebu (Cultural and Artistic Department of the Ministry of Education in Zagreb).<sup>55</sup>

51 Today, the Glyptothèque of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. See more in: Magdalena Getaldić, “Povijest Gliptoteke Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti” [The History of the Glyptothèque of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts], *Kroatologija*, no. 1–2 (2018): 43–67.

52 *Naša domovina, II*, ed. Lukas, 669–680, 720–738. The texts can be found in the chapter *Hrvatska umjetnost* [Croatian art], edited by A. Schneider.

53 For more about Jiroušek, see Šourek, “Uz zagrebačke teme Željka Jirouškera,” 113–126.

54 Dr. sc. Grgo Gamulin – docent – prijedlog za priznavanje godina službe [Grgo Gamulin, PhD – assistant professor – proposal for recognition of years of service], Zagreb, February 19, 1955, *Osobnik Grge Gamulina* [Personal File of Grgo Gamulin], AFHSS. The document wrongly states the year 1948 as the last year in which Gamulin was without employment, but it is clear from the note added on the side of the document that they actually meant the year 1940.

55 Documentation in *Osobnik Grge Gamulina*, AFHSS. For more about Gamulin and his work at the Department of Art History in Zagreb see Sanja Cvetnić, “Pater fundator noster: Grgo Gamulin,” in *Zbornik radova sa skupa 140 godina podučavanja povijesti umjetnosti*, eds. Botica and Jurković, 161–172.

Jiroušek began teaching in the winter semester of the 1946/47 academic year, teaching mostly courses in the history of medieval art in Europe and the history of medieval art in Yugoslavia, with special emphasis on Croatian Romanesque and Gothic Art and with an occasional excursion into the Baroque. As mentioned before, he was the editor and co-author of *Our Homeland* in 1943, so it can be concluded that this publication served as the basis for courses such as *Povijest romaničke umjetnosti obzirom na umjetničke spomenike kod nas* (History of Romanesque Art with Regard to Artistic Monuments in Our Country) and *Upoznavanje srednjovjekovne ikonografije, građevni oblici gotike, proučavanje umjetničkih spomenika gotike u Hrvatskoj i Dalmaciji na osnovu postojeće literature* (Introducing Medieval Iconography, Building Forms of Gothic, Study of Gothic Monuments in Croatia and Dalmatia Based on the Existing Literature), which he carried out in the form of seminar exercises between 1947 and 1950.<sup>56</sup>

Grgo Gamulin was employed in the summer semester of the 1946/47 academic year and only taught courses in general art history of the Modern Age and Modernism from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a rule, he conducted courses related to national art history with his assistants – Milan Prelog (1919–1988), Vera Horvat Pintarić (b. 1926), Radoslav Putar (1921–1994) and Božidar Gagro (1938–2009). Therefore, these courses primarily had the function of introducing young colleagues to the profession of university teachers, but consequently also of raising the status of national art in the art history study program in Zagreb.<sup>57</sup>

In the summer semester of the 1948/49 academic year, Milan Prelog came to the Seminar for the History of Art and Culture as its third member, initially as an assistant to Grgo Gamulin on the courses *Nacionalna umjetnost srednjega vijeka* (National Art of the Middle Ages; summer semester 1948/49), *Predromanička umjetnost na Jadranu* (Pre-Romanesque Art on the Adriatic; winter semester 1949/50) and *Umjetnost naroda Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* (Art of the People of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia; summer semester 1949/50).<sup>58</sup> Prelog graduated in art history at the University of Zagreb in 1945, ten years after Jiroušek and Gamulin, and worked as a professor at Muzej Narodnooslobodilačke borbe Hrvatske (Museum of the National Liberation Struggle of Croatia) in Zagreb from the end of 1945 to the beginning of 1947. Before his employment at the Faculty, he had worked for a few months as a teacher at the newly founded Gimnazija Maršala Tita (Marshal Tito Gymnasium) in Zagreb (founded in 1945). His personal file,

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<sup>56</sup> Jiroušek wrote the following chapters in Volume 1 of *Our Country* in 1938: *General Overview of Art; Artistic Epochs and Styles; Cultural and Artistic Spheres in Yugoslavia; Important Historical and Artistic Monuments*; and, *Church Architecture and Painting*. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume published in 1943, he was the author of the text *Overview of the Development of Fine Arts in Civil Croatia: From the 12<sup>th</sup> until the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> century*. See Šourek, "Uz zagrebačke teme Željka Jirouška," 123–124. For courses see *Lecture schedules* from 1946/1947 until 1949/1950.

<sup>57</sup> See *Lecture schedules* from 1946/1947 to 1972/1973.

<sup>58</sup> See *Lecture schedules* from 1948/1949 to 1949/1950.



that is, his work record, also noted his active participation in the National Liberation Movement between 1944 and 1945 and membership in Savez komunista Jugoslavije (the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia) from 1934.<sup>59</sup> Together with Gamulin, Prelog soon became the leading and most influential member of the Department in the period between 1950 and 1980.<sup>60</sup>

As a result, there were two mediaevalists working at the Seminar from 1948 forward, private assistant professor Željko Jiroušek and assistant Milan Prelog. The lecture schedules between 1950 and 1959 show that Prelog completely took over the teaching of all courses related to the national history of medieval art, that is, the history of art of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, while Jiroušek taught courses on the general history of medieval art. Initially, Prelog's "national, i.e. Yugoslav" courses varied in title and content: *Srednjevjekovna umjetnost Makedonije i Srbije* (Medieval Art of Macedonia and Serbia), *Gotička umjetnost Dalmacije, Istre, Slovenije i sjeverne Hrvatske* (Gothic Art of Dalmatia, Istria, Slovenia and Northern Croatia), *Srednjevjekovna umjetnost Jugoslavije I. i II.* (Medieval Art of Yugoslavia I and II), *Srednjevjekovna umjetnost u Dalmaciji* (Medieval Arts in Dalmatia), and *XV. i XVI. stoljeće u umjetnosti naših naroda I i II* (The 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century in the Art of our People I and II). Finally, the title *Povijest umjetnosti naroda Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije (srednji vijek I–IV)* (History of Art in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia [Middle Ages I–IV]) was established between the 1955/56 and 1959/60 academic years.<sup>61</sup>

In 1949 and 1950, Jiroušek, Gamulin and Prelog were joined at the Department by Zdenko Vojnović (1912–1954), Marcel Gorenc (1915–2009) and Tihomil Stahuljak (1918–2007), at first as part-time teachers, and later as scientific and expert teaching associates. Vojnović, who at the time of his employment at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences held the position of director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb (1952–1954), spent only four years at the Department (1950–1954). Despite this short period, he made a great contribution to the Department by innovating its study program with the course *Opća muzeologija* (General Museology).<sup>62</sup> Vojnović held courses and practical exercises in the premises of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, which was also going through significant changes at the time in the processing and presentation of its holdings, so the students certainly had the opportunity to

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59 Documentation in *Osobniku Milana Preloga* [Personal File of Milan Prelog], AFHSS. Prelog was also a member of the Croatian Leftist Students. See Milan Prelog, "Komunistički pokret na Zagrebačkom sveučilištu od 1938. do 1940." [The Communist Movement at the University of Zagreb from 1938 to 1940], in *Sveučilište i revolucija. Simpozij "Borba za socijalističko sveučilište"*, Zagreb, 8.–10. siječnja 1970. (Zagreb: Sveučilišni komitet SKH, 1970), 25–27.

60 For Prelog's contributions to the profession see the proceedings *Prelogova baština danas* [Prelog's Heritage Today], ed. Katarina Horvat Levaj (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2013.). About his activities at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb see Igor Fisković, "Milan Prelog na Filozofskom fakultetu u Zagrebu" [Milan Prelog at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb], in *Zbornik radova sa skupa 140 godina podučavanja povijesti umjetnosti*, eds. Botica and Jurković, 147–159.

61 See *Lecture schedules* from 1950/1951 to 1959/1960.

62 See *Lecture schedules* from 1950/1951 to 1954/1955.

get to know these novelties first-hand. Vojnović's premature death in 1954, at only 42 years of age, was a testimony in some way to his difficult experiences during World War II when, as a leftist and a member of the partisans, he was sentenced to forced labour in Vienna and a Gestapo prison, from which he left in a significantly impaired state of health.<sup>63</sup> In the 1956/57 academic year, the *Museology* course was taken over by Marcel Gorenc, who taught at the Department from 1950 to 1974 and at the same time held the position of director of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb.<sup>64</sup> From 1950 Gorenc taught courses on art of prehistoric and ancient times, primarily Antiquity, in which national art, as the courses' titles suggested, was represented to a lesser extent. The contents from the national artistic heritage were mentioned in only two of his courses: *Seminar: Prehistorijska umjetnost u našim krajevima* (Seminar: Prehistoric Art in Our Regions), which he taught in the summer semester of 1952/53, and *Seminarske vježbe: Spomenici antikne umjetnosti iz naših krajeva* (Seminar Exercises: Monuments of Antiquity in Our Regions) in the winter semester of 1955/6.<sup>65</sup> Of the three professors, only Stahuljak devoted significant attention towards national art through non-compulsory working groups that focused on the Baroque artistic heritage of Zagreb and the mandatory course *Barok u Hrvatskoj* (Baroque in Croatia) (introduced in the 1960/61 academic year), which he taught alongside the course in *Zaštita* (Protection), i.e. *Čuvanje spomenika* (Preservation of Monuments).<sup>66</sup>

64 Kruno Prijatelj (1922–1988) joined the Department in the summer semester of 1957/58 as a part-time teacher and taught courses on art in Dalmatia and the Dalmatian School of Painting, based on the research he had published in monographs and papers, such as *Barok u Splitu* (Baroque in Split; 1947), *Slike domaće škole XV. stoljeća u Splitu* (Paintings of the Local School in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century in Split; 1951), *Andrija Medulić Schiavone* (1952), *Umjetnost XVII. i XVIII. stoljeća u Dalmaciji* (Art of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century in Dalmatia; 1956) and *Ivan Duknović* (1957), to list some of the titles he had published before he was employed at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb.<sup>67</sup>

In the 1959/60 academic year, Milan Prelog took over from Željko Jiroušek most of the courses in the general history of medieval art, which he taught in

63 See Stanko Stančić, "Zdenko Vojnović: prilog povijesti Muzeja za umjetnost i obrt," [A Contribution to the History of the Museum of Arts and Crafts: Zdenko Vojnović], *Informatica museologica*, vol. 38, no. 1-2 (2007): 96–103.

64 "Gorenc, Marcel," *Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje* [Croatian Encyclopaedia, online edition], accessed March 25, 2023, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=22704>.

65 See *Lecture schedules* from 1949/1950 to 1973/1974.

66 See *Lecture schedules* from 1950/1951 to 1979/1980. For more about Tihomil Stahuljak's teaching activities see Dubravka Botica, "Umjetnost baroka u nastavi i istraživanju Tihomila Stahuljaka na Odsjeku za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu" [Baroque Art in Tihomil Stahuljak's Teaching and Research Practice at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb], in *Zbornik radova sa skupa 140 godina podučavanja povijesti umjetnosti*, eds. Botica and Jurković, 127–145.

67 See *Lecture schedules* from 1957/1958 to 1972/1973. See also "Prijatelj, Kruno," *Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje*, accessed, March 25, 2023, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=50331>; Tonko Maroević, "Kruno Prijatelj," *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 22 (1998): 211–217.

parallel with the national courses. These courses covered the period from Late Antiquity to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as can be seen from their titles: *Umjetnost kasne antike na području FNRJ* (Art of Late Antiquity in the FNRJ), *Umjetnost ranog srednjeg vijeka na području FNRJ* (Art of the Early Middle Ages in the FNRJ), *Razvoj umjetnosti na području Jugoslavije od IV–IX stoljeća I i II* (Development of Art in Yugoslavia from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> Century I and II), *Umjetnost naroda Jugoslavije od X–XIII stoljeća – I i II* (Art in Yugoslavia from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century – I and II), and *Umjetnost naroda Jugoslavije od XII (XIII)–XV stoljeća I i II* (Art in Yugoslavia from the 12<sup>th</sup> (13<sup>th</sup>) to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century I and II).<sup>68</sup> From 1959/60, however, Željko Jiroušek mostly taught in so-called working groups, which students enrolled in by choice, as a kind of elective course. Jiroušek focused these working groups on monuments in Zagreb, more specifically the topography of late medieval Zagreb, Zagreb's Gothic architecture, the construction phases of the medieval Zagreb cathedral, fortifications and the urban development of Zagreb's Gradec and Kaptol neighborhoods, with the exception of the working group dedicated to the monuments of early medieval decorative sculpture in Dalmatia, which he conducted in the 1970s.<sup>69</sup> Most of these courses were related to research topics that Jiroušek had dealt with at the beginning of his university career between 1936 and 1943.<sup>70</sup> In the context of the course on the national history of art, Jiroušek, Prelog and Stahuljak were joined by Božidar Gagro from 1962 as Gamulin's assistant in *Seminarske vježbe iz Novije povijesti umjetnosti naroda FNRJ* (Seminar Exercises in the Recent Art History of the FNRJ), which later became *Umjetnost naroda Jugoslavije u XIX. i XX. stoljeću* (Art in Yugoslavia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century).<sup>71</sup>

Gamulin's practice of gradually introducing assistants was also continued by Milan Prelog, who hired Radovan Ivančević (1931–2004), Marija Planić Lončarić (1933–1992), Tonko Maroević (1941–2020) and Igor Fisković (b. 1944) in his courses. In this regard, Gamulin and Prelog played a crucial role in the selection of young academic staff and the personnel policy of the Department, with the aim of modernizing, expanding and deepening the study program with topics related to iconography, art theory, spatial culture, visual culture and communication. Marija Planić Lončarić, who joined the Department in 1961 as Prelog's assistant in the courses on art history of the Middle Ages, led, among other things, seminars in art history of Yugoslavia, which now for the first time included field teaching, i.e. joint fieldwork of the Department and Institute of Art History in Istria, the Kvarner region, and Dubrovnik.<sup>72</sup>

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68 See *Lecture schedules* from 1959/1960 to 1983/1984.

69 See *Lecture schedules* from 1959/1960 to 1981/1982.

70 See Šourek, "Uz zagrebačke teme Željka Jirouška," 116–124.

71 See *Lecture schedules* from 1961/1962 to 1965/1966.

72 See *Lectures schedules* from 1960/1961 to 1979/1980. See also Radovan Ivančević, "Marija Planić-Lončarić i istraživanje prostora. In memoriam" [Marija Planić-Lončarić and Spatial Exploration. In Memoriam], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 16 (1992): 265–267.

In accordance with the described personnel reinforcements, the lecture schedules started to list three chairs beginning in the 1963/64 academic year: 1) the chair for the history of ancient art; 2) the chair for general and national art history of the Middle Ages and 3) the chair for general and national art history of Modern Age. In the 1968/69 academic year, they transformed into 1) the chair for general art history 2) the chair for national art history and 3) the chair for theory of visual arts. The organization of a separate chair for national art history speaks in favour of the increasing representation of the teaching content on domestic artistic heritage in the study program and the equal value placed on courses dedicated to national art and those on the general history and theory of art. However, it is important to point out that in the period between 1946 and 1976, the majority of courses that dealt with art in Croatia and other countries of Yugoslavia was devoted to medieval art, whereas a significantly smaller part focused on Baroque art, and the smallest portion on the art of Modern Age and Modernism. These relationships primarily reflected the efforts of Professor Prelog, who, with his continuous offering of courses dedicated to Croatian and Yugoslav artistic heritage, educated a whole series of excellent experts. Even during their studies, these students of Prelog realized the importance of intertwining theoretical knowledge and practical experience of working with monuments on site.<sup>73</sup>

66 In the context of Prelog's contribution to the research of national art history and teaching about it, it is worth highlighting a quote from his 1978 paper *Umjetnost na tlu Jugoslavije između Evrope i Mediterana* (Art on the Territory of Yugoslavia between Europe and the Mediterranean), in which he critically addressed the problem of the regionalist approach to research and the professional presentation of the art of Yugoslavia:

Starting from undeniable facts that the development of art on the territory of Yugoslavia took place in different historically conditioned regions, our history of art today should not direct its work towards fixing closed regions. Such efforts must lead to deformations of the real historical and art-historical content. Of course, a complex presentation of the entire development of the history of art on the territory of our country cannot be achieved by constructing some fictitious unity, nor by isolating individual regional complexes. The immediate proximity of certain regions, mutual connections created by different forms of communication, impose the necessary need to observe this regional development in a certain interdependence. A critical attitude towards different boundaries that previous research, domestic and foreign, has drawn across the territory of our

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73 See Radovan Ivančević, "Riječ o Milanu Prelogu" [A Word about Milan Prelog], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 12–13 (1988–89): 11, 14.

country is a necessary assumption for the presentation of the entire art-historical situation in the past and present.<sup>74</sup>

Consistent with this point of view, and in addition to teaching work that focused on art in Croatia and Yugoslavia, Prelog's engagement also resulted in a series of synthesizing publications, among which we should single out *Pregled razvoja umjetnosti u Hrvatskoj* (Overview of the Development of Art in Croatia, 1959) and *Romanika na tlu Jugoslavije* (Romanesque Art on the Territory of Yugoslavia, 1984). His participation in the realization of many important exhibitions was also of great importance, including *Minijatura u Jugoslaviji* (Miniatures in Yugoslavia; 1964) at the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb and *Umjetnost na tlu Jugoslavije od predhistorije do danas* (Art on the Territory of Yugoslavia from Prehistoric Times to the Present; 1971) at the Grand Palais in Paris, to name just a few. In 1982 he initiated the Art Topography of Croatia project within the Institute of Art History in Zagreb.<sup>75</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The continuous offer of courses on the history of Croatian artistic heritage and the artistic heritage of other provinces of Yugoslavia at the Department of Art History of the University of Zagreb began in the 1920s. Over the subsequent decades, it clearly reflected the frequent state-building transformations that took place in the aforementioned period. This has been primarily reflected in the courses' titles in which, depending on state and political changes, phrases such as the *territory of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Banovina of Croatia, Yugoslav countries, Yugoslav art, and art in the FNRJ* appeared, as well as their more neutral forms, such as *our monuments, domestic monuments, artistic monuments in our country, and national art*. The desire for a broader understanding of the history of art on the territory of Yugoslavia was primarily reflected in Knoll's teaching in the period between the two World Wars and in Prelog's teaching after World War II. This approach certainly contributed to the positioning and status of the Zagreb Department of Art History as a higher education institution with both educational and scientific qualities in the context of related Yugoslav institutions, such that some authors have begun to use the phrase *Zagreb School of Art History*, bearing in mind its peculiarities, primarily in the approach to national artistic heritage.<sup>76</sup> The power and influence that changed political and state circumstances have on all aspects of life, including scientific life, is illustrated by the fact that with the breakup of Yugoslavia (1991), topics related to the artistic heritage of the former Yugoslav countries have completely disappeared from the then study program of the Department in Zagreb.

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74 Milan Prelog, "Umjetnost na tlu Jugoslavije između Evrope i Mediterana" [Art on the Territory of Yugoslavia between Europe and the Mediterranean], *Peristil: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1978): 14.

75 See Ivančević, "Riječ o Milanu Prelogu," 11–13.

76 See Ivančević, "Marija Planić-Lončarić," 265.





# Art

and

**the State**

in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# Political Transformation, Artistic Change

## **Dubravka Botica**

CREATING THE MONARCHY STYLE IN THE  
TIME OF EMPEROR FRANCIS I – THE ROLE  
OF URBAN DECORATIONS AND PUBLIC  
MONUMENTS IN ZAGREB

## **Nikola Tomašegović**

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## CREATING THE MONARCHY STYLE IN THE TIME OF EMPEROR FRANCIS I – THE ROLE OF URBAN DECORATIONS AND PUBLIC MONUMENTS IN ZAGREB

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**Abstract**

*The reign of Emperor Francis I (II) (1804–1835) was characterized by the stabilization and consolidation of the new state, Austrian Monarchy, after the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna. An important role in this process was played by the emperor himself, whose extensive travels had a reuniting effect for the Monarchy. New imperial iconography and decorations in Neoclassical style were used in representations of the monarch at festivities in the cities the emperor had visited during his protracted travels. The chapter discusses the decorations installed on the occasion of the 1818 visit of the imperial couple to Zagreb, the last stop on their long travel through Dalmatia and Croatia. Although mentioned in Croatian scholarly literature, these temporary decorations have not been discussed in a broader context of the decorative programme and models of visual representation of the emperor. These decorations and ephemeral architecture have had a crucial impact on the spread of the Neoclassical style in architecture in northern Croatia.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were marked by decisive events that would significantly change the European political context. 1806 witnessed the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, when the last Holy Roman Emperor, Francis II (1804–1835), abdicated his title and as Francis I became the first ruler of Austrian Empire. The new state was the successor to the Habsburg Monarchy in the new political context of post-Napoleonic Europe, and these circumstances were visible in the representation of ruler: continuity of tradition combined with new stylistic forms. Especially in the period of the Congress of Vienna and its aftermath, Emperor Francis I appropriated carefully elaborated strategies based on various models of representation of former, especially 18<sup>th</sup>-century Habsburg rulers, but now with decorations in Neoclassical style. Emperor Francis I travelled tirelessly through the country and continued the practice that had been important since the Middle Ages, seeking to (once again) bring the monarchy closer to all social classes through this “ritualized, symbolic and political communication.”<sup>1</sup> These travels were focused on strengthening and

<sup>1</sup> On similar practices employed by Prussian rulers after the Congress of Vienna, see Gaby Huch, *Zwischen Ehrenpforte und Inkognito: Preußische Könige auf Reisen. Quellen zur Repräsentation der Monarchie zwischen 1797 und 1871* [Between Triumphal Arch and the Incognito: Travels of the Prussian Kings. Sources on the Representation of the Monarchy between 1797 and 1871] (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Akademie Forschung, 2016), 3–4.

legitimizing the new state by presenting his own, new role as the father of the nation after the Congress of Vienna. The political messages and goals of the imperial travels were clearly conveyed by newspaper titles and reports intended for audiences throughout the monarchy, but also through the programmes and decorations of the lavish festivities in the cities visited by the ruler. Decorations and ephemeral architecture in the Neoclassical style were part of the detailed strategy of visual representation of the ruler of new state. The emperor visited Istria in 1816, and Dalmatia and inland Croatia in 1818.<sup>2</sup> The visit of the emperor and empress to Zagreb at the end of June 1818, the last stop on their journey, encouraged numerous ceremonies and theatre performances, as well as the publication of texts and poems commemorating the occasion. The festivities in Zagreb followed the established models of visual representation, style and types of ephemeral architecture as well as decorations and lighting in the city. These decorations also significantly accelerated the spread of Neoclassical motifs in architecture in northern Croatia.

This chapter will examine the decorations and lighting, which are traditionally attributed to the city architect Bartol Felbinger (1785–1871). Their programme and stylistic features will be considered in the broader context of the political iconography and style of the monarchy, an aspect neglected in previous research. The chapter will also consider and propose possible prototypes for the creation of these decorations.

## FESTIVITIES AND DECORATIONS IN ZAGREB IN 1818

The 1818 imperial journey through Dalmatia and continental Croatia lasted from April to early July. Numerous reports and descriptions documenting the journey represent a valuable source of information about the cities, monuments and inhabitants of Croatia in that period. The emperor himself kept detailed notes in his diary entries,<sup>3</sup> accurately describing everything he had seen. The visit of Emperor Francis I, as well as his reign, received mostly negative assessment in older Croatian historiography, often described as a reactionary period marked by “the bureaucratic-authoritarian spirit of a monarchist regime.”<sup>4</sup> The reports of contemporary writers are thoroughly different in tone, especially the enthusiastic description of the decorations and lighting by Ignaz Bubenhofen, the leader of the German theatre in Zagreb,

2 Stjepan Antoljak, “Doček Franje I u njegove supruge u Karlovcu i Zagrebu 1818. godine” [The Reception of Francis I and his Wife in Karlovac and Zagreb], *Posebni odtisak iz “Nastavnog vjestnika,”* vol. 51, no. 3-4 (1943): 171. The iconography of Francis I on monuments in Croatia was discussed by Marko Špikić, “*Titus Novus*. Emperor Francis I’s Iconography of Power and Its Reception in Croatia and Dalmatia,” *IKON*, no. 5 (2012): 305–319.

3 Translated and edited by Ljudevit Krmpotić (ed.), *Car Franjo I. u Hrvatskoj 1818* [Emperor Francis I in Croatia in 1818] (Hannover, Čakovec: Hrvatski Zapisnik, 2002).

4 Duško Kečkemet, “Opis Splita u prigodi posjeta cara Franje prvoga 1818” [Description of Split on the Occasion of the Visit of the Emperor Francis I], *Kulturna baština*, no. 9-10 (1979): 66. See also Ivan Rabar, *Poviest najnovijega vremena. Od godine 1815. do godine 1878.* [History of the Newest Period: From 1815 to 1878] (Zagreb: Naklada “Matice hrvatske”, 1898), 7.



titled *Beschreibung der Illumination welche in der königl. Haupt-und Fraystadt Agram den 28. Juni 1818. bei der allerhöchsten Anwesenheit Ihrer k.k. Majestäten Franz und Caroline gegeben wurde.*<sup>5</sup>

The emperor left Vienna on April 10, 1818, accompanied by his wife Caroline Augusta. The road led them through Carniola and Ljubljana to Trieste, and then to the territory of present-day Croatia, to Rijeka, then through Lika to Zadar and further south, to Šibenik, Trogir, Kaštela and Split, places to which he dedicated most of his travel diary. He then proceeded to Dubrovnik and described the Bay of Kotor, although it was not among the places he visited. From Dubrovnik he travelled through numerous cities and towns in the period from June 2 to 27, finally arriving to Zagreb, where the imperial couple stayed for four days before returning to Vienna.<sup>6</sup>

The festivities in Zagreb marked the end of this long journey. Numerous decorations were placed throughout the city: On each house there was at least the inscription *Vivat F C* (Long live Francis and Caroline) and garlands, and the city was lavishly lit and transformed into a public stage of the ruler's performance in front of his hosts. This was accompanied by feasts, banquets, a theatre performance and printed speeches and poems commemorating the occasion. The reconstruction of ceremonial events, the course of the visit and the (political) programme of the festivities are aided by preserved descriptions, primarily Bubenhofen's and Bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovac's diary entries,<sup>7</sup> while records of city administration assemblies and designs of decorations and lighting are preserved in the State Archives in Zagreb.<sup>8</sup> Preparations for the imperial visit to Zagreb commenced in March of the same year, while details of the reception were established in May. In June the Zagreb magistracy made the decisions regarding the theatre performances and decorations of the theatre building, while prothonotary Josip Kušević drew up the schedule of the ceremonial reception, *ordo*, in 16 points.<sup>9</sup>

The emperor, empress and their entourage arrived from Karlovac to Zagreb on June 27 in the afternoon, around two o'clock. They were greeted by a ceremonial escort on the Sava bridge. The main ceremony took place in Harmica Square (today the main square, named after Ban Josip Jelačić).

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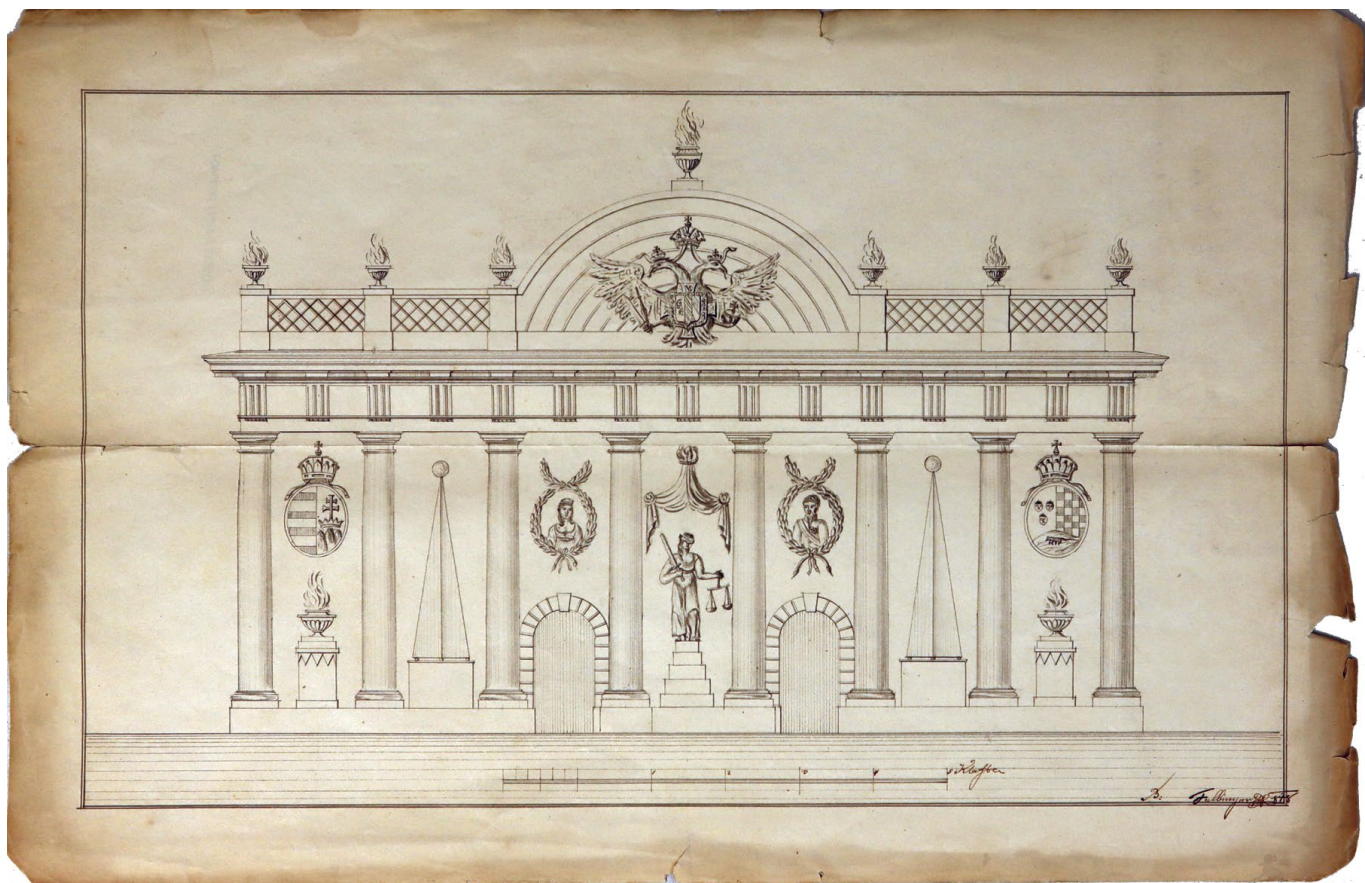
5 Ignaz Bubenhofen, *Beschreibung der Illumination welche in der königl. Haupt-und Fraystadt Agram den 28. Juni 1818. bei der allerhöchsten Anwesenheit Ihrer k.k. Majestäten Franz und Caroline gegeben wurde* [Description of the Illumination which was Used in the Royal Capital and Fraystadt Agram on June 28, 1818. With the Supreme Presence of Your K.K. Majesty Franz and Caroline was Given] (Agram/Zagreb: mit von Novosselischen Schriften, 1818), National and University Library, Manuscripts and Old Books Collection RIIF-8<sup>o</sup>-1165.

6 Krmpotić, *Car Franjo I.*, 5–6.

7 Information from Bishop Vrhovac's *Diarium* is included in Antoljak "Doček Franje I".

8 *Acta politica*, inv. no. 2261, State Archives in Zagreb (hereafter cited as HR-DAZG).

9 *Acta banalia*, June 18, 1818, HR-DAZG; published in Draginja Jurman-Karaman, "Zagreb u klasicističkom dekoru (Dekoracija i iluminacija Gradeca i Kaptola prilikom boravka cara Franje II. krajem lipnja 1818. godine)" [Zagreb in Neoclassical Décor (Decoration and Illumination of Gradec and Kaptol during the Visit of Emperor Francis II in Late June 1818)], in *Izdanja Muzeja grada Zagreba, Iz starog i novog Zagreba*, II, ed. Franjo Buntak (Zagreb: Muzej grada Zagreba, 1960), 183–196.



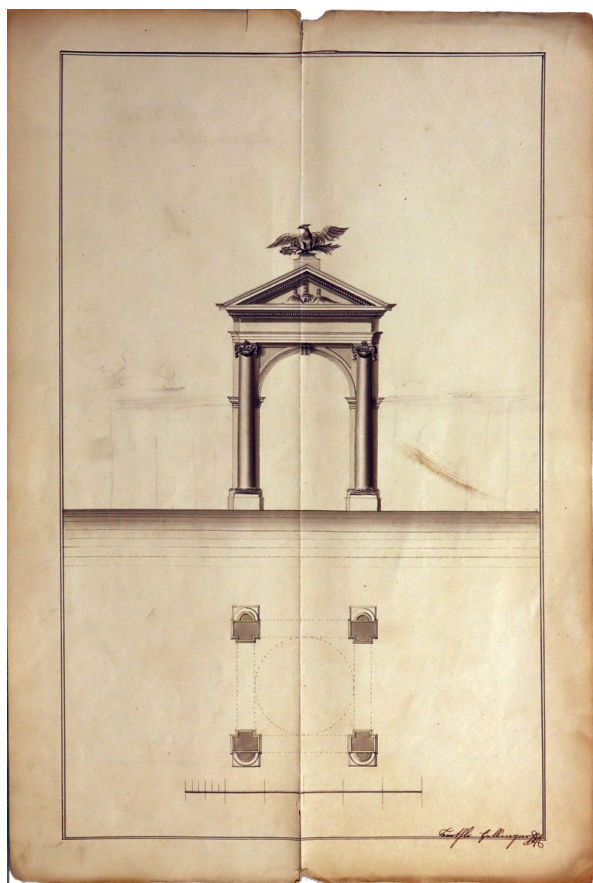
The emperor and empress were greeted by the city judge Gorup and city notary Štajdacher and were given the keys of the city, a symbolical gesture of confirmation of the ruler's authority.<sup>10</sup> A ceremonial triumphal arch was placed in the square, under which the ceremony was held. The arch was constructed in the Ionic fashion, with four pillars with half columns carrying the entablature and pediments, decorated with the city coat of arms and an eagle with two swords and two palm branches. The Neoclassical style of the triumphal arch was described by contemporaries as "created according to the strictest rules and with greatest diligence" (fig. 2).<sup>11</sup> The decorations in Harmica square also included an imposing Tuscan column over 30 meter tall, surrounded by twelve smaller columns, wrapped in flaming ribbon and illuminated by 3,000 lamps and 49 flaming balls (fig. 3).<sup>12</sup> The house of the royal adviser and prothonotary of Croatia and Slavonia, Josip Kušević, was decorated with images of Mars and Janus, sacrificial altars, the figure of the emperor and the coats of arms of Dalmatia, Slavonia and Croatia, complemented by 1,500 lamps and inscriptions.

Fig. 1. Bartol Felbinger, *Decorations on the City Hall*, from *Acta Politica* (1818), inv. no. 2261, State Archives in Zagreb.

<sup>10</sup> This medieval tradition had not only a symbolic but also a legal function and was maintained in the Early Modern period as part of rulers' representation. It continued into the period after the Congress of Vienna. See Huch, *Zwischen Ehrenpforte und Inkognito*, 80.

<sup>11</sup> "nach strenger Regel mit dem größten Fleisse hergestellt wurde," Bubenhofen, *Beschreibung*, 19.

<sup>12</sup> The Doric Column was 32 m high (17 Klafter, 1 Klafter is 1,896484 m = 32 m) and the smaller columns (3 Klafter) were 5.67 m tall.



**Fig. 2.** Bartol Felbinger, *Project for Triumphal Arch on the Harmica Square*, from *Acta Politica* (1818), inv. no. 2261, State Archives in Zagreb.

The next day (June 28), at around 9 pm, the city – Gradec, Kaptol, Harmica Square and Ilica Street<sup>13</sup> – was illuminated by solemn street lighting, described in detail by Bubenhofen. The houses were adorned by numerous inscriptions, written mostly in German, some in Latin and one in Croatian. The next day (June 29), the royal guests made a visit to Kaptol, and in the evening, Bishop Maximilan Vrhovac (1752–1827) hosted a social event (*conversatio*) in the bishop’s palace. It included a folk dance (*kolo*), performed by Croatian noblemen and noblewomen in folk costumes and singing *Pleszopisen*, composed by Vrhovac himself.<sup>14</sup> On June 30, the imperial couple attended an evening programme at the theatre. The prologue was compiled and given by Lorenz Gindl,<sup>15</sup> followed by a symbolic play honouring the kingdom and a selection of old folk songs. The next day (July 1), the emperor and empress and their entourage left Zagreb for Varaždin and proceeded further toward Styria and Vienna.

In his exhaustive description, Bubenhofen minutely recorded the decorations on all of the buildings in the entire city. He paid special attention to the lighting, which was particularly impressive, as the emperor himself noted in his diary: “In the evening, all the cities [including the Lower Town] were beautifully lit – the most beautiful thing I saw after Pisa.”<sup>16</sup> Bubenhofen wrote: “It is impossible to describe everything that these two cities made, to describe the impression that each object left on the eyes, even a painter would not be able to express that magnificence, sublimity, that splendour.”<sup>17</sup> Due to the limits of space, only brief descriptions of decorations and lighting relevant for the topic are provided here.<sup>18</sup> The most important points in the city were marked with particularly luxurious and intricate decorations and lighting. In addition the triumphal arch and column in Harmica square, the town hall in St Mark’s Square in Gradec was especially impressive, with its façade adorned by a colonnade of eight Corinthian columns bearing high entablature, illuminated

13 The old historical parts of Zagreb on two opposite hills, united in 1850: Gradec was the seat of government, Kaptol was the ecclesiastical centre for the Catholic Church, and Harmica was a new square connected to the main street Ilica. In 1850, all historical parts were united in the new city of Zagreb.

14 Antoljak “Doček Franje I,” 175–177, after Bishop Vrhovac’s *Diarium*.

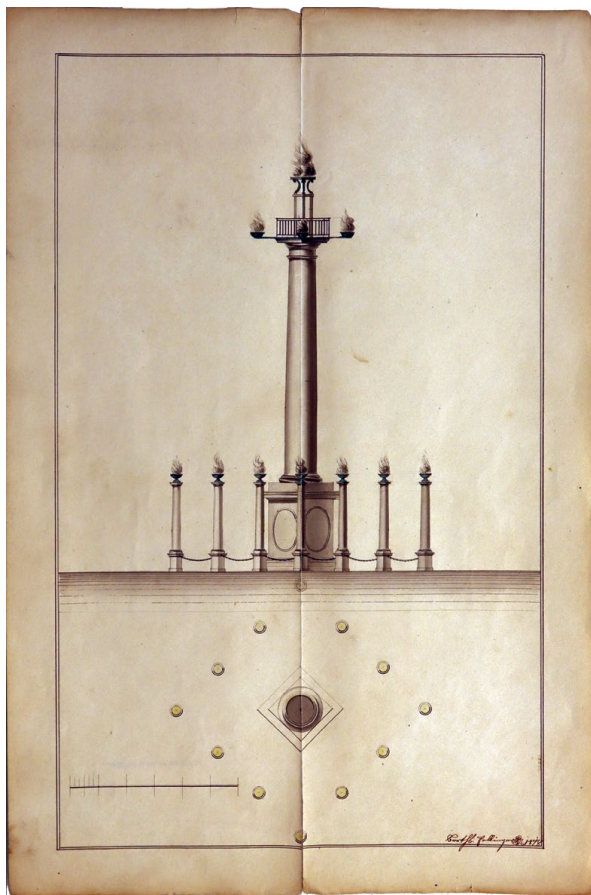
15 Velimir Deželić, *Iz njemačkog Zagreba. Prinos kulturnoj povijesti Hrvata* [From German Zagreb. Contribution to the Cultural History of the Croats] (Zagreb: Tiskara Antun Scholz, 1901), 21–22.

16 Krmpotić, *Car Franjo I.*, 604.

17 “Alles zu beschreiben, was beyde Städte leisteten, den Eindruck zu schildern, den jeder Gegenstand auf das Aug machte, ist unmöglich: dem Mahler selbst würde es nicht gelingen, das Kühne, das Erhabene, die Pracht auszudrücken,” Bubenhofen, *Beschreibung*, 31.

18 The shortened descriptions of decorations were published in Dragutin Hirc, *Stari Zagreb II, Kaptol i Donji grad* [Old Zagreb II, Kaptol and Lower Town] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2008), 63–74.





**Fig. 3.** Bartol Felbinger, *Project for Column on the Harmica Square*, DAZ, from *Acta Politica* (1818), inv. no. 2261, State Archives in Zagreb.

by as many as 8,500 lamps and decorated with portraits of the imperial couple, the coats of arms of Croatia and Hungary and urns with flames (**fig. 1**). A colonnade of Ionic columns was erected in front of the county building on the same square, flanked by temples with fire burning in front of them. In the middle was a triumphal arch decorated with a motif of the Sun and the inscription *Patri et matri Patriae / Devotissimi Status et ordines Comitatus Zagrabienensis*.<sup>19</sup> The Academy building was illuminated by 2,000 lamps and decorated with mythological depictions and inscriptions, including an image of a column rising from a rock and bearing imperial insignia. Bubenhofen's description of the decoration is also an important source for the history of the city's development. For example, he wrote what is probably the first description of the newly renovated city promenade on the city walls (Svirca/Svirča, opened in 1813, and later known as the South Promenade or the Strossmayer Promenade). For this occasion, the entrance in the city walls to the promenade was marked by an ephemeral double-arched triumphal arch flanked by engaged Corinthian columns, erected on the site of the former Dverce Gate, demolished a few years earlier.

The access terrace was illuminated by 10,000 coloured lamps, and the walls along the promenade were decorated with tree-shaped lighting with thirteen larger lamps in between.<sup>20</sup> All of the city gates were decorated, with openings flanked by pilasters and entablature, thus creating the motif of a triumphal arch. In front of the *Frauentor* (Women's or North Gate) there was a forested grove of 800 trees. The bell tower of the Cathedral of St. Stephen stood out in Kaptol, with its dome lit by coloured balloons. The Kaptol Gate and the cathedral portal were also decorated, while a temple was erected along the Kaptol walls.

Bubenhofen's account reveals the names of the authors of decorations and lighting: County engineer Joseph Szeman designed the decorations of the county building (triumphal arch and temples), decorations commissioned by the city magistrate (the high column in Harmica Square, the Triumphal arch, City Hall, Svirča gate, and the grove between the North Gate and the Stone Gate) "were mostly made according to the drawings and instructions of Mr Felbinger, master builder,"<sup>21</sup> while Gigl was hired for Kaptol.

<sup>19</sup> Bubenhofen, *Beschreibung*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Designs for lighting are in *Acta politica*, inv. no. 2261, HR-DAZG.

<sup>21</sup> "Die Hauptgegenstände welche der kögl. Magistrat errichten ließ, als die hohe Säule auf der Harmicza, die Triumphpforte, das Rathaus, die Svirca, die Thore, das Wäldchen vom Frauenthor bis zum steineren Thor sind meistens nach der Zeichnung und Angabe des Herrn Baumeister Felbinger errichtet worden," Bubenhofen, *Beschreibung*, 25.

The political programme and goals of the ruler's visit were directly implied by the inscriptions, especially those written in German: The emperor is the father of the nation, and loyal citizens celebrate him and the monarchy. The inscriptions conveyed a sense of the historical moment and the new role of the emperor in post-Napoleonic Europe, celebrating him as a peacemaker and liberator of Europe, as stated in those on the house of the city brewer Mr Albertoli, a Swiss national: *Viva il Vincitore di Leipzig! Viva il Liberatore dell'Europa! Pace. Viva tutta l'Imperial casa di Austria. Viva il Trattato di Parisii.*<sup>22</sup> Political messages were also mediated by ceremonies, so the play and prologue in German were monarchically faithful. But other inscriptions and decorations conveyed the message of national awakening: The Croatian inscription on the house of Franciška Vrhovac, printer Novosel's widow and Bishop Vrhovac's sister, as well as the joined coats of arms of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia placed on Kušević's house, reflected the desire for unification of Croatian territories expected from the emperor.<sup>23</sup> Bishop Vrhovac wrote a poem and the dance programme in Croatian, which was an important precursor to the national revival that would begin in the 1830s.

## MODELS FOR THE ZAGREB DECORATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPERIAL/ROYAL ENTRANCES INTO THE CITY

The politically important programme and elaborate decorations for such an important event were naturally not left to the city authorities, but were created according to models and instructions from the centre of the Monarchy, so they need to be considered in the broader context of visual representations of rulers and ceremonial entrances to cities. The ceremonial-performative entry into the city – *Adventus* – after the coronation of the emperor, by which the ruler takes power, was carefully elaborated in the Early Modern period.<sup>24</sup> This lavish model of representation, which included a complex programme and decorations, was the bearer of a strong message and, at the same time, a means of establishing political legitimacy. Adopted from this tradition, *adventus* was still performed in new empire, and this term was included in the title of the official description of the Zagreb ceremony: *Urbem Zagrabiensem Adventus*.<sup>25</sup>

The programme and visual representation of rulers during these visits was shaped in the centre of power, and all ceremonies followed a set pattern that

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22 Bubenhofen, *Beschreibung*, 12.

23 Hirc, *Stari Zagreb*, 71; Antoljak "Doček Franje I," 178.

24 The complex ceremony of *Adventus Imperatoris* had its origin in the ceremonial return of emperors to ancient Rome after military victories, which was appropriated by Habsburg rulers and popes; particularly lavish ceremonies developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Relevant literature is listed in Marion Philip, *Ehrenpforte für Kaiser Karl V. Festdekorationen als Medien politischer Kommunikation* [Triumphal Arch for Emperor Charles V. Festive Decorations as Media of Political Communication] (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2011).

25 *Officiosa Relatio circa Illuminationem & Solemnitates occasione (...) ad hanc (...), Urbem Zagrabiensem Adventus Anni 1818*, see Jurman-Karaman, "Zagreb u klasicističkom dekoru," 183.



**Fig. 4.** Johann Schönberg, *Feyerlicher Einzug unseres Kaisers Franz in seine Residenzstadt Wien, am 15. Juny 1814* (Festive Entry of our Emperor Franz into his Residential City of Vienna, on June 15, 1814), 1814, inv. no. 57791, Wien Museum, accessed November 28, 2023, <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/515047/>.



was established in festivities after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1814. As Pieter Judson points out, these festivities were astonishingly similar in their programmes and decorations, although held in geographically and culturally very different places. He also emphasizes their similarities to festivities in Vienna.<sup>26</sup> This can be stated also for the festivities in Zagreb: The decorations and ephemeral architecture were created after the model of festivities in Vienna. To be precise, they were based on the decorations on the occasion of the ceremonial entry of the emperor into Vienna after the signing of the peace treaty in Paris, which took place on June 15, 1814 (**fig. 4**). The established iconography at this event became the official model for imperial representation in the first period of the reign of Francis I. Therefore, the carefully elaborated programme of the visit to Zagreb, as the end of a long journey to new lands, minutely followed the models of both decorations and lighting that had been established in Vienna, and the loyalty of the city's inhabitants to the emperor was repeatedly emphasized. The imperial journey and entry into Vienna were described by Joseph Rossi (1775–1838) in his work *Denkbuch für Fürst und Vaterland* (Memorial Book for Prince and Fatherland),<sup>27</sup> which also included printed illustrations of decorations, while descriptions of the entry were published in numerous newspaper articles. The emperor's entry into Vienna after his return from Paris thus represented the new-old *Adventus* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which incorporated numerous elements from earlier ceremonial entrances of Habsburg rulers. This is especially evident in the function and the design of the triumphal arch, seen as a key point for marking the entrance

26 Pieter M. Judson, *Povijest Habsburškog carstva* [The Habsburg Empire: A New History] (Zagreb: Sandorf, 2018), 115.

27 Joseph Rossi, *Denkbuch für Fürst und Vaterland* [Memorial Book for Prince and Fatherland] (Wien: In Commission bey J. B. Wallishauser, 1815), Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Digital.



Fig. 5. *Triumphforte* [Triumphal Arch], in Joseph Rossi, *Denkbuch für Fürst und Vaterland* (Wien, 1815), inv. no. 185, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Digital, Vienna, accessed November 28, 2023, [https://digital.onb.ac.at/OnbViewer/viewer.faces?doc=ABO\\_%2BZ173217101](https://digital.onb.ac.at/OnbViewer/viewer.faces?doc=ABO_%2BZ173217101).

to the city and the symbolic-ceremonial framework of the entrance itself. Decorations designed in the Neoclassical style occupied an important place in Viennese architecture of that period. Among the many authors of decorations, prominent names include Johann Ferdinand Hetzendorf von Hohenberg (1733–1816), who was director of the architecture school at the Vienna academy and the designer of the triumphal arch at Kärntnertor (fig. 5), and Ludwig Gabriel Freiherr von Remy (1776–1851), who created numerous decorations for city palaces. The motifs and design models for the Zagreb decorations clearly refer to Viennese examples, or rather to their graphic renderings. This is especially evident in the motif of the colonnade with high entablature and a triumphal arch in the middle flanked by temples on the façade of the county building (not preserved), similar to the *allegorisches Gebäude* that had been installed in front of the parliament of Lower Austria, as recorded in *Landhause der niederösterreichischen Herren Stände* (Country Houses of the Lower Austrian

Estates) by L. Remy.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the most important ceremonial element, the triumphal arch in Harmica Square, represented a simplified and smaller repetition of the triumphal arch at Vienna's Kärntnertor.

Once established as official decorations for the emperor, these design models and stylistic choices were repeated in the decorations installed on the occasion of later imperial travels, such as the Neoclassical decorations in Prague in 1836.<sup>29</sup> The decorations and lighting followed the same patterns in Vienna, Zagreb and in Prague, especially in the layout of the triumphal arches and decorations on the town hall. The colonnade and lavish decorations between columns and the baldachin with a crown/coat of arms in its centre were evident in Vienna and Zagreb as well as in Prague on the building of Old Town hall.

This also opens the question of the authorship of the Zagreb decorations, previously often published as Felbinger's work.<sup>30</sup> However, it is questionable whether all of the drawings of the series preserved in the State Archives in Zagreb can really be claimed to be the original work of Felbinger – Bubenhofen

28 See Rossi, *Denkbuch*, 67 and Figure 189.

29 Taťána Petrasová, "Slavobrány, ohňostroje a triumfální architektura" [Gates, Fireworks and Triumphant Architecture], in *V mužském mozku. Sborník k 70. narozeninám Petra Wittlicha*, eds. Lenka Bydžovská and Roman Prahel (Dolní Břežany: Scriptorium, 2002), 297–308.

30 The most important contributions, in chronological order, are: Lelja Dobronić, *Bartol Felbinger i zagrebački graditelji njegova doba* [Bartol Felbinger and Zagreb Master Builders of His Time] (Zagreb: Društvo historičara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 1971), 81–83; Draginja Jurman-Karaman, *Bartolomej Felbinger (1785–1871), zagrebački klasicistički graditelj* [Bartolomej Felbinger (1785–1871), Zagreb's Neoclassical Master Builder], *Bulletin JAZU*, no. 1, 55/56 (1984–85): 15–37; Snješka Knežević and Aleksander Laslo, "Klasicizam/biedermeier u Zagrebu" [Neoclassicism/Biedermeier in Zagreb], *Čovjek i prostor: arhitektura, kiparstvo, slikarstvo i primijenjena umjetnost*, no. 38, 1/2=454/455 (1991): 31–32; Jasna Galjer, "Arhitektura u Hrvatskoj u vrijeme bidermajera" [Architecture in Croatia during the Biedermeier Period], in *Bidermajer u Hrvatskoj 1815–1848*, ed. Vladimir Maleković (Zagreb: Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, 1997), 338–340.

claims that the decorations “were mostly made according to the drawings and instructions of Mr. Felbinger”<sup>31</sup> – or rather his adaptation of the models of decorations and ephemeral architecture from Viennese festivities. The drawings of the decorations that are site-specific, such as decorations on city gates (Mesnička Street gate, the Stone Gate) and tree-shaped lighting on the south promenade, are undoubtedly attributable to Felbinger. Compared to the drawings of the most politically and symbolically important decorations and more detailed projects – the triumphal arch and column in Harmica square but also the Dverce gate – the aforementioned drawings are rather simple and lack volume modelling. In style, quality and manner of execution, the drawings of the most important decorations suggest the hand of a trained draughtsman, skilful in volume modelling, shading and attentive to details, especially in the rendering of capitals and motifs of flames. In my opinion, these drawings indicate a closer connection with the Viennese circle of architects, rather than the local architects.

The ephemeral architecture and decorations in Zagreb in 1818, created with elements of the classical style – Ionic and Doric columns – were the most prominent examples of “mature Neoclassical style” at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Croatian architecture.<sup>32</sup> These decorations, especially the ephemeral architecture, had a considerable influence on the development of architecture and the acceptance and spread of Neoclassicism in Zagreb and north-west Croatia. Some of the protagonists of festivities had an important role in this process: Bartol Felbinger adopted the Neoclassical style in his own projects, especially in his early works, probably most present in the façade of the pharmacy building in Kamenita Street (1823), where he applied a triumphal arch, i.e. four fluted engaged columns and entablature. Similarly, Bishop Vrhovac renovated the castle in Stubički Golubovec with Neoclassical garlands and other decorations on the façade.

## CONCLUSION

The arrival of the ruling couple to Zagreb in 1818 made a great impression, as recorded in contemporary descriptions and reports. For a few days, and especially on the evening of June 28, impressive decorations and lighting turned Zagreb into a magical stage for a festive event. The lavish, complex programme of the ceremonies was created to emphasize loyalty to the crown and to present the new emperor as a bearer of peace and caring father of

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31 Bubenhofen, *Beschreibung*, 25.

32 According to Andela Horvat, there are three phases of Neoclassical style in architecture in Croatia between 1780 and 1830 – baroque classicism, the mature Neoclassical style and early romanticist Classicism. Andela Horvat, “Barok u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj” [The Baroque in Inland Croatia], in *Barok u Hrvatskoj*, eds. Slavko Goldstein, Milan Mirić, Vera Čičin-Šain and Željko Ivančić (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1982), 62–63. On periodization and terminology see also Milan Pelc, “Periodizacija hrvatske povijesti umjetnosti i klasicizam” [Periodization of Art History in Croatia and Neoclassicism], in *Klasicizam u Hrvatskoj* [Neoclassicism in Croatia], ed. Irena Kraševac (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2016), 11–22.

the nation. The models for such festivities were established in Vienna on the occasion of the emperor's return from Paris and victory over Napoleon in 1814. The decorations and ephemeral architecture in Neoclassical style, theatrical plays, and published descriptions that accompanied the ceremony of the solemn entry of the ruler into the city, as well as the people's welcome, became a model followed in other cities and other parts of Austrian empire. In Zagreb in 1818, the city was decorated with Neoclassical motifs, facades of the important building were displays of Neoclassical ephemeral architecture by city architects Felbinger, Szeman and Gigl, while sumptuous lighting transformed the city into a fantastic stage. For some of the decorations they adopted Viennese models – the triumphal arch and column on Harmica square – while other, site-specific decorations in the city (the city gates, the south promenade) were designed by city architects. These Neoclassical decorations designed for the imperial visit to Zagreb greatly influenced the rapid spread of classical architectural motifs in Zagreb and north-west Croatia.





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## LOOKING BEYOND VIENNA 1900: THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CROATIAN SECESSION

### Abstract

*This paper analyses the political framework of the Croatian Secession as a contribution to research on the relationship between the Secession and patriotism in the fin de siècle Habsburg Monarchy, inaugurated by Carl Schorske. The main proposition is that the specific political and cultural context of fin de siècle Croatia affected the intellectual framing of new, secessionist ideas in such a way that they were necessarily embedded in national(ist) thinking. Therefore, even though they shared common philosophical and stylistic postulates, the Croatian Secession cannot be seen as an imitation of its Viennese counterpart, nor can their mutual relationship be analysed without taking into account the different intellectual, political and cultural contexts. This paper thus advocates the expansion of the spatial perspective of fin de siècle Habsburg studies in which, more often than not, Vienna served as a central and paradigmatic focal point.*

### INTRODUCTION

In his famous book on *fin de siècle* Vienna, Carl Schorske (1915–2015) briefly discussed the relationship between the Vienna Secession and the Austrian government's reform project based on economic and cultural progress. Even though the Viennese secessionists proclaimed a sharp break with the traditional liberal bourgeois culture of their "fathers", which played a dominant role in Austrian society during most of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they soon found themselves under the patronage of the state. The new Austrian government – the *Beamtenministerium* – led by Ernest von Koerber and installed in 1900 after a prolonged parliamentary crisis imposed by mutually combating nationalisms (namely Czech and German), saw in the Secession a new supra-national form of art that could function as a unifying agent in creating a single Austrian cultural identity, a *Kunstvolk*. This was an attempt to circumvent the nationalist political deadlock by advocating economic and cultural reform which could appease the warring factions through mutual self-interest. Therefore, the Austrian government opted to sponsor the secessionist movement generously, as it was seen as being truly cosmopolitan and thus bringing contemporary European currents into the Habsburg Monarchy, reaffirming traditional Habsburg universalism in a modern spirit. In turn, the secessionists openly advocated for a universalist Austrian culture, underscored with noticeable Habsburg loyalism. One of them, Berta Szeps-Zuckermandl, claimed that her commitment to the movement was "a question of defending



a purely Austrian culture, a form of art that would weld together all the characteristics of our multitude of constituent peoples into a new and proud unity.”<sup>1</sup> Yet things did not go as planned, and the new art project added fuel to the fire of old divisions, while also creating new opponents along the way, such as the antisemitic and antimodernist Christian Socials, led by the mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger. This eventually resulted in the abandonment of the government’s project to use the Vienna Secession as a tool of cultural politics aimed at unifying the Empire’s diverse subjects.<sup>2</sup>

One of the major criticisms directed at Schorske, or rather the research paradigm his book inaugurated, was aimed at the tendency to look at Vienna as being paradigmatic for the Habsburg Monarchy as a whole. Schorske’s critics have shown in more recent studies that the situation might be quite the opposite: Vienna could be seen more as an exception rather than the rule when *fin de siècle* Austria is concerned. For example, Pieter Judson has questioned the claim, based on a Schorskean reading of *fin de siècle* Vienna, that the new political movements, subsumed under the term “illiberal collectivism”, brought about the demise of liberalism in Central Europe, which could not adjust to the circumstances of new, mass politics. A look outside of Vienna, and especially beyond its parliamentary politics, shows us that liberalism successfully interacted with nationalism and that it also participated in mass politics, providing the new movements with fundamental political concepts concerning citizenship and nationhood.<sup>3</sup>

If such was the case with the Austrian half of the Monarchy, then there is more than enough reason to believe that the situation diverged from the Vienna paradigm even more in its Hungarian counterpart. In this paper, I explore the political framework of the Secession in *fin de siècle* Croatia as a small contribution to the research topic inaugurated by Carl Schorske. Can we interpret the Croatian Secession using the analytical tools of the Schorskean paradigm? Was it also a result of a retreat from the political to the cultural on the part of the younger bourgeois generation as a reaction to the advances of nationalism and mass politics? Did it also espouse an explicit or implicit cosmopolitan and antinationalist outlook, combined with Austrian or Habsburg patriotism and loyalism? Or did the different political and cultural context lead the Croatian Secession to adopt a distinct political and ideological framework, perhaps one more in line with Judson’s proposal? The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Croatian and the Vienna Secessions were not discrete but entangled historical phenomena. Therefore, the multiple modalities of intellectual and cultural transfer will have to be discussed as well,

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1 Quoted in Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 237.

2 For the whole argument see *ibid.*, 236–243.

3 Pieter Judson, “Rethinking the Liberal Legacy,” in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, ed. Steven Beller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 57–79. For different aspects of the critique of the Schorskean paradigm, see the other contributions in this book.

contributing to the debate on the relationship between the ideas and their uses by various historical actors in changing social, political, and cultural contexts.<sup>4</sup>

## SECESSION IN THE CROSSFIRE OF POLITICS

The political and cultural context of *fin de siècle* Croatia was different than that of Vienna.<sup>5</sup> Croatian art in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was heavily influenced by and shaped through the national movement, which began with the Illyrian movement and was further developed by its successors, so it followed the romanticist-realist stylistic nexus which blended academic aesthetics, bourgeois tastes and nationalist aims. Cultural institutions were dominated by the Croatian bourgeois elite, whose political power did not match its cultural capital.<sup>6</sup> The government, led from 1883 to 1903 by Count Khuen Héderváry, a capable politician close to the Hungarian liberals, but also to the imperial court, pursued a successful combination of implementing economic and political measures aimed at advocating Hungarian interests in Croatia by encroaching on the provisions of the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise, and cultural politics promoting Habsburg loyalism. The idea was to show that the Croatian nation could prosper under Habsburg rule and its current position within the Monarchy. Investments in high culture and educational institutions, such as the School forum or the new building of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, were used to obscure the repressive policies that were employed against the opposition, the pressure put on the bureaucracy to ensure support for the government, and electoral gerrymandering.<sup>7</sup> So it might seem, at least rhetorically, that Khuen's cultural politics resembled the proclaimed aims of the Koerber administration, which came years later. In reality, though, it was much more politically opportunistic and focused on promoting the material and political interests of certain dependent groups that supported his government. And just like in the case of Koerber, it was met with staunch criticism and even moral panic based on fears of Magyarization and denationalization

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4 For a further discussion on this topic see Nikola Tomašegović, "Transnational Approaches and *fin de siècle* Modernisms: The Case of the Croatian Modernist Movement," *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, no. 1 (2020): 173–188.

5 I use "*fin de siècle* Croatia" as a historiographical, not as a geographical or administrative term. The Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia was administratively divided between Cisleithania and Transleithania in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so the term "Civil Croatia and Slavonia" is mostly used to designate the territory under the jurisdiction of the Land Government in Zagreb, while Dalmatia was a separate province in Cisleithania. However, it was precisely the cultural sphere that functioned as a unifying force in Croatian nation-building processes. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Zagreb was already established as the national cultural and intellectual centre, so it was a place of convergence of various nationally conscious agents from other regions as well, including Dalmatia, which are mentioned and discussed in this paper (e.g. Vlaho Bukovac). The term "*fin de siècle* Croatia" thus denotes both the political idea of the "virtual Triune Kingdom" present at the time and, primarily, the shared concept of national culture.

6 For a good overview, see Ivo Frangeš, "Realizam" [Realism], in *Povijest hrvatske književnosti, vol. 4: Ilirizam i realizam*, eds. Slavko Goldstein et al. (Zagreb: Mladost, 1975), 219–488. On the development of the visual arts in 19<sup>th</sup> century Croatia see Grgo Gamulin, *Hrvatsko slikarstvo XIX. stoljeća* [Croatian Painting in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century], 2 vols. (Zagreb, Naprijed: 1995).

7 Iskra Iveljić, "Kulturna politika u Bansknoj Hrvatskoj 19. stoljeća" [Cultural Politics in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Civil Croatia], *Historijski zbornik*, no. 2 (2016): 362–366. Jaroslav Šidak et al., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860–1914*. [History of the Croatian People, 1860–1914] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968), 121–125.

spread by the Croatian opposition. Two main parties comprised the core of the Croatian opposition: the Yugoslav oriented Neodvisna narodna stranka (The Independent National Party) and the Croatian exclusivist Stranka prava (The Party of Rights). Bitter enemies before, by the early 1890s they had established an alliance, motivated by the need to stand up to the Khuen regime, which resulted in a common programme of the Croatian opposition in 1894. They were, however, unable to cope with the political pressures applied by the government, and the opposition recorded a series of consecutive electoral defeats, worsened by mutual bickering and fragmentation.<sup>8</sup> Thus, in the Croatian case, it was the “fathers” who found refuge in the confines of culture amidst their political defeat, and this fact was decisive for the formation of the new, modernist and secessionist movements led by the youth.

Appearing in 1897, the Croatian Secession immediately found itself caught in the crossfire between the government and the opposition. Yet, as Croatian art and cultural institutions were led mostly by the oppositional elites, they felt more threatened by the secessionist challenge. And the challenge *was* eventually aimed at them. Although questions of aesthetics cannot be discarded as irrelevant, one of the major impetuses for the emergence of the Croatian Secession was the opposition of the young artists to the almost unquestionable authority of Isidor Kršnjavi, head of the Department of Religion and Education in Khuen’s government and a leading figure of his cultural politics. Although he was forced to leave his post in 1896 as a scapegoat for the student demonstrations during Emperor Franz Josef’s visit to Zagreb in October 1895, Kršnjavi was still one of the most influential figures in Croatian cultural affairs.<sup>9</sup> Founder of the Društvo umjetnosti (The Art Society), he was responsible for gathering in Zagreb the group of young Croatian visual artists, led by Vlaho Bukovac, who formed the core of the Croatian Secession. His rigorous overseeing of their work and lack of artistic freedom led the artists, especially Bukovac, to clash with Kršnjavi, and to establish their own society, the Društvo hrvatskih umjetnika (The Society of Croatian Artists).<sup>10</sup> The secessionists found new allies in the nascent modernists, who were building their own movement at the same time, and, from that moment on, new aesthetic, philosophical and artistic concepts and ideas were developed to provide an intellectual and ideological framework for the Croatian Secession, leading directly to a battle with the representatives of the traditional aesthetic and artistic views, which were preponderant in the ranks of the Croatian opposition. The Croatian Secession thus began with the

8 Rene Lovrenčić, *Geneza politike ‘novog kursa’* [The Genesis of the “New Course” Politics] (Zagreb: Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1972), 53–101.

9 For an analysis of the Croatian student demonstration of 1895 see Sarah Kent, “State Ritual and Ritual Parody: Croatian Student Protest and the Limits of Loyalty at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, eds. Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 162–177.

10 On Kršnjavi see Marina Bregovac Pisk and Kristian Gotić (eds.), *Iso Kršnjavi – veliki utemeljitelj* [Iso Kršnjavi – the Great Founder] (Zagreb: Hrvatski povijesni muzej, 2012) and Olga Maruševski, *Iso Kršnjavi kao graditelj* [Iso Kršnjavi as a Builder] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2009).

clash with Kršnjavi as a proponent of the government, but it soon found itself fending off attacks launched by intellectuals close to the opposition.

The Croatian government and ruling circles sensed the opportunity in this bickering between the proponents of the new and the old art – the so called *Mladi* (the Young) and *Stari* (the Old). Just like Koerber, they morally and materially supported the secessionist artists, even though their plans were not so elaborate as to promote a new, universalist paradigm of art.<sup>11</sup> Count Khuen's reasoning was more political and pragmatic. His support for the new art was a sort of a win-win situation for his government: if the Secession proved successful, it would be easy to underline the government's support and to proclaim it an achievement of its cultural politics; if not, at least it would cause bickering and distrust within Croatian oppositional circles. On December 15, 1898, the Ban opened the first exhibition of the Croatian Secession – *The Croatian Salon* – in Zagreb, in the new Art Pavilion, which was first built as the exposition space for the Croatian artists at the Hungarian Millennial Exhibition of 1896.<sup>12</sup> Cunningly, he saw an opportunity to incorporate this event into his political narrative. In his opening address, Khuen hailed the young artists for their criticism, noting that it was precisely this criticism that enabled progress, in which Croatia was no longer a passive participant but an active factor – with the current exhibition serving as the main proof of this claim.<sup>13</sup> The subtle message was, of course, that his government supported this progress of national culture, while the opposition actively opposed it.

From the beginning, the Croatian Secession was thus intertwined with national politics and the question of the desired direction of the development of national culture. Unlike Vienna, where the emergence of mass politics had already caused the fragmentation and diversification of party politics, these processes were just starting to pick up their pace in Croatia. So, the secessionists found themselves caught in the crossfire between the two dominant political forces: the government and the opposition. The debate that soon emerged was therefore on the surface about questions of aesthetics and style, but it was underpinned by the crucial concept of national culture, and it sublimated the political conflicts of the time.

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11 For example, among the founding members of the secessionist Society of Croatian Artists were Ivo Mallin, one of the most important officials in Khuen's government and Milutin Kukuljević, the great county prefect of the Bjelovar-Križevci County, politically close to Khuen. "Društvo hrv. umjetnika" [Society of Croatian Artists], *Hrvatski salon*, vols. 1 and 2 (1898): 10, 23.

12 For an interesting analysis of the Croatian participation in this exhibition see Rachel Rossner, "The secessionists are the Croats. They've been given their own pavilion...": Vlaho Bukovac's Battle for Croatian Autonomy at the 1896 Millennial Exhibition in Budapest," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, no. 1 (Spring 2007), accessed November 21, 2021, <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring07/141-qthe-secessionists-are-the-croats-theyve-been-given-their-own-pavilion-q-vlaho-bukovacs-battle-for-croatian-autonomy-at-the-1896-millennial-exhibition-in-budapest>. See also Lea Ukrainčik (ed.), *Hrvatski salon, Zagreb 1898.: 100 godina Umjetničkog paviljona* [The Croatian Salon, Zagreb 1898: 100 Years of the Art Pavilion] (Zagreb: Umjetnički paviljon u Zagrebu, 1999).

13 "Svečano otvorenje umjetničke izložbe i umjetničkog paviljona dne 15. prosinca 1898." [The Opening Ceremony of the Art Exhibition and the Art Pavilion on December 15, 1898], *Hrvatski salon*, vol. 2 (1898): 22.

## SECESSION AND PATRIOTISM

Even before the first secessionist exhibition took place in Zagreb, a harsh debate emerged between the advocates of the new and the old art. Franjo Ksaver Kuhač, a traditionalist musicologist, launched a rabid attack on what he called “artistic secessionism” and “literary decadentism”.<sup>14</sup> For him, this new art was nothing but a foreign, German import aimed at poisoning and destroying the Croatian youth and culture in general:

It is not enough, that Croatia has to fight with various foreign elements in our fatherland, so that it preserves its nationality and its survival, but also in the most recent times some domestic current appeared, which strives to completely corrupt our youth, to rip out from their hearts the sense of morality, religion, patriotism and other noble feelings and characteristics ... This coveting for originality was imported in Croatia by foreign agitators, who aim to hinder Croats in their natural development, to poison their hearts and brains and find *Absatzgebiet* for their products that mock every morality and reason. To be able to accomplish that Croats become slaves of the sins of others, they strove to win over Croatian writers and painters.<sup>15</sup>

The debate was thus framed primarily in national terms from the beginning. The foremost question was whether new, secessionist art was or was not essentially Croatian. For the antimodernists, traditional aesthetics were intertwined with patriotism. The classic bourgeois ideals of beauty and morality were bound up with the idea of the Homeland in an artistic paradigm that demanded sublimated and idealized representations of reality. The aim was to uplift the patriotic spirit and to correct individual moral deviations that could plague the nation. To question these traditional norms thus represented, in the eyes of the national cultural elite, an attack on established patriotic values. The polemic between the opposing philosophical, aesthetic, and artistic ideas was therefore underpinned by a debate on the dominant meaning of the concepts of nation, national culture, and patriotism. It became of utmost importance to show that the new artistic ideas represented a new impetus, and not a hinderance, for the national development.

Ivo Pilar, a young adherent of the new art, responded to Kuhač in a series of articles (later published as a pamphlet) on the Secession, which he takes as a general name denoting all new artistic currents in both literature and the visual arts. Where Kuhač saw danger, Pilar saw opportunity. For him, the new art which had been developing in Croatia was not a concoction of foreign agents aimed at destroying Croatian culture, but an expression of its natural and historical progress. The fact that the Secession appeared so early in Croatia –

14 Franjo Ksaver Kuhač, *Anarkija u hrvatskoj književnosti i umjetnosti: poslanica umjetničkim secesionistima i književnim dekadentima* [The Anarchy in Croatian Literature and Art: An Epistle to the Artistic Secessionists and Literary Decadents] (Zagreb: self-published, 1898).

15 Ibid., 4. All translations are by the author.

basically at the same time as in Vienna – signalled that Croatian culture had finally caught up with Europe. A new phase was thus emerging in Croatian cultural life in which art would not be measured by standards of its or its author's presumed patriotism, but by its artistic value and with world-class criteria in mind. That is why the traditionalists felt threatened. It was not Croatian culture as such, but traditionalists' monopoly in the matters of culture that was in peril:

But nowhere should we be more wary of conservatism as in art... Because behind conservatism always lurks stagnation and regression, and underneath it hides one-third ignorance and spiritual poverty, and two-thirds the interests of those who have until now been *beati possidentes*, i.e. those who no longer have moral or intellectual strength to change and refresh, but desperately cling to the old and defend it by all means necessary, because they feel that with it decays their significance, influence and power.<sup>16</sup>

If Khuen was subtle and vague in his praise for the Secession's role in the advancement of national culture in his opening speech, the organizers of the *Croatian Salon* went out of their way precisely to underscore this point. Ksaver Šandor Gjalski, a writer and one of the key role models for the literary modernist movement in Croatia, penned a letter to the secessionist artists which was published as a preface to the publication accompanying their exhibition. Contrary to the fears expounded by the members of the older generation that the new art posed a threat to the Croatian culture and thus for its national being, Gjalski, "as a nationalist",<sup>17</sup> saw it as something to be happy about, because it placed Croatian art on a par with the art of the most advanced countries of the world. "And with that," he praised the secessionists, "you not only serve art itself, but also assuredly contribute to your homeland, your people and their cultural efforts."<sup>18</sup> In other words, if the Secession fights for the freedom of expression and serves art, then it serves the nation as well, because today only great art can contribute to the progress of national culture.

This was the key argument of one of the main ideologues of Croatian *fin de siècle* modernism, Milivoj Dežman, who wrote the programmatic article for the *Croatian Salon*. It is worth noting that the Croatian Secession worked in close collaboration with the Croatian modernist movement, the Movement of the Young. This movement emerged around the same time as the Secession and was led by student and youth groups in Prague, Vienna and Zagreb. Disillusioned with the state of Croatian politics and culture, these groups turned to new intellectual currents which they observed, especially in Prague and Vienna. They appropriated new, modernist ideas and political methods, modified them, and applied them to the Croatian situation. Their

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16 Ivo Pilar, *Secesija: studija o modernoj umjetnosti* [The Secession: A Study on Modern Art] (Zagreb: Tisak Dioničke tiskare, 1898), 34.

17 Šandor Gjalski, "Uvod" [Preface], *Hrvatski salon*, vol. 1 (1898): 1.

18 Ibid.



critique was primarily directed toward the Croatian oppositional elites in the area of politics and culture. The modernists chastised the opposition for their passivity, for clinging to anachronistic political concepts, such as the historical state right, and for losing sight of the Yugoslav ideas of their predecessors.<sup>19</sup> Just like their Czech role models in the *Česká moderna* manifesto, they called for a rejuvenation of national politics and culture based on the acceptance of modern social and political movements, the idea of strong individuality and the freedom of expression.<sup>20</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the modernists and the secessionists saw in each other natural allies. The secessionist Society of Croatian Artists also included the Klub hrvatskih književnika (the Croatian Writer's Club) which was home to modernist inclined writers and intellectuals. The modernists therefore functioned as ideologues, theoreticians, propagators and polemicists of the Secession, whose high-profile events and publications in turn served as a platform for the popularization of modernist ideas.

In his programmatic article titled *Our Aspirations*, Dežman discarded the accusations of foreign influence made against the modernists and the secessionists as hypocrisy because Croatian culture had constantly observed what was going on abroad and profited from foreign appropriations, from the Illyrian movement onwards. The young modernists and artists respected the achievements of their elders, but tradition must not be used to the detriment of progress. No one can usurp the right to judge others on their patriotism. The secessionists should be given a chance to prove their worth. If the freedom of artistic expression is stifled, if everything new was discarded from the start as unpatriotic and dangerous, then one could only expect stagnation, and Croatian culture would truly be in jeopardy. Freedom is thus the only prerequisite for the advancement of culture; let the secessionists create, and time will tell whether their art contributed to Croatian culture or not: "If we now look for our role models not only in the people, but also outside of the homeland, are we traitors because of that? It is asked whether it is useful or harmful? Did not our ancestors have to at least partially trample on tradition by making a new step? One thing remained the same in all epochs – and that is the love for the homeland – and who can deny us that?"<sup>21</sup>

This principal argument, that the Secession was beneficial to Croatian art and culture, was demonstrated at the international exhibitions. In 1899, the Exhibition of art and arts and crafts of the peoples of Austria-Hungary was held in Saint Petersburg, organized by the Russian imperial society for the

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19 The Young envisioned themselves as being part of a continuous generational tradition of the national movement. The first generation, the "grandfathers", were the Illyrians and their immediate successors, primarily the founders and leaders of Yugoslavism (Franjo Rački, Josip Juraj Strossmayer and others). The second generation were the "fathers", the political elite of their own age, whom they criticized for abandoning the ideals of the "grandfathers". And the third generation, the "children", were of course the Young themselves, set on a mission to restore the true ideals of the "grandfathers".

20 For a broader discussion on this topic see Tomašegović, "Transnational Approaches," 176–183.

21 Ivanov [Milivoj Dežman], "Naše težnje" [Our Aspirations], *Hrvatski salon*, vol. 1 (1898): 8.

advancement of art. The exhibition was divided – just like the Monarchy – into two parts: Austrian and Hungarian. One of the organizers of the Croatian part of the exhibition, a young modernist named Dušan Plavšić, claimed that the general negative reviews of the exhibition stemmed from this basic organizational principle, which caused political concerns to dominate artistic ones.<sup>22</sup> Yet Croatian art, which was exhibited in a separate room under the Hungarian part of the exhibition (mirroring its political sub-dualist arrangement), received critical acclaim and overshadowed its Viennese (*Künstlerhaus*, though, not the Secession) and Hungarian counterparts. In this way, the successes of the new secessionist art in Croatia reinforced the Croatian position within the Monarchy as a distinctive nation and presented it to the world in its own light, notwithstanding the formal dualist construction of the state.

## CONCLUSION

A less Vienna-centric approach when *fin de siècle* studies are concerned offers fresh perspectives on the dissemination of contemporary aesthetic and artistic ideas and intellectual currents. The local context was often fundamental for their specific iterations. To focus solely on the general or the ideal type narrows the perspective in the same manner as it does when one confines oneself inside national boundaries. It is the interaction between the specific and the general that proves central to the understanding of the spread of ideas, and in practice it is carried out by historical actors who appropriate, modify and transfer ideas according to specific contexts and situations.

The case of the Croatian Secession thus reinforces the claim of Schorske's critics that research with a dominant focus on Vienna may in many ways prove to be a hinderance when *fin de siècle* Habsburg studies are concerned. Although artistically and intellectually related, even through direct links, the Viennese and the Croatian Secession functioned in different political and cultural contexts. The predominance of the national in Croatian political and cultural space caused the Secession to be framed primarily in national terms. General, shared secessionist and modernist principles were therefore embedded in national(ist) reasoning: the appropriation of contemporary intellectual and cultural currents meant the modernization and "catching-up" of national culture with European developments; freedom of artistic expression became a prerequisite for the creation of great national art; to be modern meant to present one's national culture to the world in a positive and progressive light, etc. And while the Croatian government and ruling circles tried to use the Secession to their own advantage, this too had more to do with the local political context than with the idea of creating a supra-national, universalist Habsburg art. For the Croatian Secession, therefore, the question was not how to look more Viennese, but how to look more Croatian.

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22 Dušan Plavšić, "Petrogradska izložba" [The Saint Petersburg Exhibition], *Život*, no. 4 (1900): 141–145. See also his response to the critics in Dušan Nikolajev Plavšić, "List na uredništvo" [A Letter to the Editorial Board], *Hrvatska domovina*, December 28, 1899.



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postmodernism, New  
Ukrainian Wave

## UKRAINIAN PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE 1990S: FROM PARADIGM SHIFT TO THE NEW VISUAL STATEMENT\*

### Abstract

*In 1991, the once powerful USSR ceased to exist, and Ukraine, as a former part of the USSR, gained independence after almost seventy years of totalitarianism. It was a paradigm shift, on the basis of which new Ukrainian art was created. All of the processes that occurred in Ukrainian photography during the post-perestroika period have taken place within the conditions of gradual liberation from ideological pressure and in a situation of transition from one historical era to another. In the 1990s, Ukrainian photography developed in two directions. Representatives of the first direction embodied postmodern principles in their work, while the second direction focused exclusively on acute social issues, showing general concern, anxiety, sadness during the difficult period of the 1990s. This new generation of photographers was one of the first whose work clearly reflected changes in the artist's worldview in relation to the conditions of the new historical era.*

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### INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 1980s, a series of irreversible social processes resulted in rapid transformations in collective thought and ideology in Ukrainian society. The era of *perestroika*, which began in the late 1980s, constituted a real ideological revolution. The year 1989 was decisive and was marked by a number of important events that influenced the further course of history.<sup>1</sup> An understanding of the Ukrainian situation during this transition period would be incomplete if analysed separately from the broader European context. A number of changes affected collective worldviews, including local Ukrainian events such as the anticipation of the collapse of the USSR, mass strikes of miners, the return of the Crimean Tatars to their historical homeland in the Crimea, and the birth of the Student Fraternity in Lviv,<sup>2</sup> as well as events that took place in Eastern Europe: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, and so on. Ultimately, there was a final liberation from the system that attempted to manage the cultural processes of the country.

In the wake of these vast transformations, Ukraine no longer suffered from censorship and government control of cultural production. State institutions,

\* Participation in the conference Art and the State in Modern Central Europe (18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Century) was supported by the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation.

1 Piotr Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2012), 7–11.

2 This was an influential opposition youth union during the era of *perestroika*, which was founded in Lviv on May 25, 1989, and united various student fraternities.

such as the Union of Artists of the USSR,<sup>3</sup> which existed as instruments of ideological control over artists, lost their status and power. From Western Europe, new, previously unknown information about worldwide artistic phenomena arrived unimpeded. For the first time, many artists had the opportunity for short trips to the countries of Eastern and Western Europe. By the early 1990s, the experience of Western art had already begun to influence Soviet consciousness.

In the field of photography, during the 1990s Ukrainian photographers repeatedly had the opportunity to travel abroad for presentations in mainly group photo exhibitions. For example, Ukrainian photographer Viktor Marushchenko participated in the exhibition *100 Photographers of Eastern Europe* in Lausanne (1990), and exhibited as part of the *Days of Kyiv* in Toulouse in 1993. Such travel contributed to the accumulation of experience in creating exhibition projects of a certain level and provided opportunities to see the previously unknown state of development of modern photography in Western Europe.

In addition to liberation from the ideological pressures of the previous era, several significant factors influenced the formation of a new visual language, including collective memory of local cataclysms, the trauma inflicted on art by totalitarianism, and the emergence of nonconformism from the underground and its institutionalization. Most important were the clearly expressed differences in visual language from the various regions of Ukraine and the conditional division of the Ukrainian cultural landscape, into the West, Centre and East.<sup>4</sup> In what follows, the article considers the prerequisites that formed the new Ukrainian photography in detail. To understand the features of the new visual language in photography after 1989, we analyse some of the most striking examples of creativity on the art of several Ukrainian photographers. First are the artists who belong to the so-called Ukrainian New Wave: Mykola Trokh, Oleksandr Druganov, an Oleksandr Lyapin. The works of these three photographers vividly represented the new tendencies in post-modern photography in Ukraine. Moreover, they were the first to turn photography into the main tool for their visual expression. The artworks analysed in this article were among the main exhibits of new Ukrainian art of the 1990s and influenced the development of Ukrainian photography. The second current in Ukrainian photography is represented by documentary photographers. The article discusses the Poglyad group as the only photographic community

3 The Artist's Union of the USSR was the official state Union of artists and art critics that existed since 1931 and was the body of ideological control of creative activity of artists. According to Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, "the unions quickly became the primary institutional means of asserting an unprecedented state monopoly over the arts." Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, "Perestroika and the Soviet Creative Unions," in *New Perspectives on Russian and Soviet Artistic Culture. Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies*, ed. John O. Norman (Harrogate: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), 132.

4 More about the specifics of the Kharkov school of photography: Tatiana Pavlova, "Kharkiv School of Photography: Soviet Censorship to New Aesthetics 1970–1980s. Late 1960s to 1980s – The Vremya Group's Time," *Vasa Project*, accessed August 30, 2022, <http://www.vasa-project.com/gallery/ukraine-1/tatiana-essay.php>.

in Ukraine that foregrounded the importance of documentary photography. Particular attention is devoted to artists such as Yuri Nesterov, Alexander Chekmenev and their projects, which clearly demonstrate the renewal of a visual language in documentary photography in Ukraine in the 1990s and, consequently, the transformation of political views.

## PREREQUISITES FOR THE FORMATION OF NEW UKRAINIAN PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER 1989

Changes and transformations in Ukrainian photography of the transition era had several important prerequisites. Photography in Ukraine had its own history, distinct from the global history of photography. This is due to the fact that, as part of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, like all the republics of the USSR, was isolated from global cultural processes and was in a cultural vacuum. Therefore, the first development in photography after 1989 was an active expansion of content. Photographers turned to material that was previously “taboo”, and affirmed a radical rejection of the principles of Soviet photography.

Several movements that gradually changed the consciousness of artists led up to this time of cultural transition.<sup>5</sup> It was well known that there were two artistic currents in Ukraine: the official subsidized and state-sanctioned art on behalf of the Union of Artists, and the unofficial line which was later called a nonconformism.<sup>6</sup> By the end of the 1980s the unofficial line had already participated in semiformal apartment exhibitions and prohibited showings. Nonconformism was a phenomenon of social status,<sup>7</sup> and, above all, a moral position. Ukrainian nonconformist artists denied any norms that were binding on Soviet society, highlighting their own vision as opposition to common opinion.

In 1989, official photography still existed, its adherents were represented in the main periodicals of the country, and their work continued to serve the needs of propaganda and the demonstrative aims of such official magazines. But unofficial photography had already emerged from the underground, and began to attract attention: the first exhibitions opened, while new photographic publications appeared.

The transition era fundamentally changed Ukrainian photography. Beginning from opposition to the stereotypes of Soviet art, unofficial photography wanted to defend its right to its own vision, visual expression and self-expression. The border between Soviet-era photography and the new

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5 For more about Ukrainian art history during this period, see Halyna Sklyarenko, *Українські художники: з відлиги до незалежності* [Ukrainian Artists: From the Thaw to Independence] (Kyiv: ArtHuss, 2018).

6 Victor Sydorenko, “Ukrainian Nonconformism Role in Preserving the Foundations of Free Creativity,” *Suchasne Mystetstvo*, no. 12 (2016): 229–39.

7 For more on this topic, see Glib Vysheslavsky, “Нонконформізм: андеграунд та неофіційне мистецтво” [Nonconformism: Underground and Unofficial Art], *Khudozhnia kultura. Aktualni problemy*, no. 3 (2006): 171–198; Lesya Smyrna, *Століття нонконформізму в українському візуальному мистецтві* [The Century of Nonconformism in Ukrainian Visual Art] (Kyiv: ФЕНІКС, 2017).



photography of the independence era was marked, especially by an increased element of personalism. Forbidden topics no longer existed. Exposing the true picture of real life became very common. The aim of the photography of the 1990s was to transmit a state of anxiety, concern, and sometimes even despair. All of this was inherent in the sense of the time of transition. This was the essential principle of photography from the late 1980s and early 1990s that separated it from the photographic practice of the previous period, and established a certain historical boundary in relation to the style of the past.

In the late 1980s, art groups such as New Ukrainian Wave were formed. Such groups represented a progressive conception of a new visual language, as well as an appeal for new forms of art. For Ukrainian artists of the 1990s, it was natural to abandon the presuppositions and bases of the past. Artists turned to self-irony and scepticism. A special feature of this phenomenon throughout the former USSR was excessive politicization – having arisen after socialist realism, new Ukrainian art tried to break away from the totally ideologized base by anti-totalitarian methods.

Kyiv was the centre for the powerful New Ukrainian Wave art movement. Quite soon, two directions of photography took shape. From the beginning of the 1990s, the difference between the two was quite obvious. Representatives of the first tendency of new Ukrainian photography existed along with and were directly influenced by the artists of the New Wave. They conducted their exhibition activities together. Photographers of the second photographic movement, by contrast, existed on their own or were affiliated with the Poglyad photographic community. As a result, two separate movements of photography formed in Kyiv in the 1990s: postmodern and social-documentary.

## NEW UKRAINIAN WAVE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The generation of artists known as the *New Ukrainian Wave* became one of the first whose work clearly reflected changes in the artist's worldview in the new historical era.<sup>8</sup> In the late 1980s, the artists of the New Ukrainian Wave settled in Kyiv on Paris Commune Street. Among the inhabitants of the Paris Commune Squat was the photographer Mykola Trokh. Elements of quotation, irony, cynicism, play as a process, and, of course, references to motifs of rigid eroticism – Trokh inherited all of these characteristics from the artists of the New Ukrainian Wave and embodied them in his photography. In the 1990s, he focused on subjectivism, in terrible and painful ways.

Trokh's photos of the Paris Commune Squat have a number of features that explain their conceptual content: privacy, informality, and an emphasis on the idea of an infinite bacchanalia, obligatory for Trokh. In particular, his photography involved visual experiments with the body. For Trokh, the

<sup>8</sup> Glib Vysheslavsky, *Contemporary art Ukraine – від андеграунду до мейнстріму* [Contemporary Art of Ukraine – From Underground to Mainstream] (Kyiv: MARI, 2020).



Fig. 1. Mykola Trokh, *Golden Carp*, 1993, gelatin silver print, hand-coloring, private collection.

most important principle is the symbolism of nudity, the experience of an act that borders on pornography. The body, for Trokh, is an object with which he carries out various manipulations. Rather than bringing to the fore the beauty and plasticity of the body, he sometimes focuses on the ugliness of physicality. He tried to portray something that can outrage, cause mental discomfort and despair. The representation of the naked body in Trokh's photography (*Achtung Baby*, 1992; *Golden Carp*, 1993 (fig. 1), etc.) was associated with the trauma of forbidding the demonstration of explicit sexuality in Soviet art and the aggressive censorship of nudity.<sup>9</sup>

Another representative of the Paris Commune Squat was Oleksandr Druganov<sup>10</sup> – an artist with a fairly wide range of creative activities. Fragmentary thinking inspired Druganov's first photo exhibition, part of the collective project *Shtil* (The Calm) in March 1992. The first photo shows a girl sitting looking at the sky, conventionally named *The Angel*. Games with double meanings occur in other works of the project. The next photograph shows a plaster figure without a head thrown to the ground, called *You Are Like a White Rose Bud* (fig. 2). At the same time, it can either totally confuse the viewer, or provoke certain associations, which in each case are as subjective as possible.

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Fig. 2. Oleksandr Druganov, *You are like a White Rose Bud*, 1992, gelatin silver print, private collection.

<sup>9</sup> The archive (negatives and photographs) of Mykola Trokh was partially lost after his death. Some of these works are currently preserved in private collections in Ukraine.

<sup>10</sup> Most works by Oleksandr Druganov belong to private collections.

The most important project in Kyiv during the 1990s was a series of photographs by Oleksandr Lyapin called *Ukrainskyi Likuvalnyk* (Ukrainian Medical Book), which was presented as part of the collective exhibition *Vision Art* (1996). The project was curated by Oleksandr Lyapin and a member of the Paris Commune Squat, Oleksandr Klymenko. It was attended by both artists and photographers. The curators positioned their project as an exhibition of New Nonconformism. The *Ukrainian Medical Book* demonstrated a completely new form and concept of photography. These were depressive, hard-hitting photographs, the texts of which were ancient Ukrainian incantations – oral texts that accompanied magical actions, ancient verbal Ukrainian magic.<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, the series had a critical sociopolitical subtext, while, on the other, it was absurd.

The basis of the series *Ukrainian Medical Book* are naive photos. Here, for example, is a wedding photo depicting bride and groom sitting in a chair in the usual interior of the Soviet era. Lyapin draws fangs and yellow pupils on them and writes in the lower part of the photo: “When whirlwind is strong or there is a blizzard, then the devils are celebrating the wedding” (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Oleksandr Lyapin, *Ukrainskyi Likuvalnyk* (Ukrainian Medical Book), 1995, gelatin silver print, hand-coloring, private collection.

<sup>11</sup> Iryna Borysiuk, “Замовляння в системі архаїчних магичних практик: структурно-семіотичний аналіз” [Incantations in the System of Archaic Magical Practices: Structural-Semiotic Analysis], *Naukovi pratsi. Filozofia*, no. 257 (2015): 71.



The next photo was taken at a rally. Lyapin paints all three faces in blue and green, and adds eyes and horns. He does the same with the image on the banner, which is held by men. The next caption says: “Demons are born and live, they do not die. They are eaten by wolves, shot by hunters, burned by the sun, killed by lightning. Love is ruining them.” In another photo, Lyapin cites the text of a spell against melancholy.

*Ukrainian Medical Book* was at that time one of the most successful examples of post-*perestroika* art. Absurdity and social problems, the remnants of the Soviet era and the spontaneity of ancient spells – all of this and more are intertwined in it quite naturally. Against the background of the overall project *Vision Art*, Lyapin’s exposition stood out due to its radical post-Soviet statement. *Ukrainian Medical Book* was nothing more or less than an illustration of the painful era of the 1990s. Subsequently, the project was exhibited in galleries in Holland, Brazil and France.

## DOCUMENTARY MOVEMENT IN UKRAINIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Ukrainian photography could not follow the path of Western and global photography because its development took place under historical conditions related to the Soviet period. Even liberation from ideological pressure, transformations of artistic consciousness, and historical, social and cultural changes could not completely break a certain dependence on the photographic art of the Soviet era. The 1990s were marked by an emphasis on subjects considered taboo, with social issues at the forefront. Although the photography of the early 1990s was forced to build on the aesthetics of the Soviet era, at the same time it tried to abandon it. The boundary between Soviet-era photography and the era of independence is defined by an acute element of subjectivism, as well as critique and representation of previously prohibited subjects. In this way, the new artistic worldview is affirmed. This aspect is unique to photography in the early 1990s.

In 1987, the first photographic association whose members focused their creative work exclusively on documentary photography was established in Kyiv. The association took the name Poglyad (The Gaze),<sup>12</sup> and its activity affirmed the representation of life as it actually is. Poglyad completely rejected staged shooting and excessive lyricism. Its photographers sought to reflect reality as frankly as possible, without embellishing it, to analyse reality and, above all, to “reveal it”. As a photography group, Poglyad turned out to be very in tune with the mood of the time. The photography of the early 1990s exhibited, first of all, anxiety, sadness and the general mood of the problematic era of transition from the socialist model of society to the new model. In this regard, Poglyad as a photographic association had great significance. It inspired the specific photographic language of artists including Oleksandr Glyadelov, Rita

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<sup>12</sup> *Poglyad* is an association of documentary photographers that was founded in Kyiv in 1987.

**Fig. 4.** Yuri Nesterov, photograph from the series *Dear Our Foretime*, 1992, gelatin silver print, Museum of Kharkiv School of Photography.



Ostrovskaya, Oleksandr Lyapin, Yuri Nesterov, Yuri Kosin and a number of other Kyiv documentary photographers.

In addition to the activities of Poglyad, the development of documentary photography in Kyiv was also affected by the Ukrainian Press Foto competition. In fact, these two powerful impulses led to the formation of a certain current of photography in Kyiv, which Oleksandr Lyapin subsequently designated as “the Kiev school of free creative documentary photography.”<sup>13</sup> The artists who exclusively practiced the documentary method in the 1990s include several of the most significant photographers of the time. In the early 1990s, Yuri Nesterov presented his vision of documentary photography. Lacking a professional education, Nesterov spent the 1980s actively engaged in self-improvement, studying foreign literature on photography. His first significant presentation took place in 1996 in the *Fotografiya Revyu* (Photography Review) magazine. Oleksandr Lyapin, the publisher, gave him several pages, printing the series *Dear Our Foretime*.<sup>14</sup>

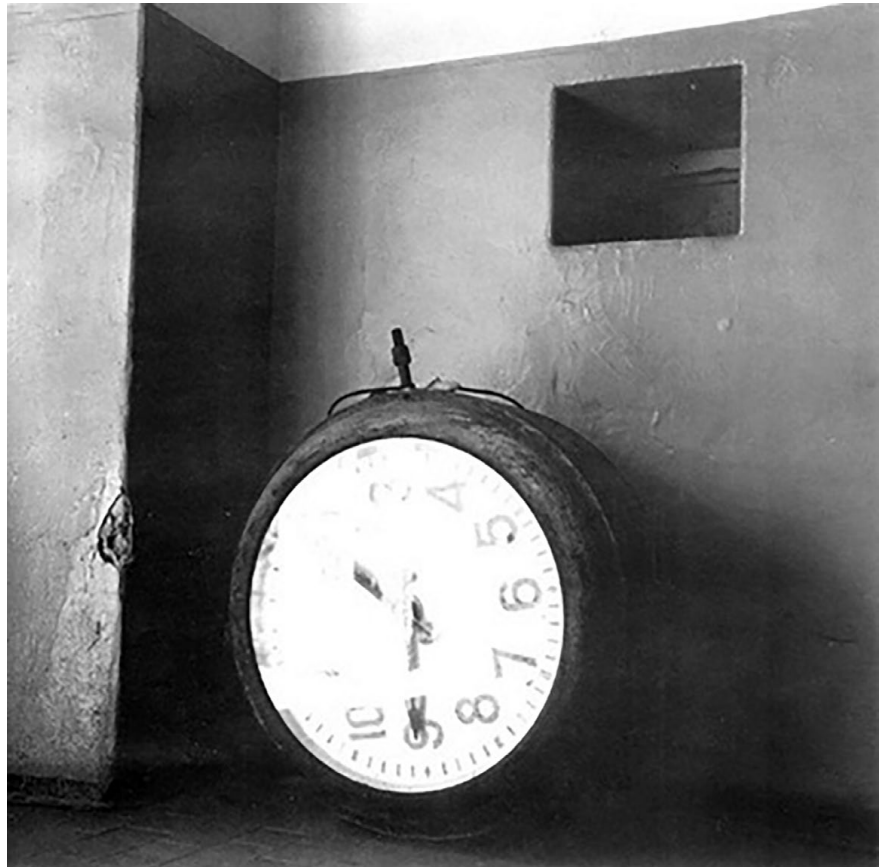
The title of the photo series turns out to be, if not a mockery, then a rather vicious irony, because what you see in the pictures is far from a lyrical pastoral. The location for the shooting was the Shterovskaya hydroelectric power

<sup>13</sup> Oleksandr Lyapin, *Александр Чекменев. Черно-белая фотография* [Oleksandr Chekmeniov. Black and White Photography] (Kyiv: Artbook, 2008), 24.

<sup>14</sup> Oleksandr Lyapin “Луганськ – місто фотогенічне” [Luhansk is a Photogenic City], *Fotografiya Revyu*, no. 1 (1996): 18–25.



**Fig. 5.** Yuri Nesterov, photograph from the series *Dear Our Foretime*, 1992, gelatin silver print, Museum of Kharkiv School of Photography.



station, where Nesterov captured what remains from the Soviet era. These are fragments of a past life, most clearly seen in the images of the station's environment. Nesterov divided the photo series into two constituent parts. The first is intended to depict the environment without human presence, to show the hydroelectric power station in its powerful and at the same time frightening architecture. The second part presents photographs of station employees (**fig. 4**). This strange, dirty place with blocked (fortified) exits is a representation of the Soviet era and its past, as Nesterov notes in the series title. But this idea resonates most powerfully in the central photograph of the series, which shows an inverted clock of gigantic size, taken from nowhere and left standing on the floor as unnecessary (**fig. 5**).

Another representative of the documentary photography of the 1990s was Alexander Chekmenev, who worked as a photojournalist for various media in Kyiv at the time. In 1995, Chekmenev received a state commission to take portraits of incapacitated retired persons and seriously ill people for new Ukrainian passports. To do this, the photographer had to shoot his models directly in their own apartments. He was helped by random people who had to maintain a white backdrop for the photographs. He writes about this experience:

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became necessary in the newly independent Ukraine to replace old Soviet passports with

the new Ukrainian ones. There was a rush to accomplish this in the shortest possible time. All Ukrainians had to get a new passport within a year. In 1994, the social services of Luhansk, a town in southeast of Ukraine, started offering photographers a job of shooting passport photos in homes of the elderly and ill citizens, who could not pay a photographer on their own. I was one of the photographers commissioned by the social services to go door to door during this national passport campaign. This is how I ended up in the homes of these people, along with the social workers whose job was to provide free medicine and groceries. When I saw how people were living out the final years of their lives, it had made a very strong impression on me.<sup>15</sup>

During these difficult visits to the apartments of sick, helpless and lonely people, Chekmenev, using a second camera, recorded shocking material about the realities of the conditions in which these desperate people were forced to exist. In addition to the passport portraits, Chekmenev made additional photos in which apparently absurd and scary details were visible. Although the centre of these photographs are the people who look directly into the lens, the main subject is their environment, the background that Chekmenev tries to capture as completely as possible. We see poverty, fully formed from the remains of the previous epoch, beds with dirty linen, faded plush rugs, portraits of Lenin, and somewhere near the bed, a red coffin cover. Chekmenev continues his quest to capture the painful moments of the 1990s. That is why his characters are most often people from the street, residents of provincial towns: marginal individuals who drop out of the system of normal life. Chekmenev's subjects are vagabonds and alcoholics, or simply people who did not find a place for themselves in a time of radical changes. He met all of them right on the street. Due to the fact that they didn't refuse to pose in front of the camera, Chekmenev's shots are full of sincerity.

With a frank accent on the social exacerbation and the unsightly sides of society in the post-*perestroika* period, Chekmenev's photo series of the 1990s are deeply humanistic. It is this heightened humanistic feature that makes his photographs exceptional. He always separates the person, always puts them at the forefront, and bases almost all of his series of photographs on the human image. In an article for the photobook *Alexander Chekmenev. Black and White Photography*, Oleksandr Lyapin notes: "Chekmenev is a sculptor. He erects monuments to everyone he saw, to whom he dedicated one hundred twenty-five or even one thousandth of a second of the life of his camera. He takes portraits so monumental and plastic that it is difficult for me to call them only photography."<sup>16</sup> While Yuri Nesterov always looked for elements of post-Soviet

15 For more about the project, see Alexander Chekmenev, *Passport* (Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2016).

16 Lyapin, *Александр Чекменев*, 24.

absurdity, the aesthetics of disintegration in the material of reality, Chekmenev chose compulsory attention to a person as the main element of his work, and his purposeful search for an expressive “human type” makes him almost the only humanist among his colleagues.

## CONCLUSION

The 1990s laid the foundation for the further advancement of the art of photography in Ukraine. This period witnessed the formation and development of the creative language of those artists whose activities came to personify the photography of the 1990s. In this difficult period, photo clubs united amateurs and professionals, which also led to interconnections between photographers of different generations. There was a gradual development of exhibition activities, as photography entered the exhibition space in a variety of forms. In Kyiv, two lines of development of photography existed in parallel. The first current of work was associated with photographers who worked under the influence of the New Ukrainian Wave and represented postmodern trends in photography. The second current consisted of photographers who introduced reporting as the main creative method and focused on subjectively portraying acute social topics.

Representatives of the first current of Ukrainian photography in the 1990s expressed postmodern principles in their artwork that determined a variety of features: deep subjectivism, the aestheticization of death, citationality, the play of contexts and contents, an appeal to the subconscious, cynicism and self-irony. In the context of post-modernism, the works of Mykola Trokh are preeminent due to their irony, use of quotation, fragmentation and accentuation of political connotations that were characteristic of the former Soviet Republics. Oleksandr Druganov's photography – in particular the *Shtil* series – also illustrates the post-modern notion of a plurality of views and concepts. Finally, the work of Oleksandr Lyapin in the series *Ukrainian Medical Book* reflected the dominant aesthetic trends of the 1990s in the language of photography with its characteristic absurdity in relation to social issues,

The second current of the Ukrainian photography of the 1990s is exemplified by the work of Yuri Nesterov. His series *Dear Our Foretime* has become a sort of symbol of the transitory age, in which people living the new country are shown, even as the circumstances and context of their existence remained Soviet. *Passport* by Alexander Chekmenev is another key work in this second current, in which the sociopolitical context is brought into focus, demonstrating a new visual language for Ukrainian photography. By exploring this aspect of Ukrainian photography in the 1990s, one can conclude that artists, as a rule, focused exclusively on acute social issues, reflecting the general concern, anxiety and sadness of the difficult period of the 1990s. But at the same time, each of the photographers pioneered their own language,

and together they exhibited differences that distinguish them from another. Furthermore, it should also be pointed out that documentary photography assumed a dominant position and remained so in the 2000s. In summary, it can be argued that the 1990s laid the foundation for the further transformation of photography in Ukraine. This period witnessed the development of the creative language of many photographers, and their activities are now considered to be the embodiment of Ukrainian photography in the 1990s.

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## MAKSIMILIJAN VANKA'S *BEAUTIFUL JELA WOVE THREE WREATHS*

### Abstract

*During the World War I, Croatian artist Maksimilijan Vanka (1889–1963) made a triptych of paintings of figures in folk dress based on the lyrics of a folk song titled Lijepa Jela tri vijenca splela (Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths). They were not a state commission, but by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all three paintings landed in the collections of major Croatian state institutions – the Office of the President, the Croatian History Museum, and the Croatian Parliament building, respectively. In the decades since their creation, these works have often been misdated, the connection between the works unacknowledged, and the original context ignored. This paper situates the triptych in the midst of the war, in the last years of the Habsburg Monarchy, and explores the complex relationships of folkloric imagery to empire, nation, and foreign audiences at this historic juncture.*

**Keywords:** folklore,  
folk dress, nationalism,  
cosmopolitanism, Croatia,  
Austria-Hungary

<https://www.doi.org/10.17234/9789533792170.08>

### INTRODUCTION

In midst of World War I, in the last years of the Habsburg Empire, Croatian artist Maksimilijan Vanka (1889–1963), then twenty-seven years old and at an early point in his career, started a triptych of paintings based on the lyrics of a folk song titled *Lijepa Jela tri vijenca splela* (Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths).<sup>1</sup> In his three paintings and in the song, the young woman “Jela” gives a woven wreath first to an icon of the Madonna, then to the host of a feast next to his bountiful table, and finally to her beloved, mounted on horseback. The song has many Central Croatian and Slavonian variants. In each, a young girl weaves three wreaths using three materials to take to three different places. In most of the variants, the goal of all this wreath weaving is thankfulness for agricultural abundance, but also expressing desire for health, happiness, and love. This appears to be the first time that Vanka employed a folk song in his paintings, but it would become something the artist did in a number of his works in the decades that followed. Both the inscription of folk song lyrics and attention to regional folk dress is a testament to ethnographic specificity in Vanka’s works. The works share similar compositions: full-length depictions of figures dressed in folk dress, participating in folk ritual, and shown in Croatian landscapes. Critics compared the stiffness and arrangement of the figures to

<sup>1</sup> This research is expanded from the author’s dissertation: Heidi Cook, “Picturing Peasants: Maksimilijan Vanka’s Folkloric Paintings and the ‘Croatian Question’ from Habsburg Empire to Croatian Nation-State” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2016). I would like to thank my committee, and especially my advisor Barbara McCloskey, for their feedback and encouragement. All translations are the author’s unless otherwise noted, and the original Croatian sometimes appears in footnotes.





**Fig. 1.** Maksimilijan Vanka, *Da bi nam bolje rodilo polje* (*So That Our Fields May Be Fertile*), ca. 1916–1917, oil on canvas, 180 cm x 202 cm, Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb.

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Byzantine art.<sup>2</sup> The scale of the paintings is large. All three are approximately 200 centimeters in width, and their heights vary from 160 to 200 centimeters. Vanka purposely employed the scale and composition of a history painting, but challenged the format by depicting common folk culture rather than literary or historic narratives, playing with the divide between high and low culture.

At the time Vanka painted this series of three folkloric paintings, they were not a state commission. Despite this, by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all three, each via its own route, landed in the collections of major Croatian state institutions – three of the most powerful spaces of Croatian national imagining. The most well-known and most highly finished of the three paintings is inscribed *Da bi nam polje rodilo bolje* (*So That Our Fields May Be Fertile*, **fig. 1**).<sup>3</sup> The first president of the Republic of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, had the work purchased for the office of the President of Croatia in the early 1990s. According to a 2000 newspaper article, Tuđman encountered the work in the tennis club he frequented and, considering himself a fan of Vanka’s work, requested to purchase it.<sup>4</sup> It was hung (and continues to hang)

2 Josip Bobek, “Ausstellung Maksimilijan Vanka” [Maksimilijan Vanka Exhibition], *Morgenblatt*, April 11, 1934, 4.

3 The painting was referred to by its full folk lyric *Prvi vijenac Bogorodici dala, da bi nam bolje rodilo bolje* (The First Wreath She Gave to the Virgin Mary, So That Our Fields May Be Fertile) in Antun Jiroušek, “Naše slike: Maksimilijan Vanka” [Our Pictures: Maksimilijan Vanka], *Vijenac* I, no. 6 (February 6, 1923), 118. In 1930 it was reproduced under the title *Blagoslov žita* (Blessing of the Grain) in “Izložba Maksimilijana Vanke u Salonu Ullrich od 7.-20. o. mj.” [Maksimilijan Vanka’s Exhibition in Salon Ullrich from 7th to 20th of this Month], *Svijet* 5, no. 12 (March 15, 1930): 294–95.

4 According to the article, the painting was purchased with money from the *Fond Reda predsjednikovih vitezova* (Fund of the Order of President’s Knights) in the early 1990s for the Presidential Palace from Franjo Tuđman’s

**Fig. 2.** Maksimilijan Vanka, *Lijepa Jela tri vijenca splela* (*Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths*), 1916, oil on canvas, 166 cm x 201 cm, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.



in the conference room of the Office of the President in what is known as Villa Zagorje. The second work in the triptych, inscribed *Lijepa Jela tri vijenca splela* (*Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths*, **fig. 2**), entered the collection of the Croatian History Museum in Zagreb.<sup>5</sup> It is not on permanent display, but included in relevant exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> By 1923 this work was already reported to be in a private collection in Zagreb, and according to the museum's records the work was purchased from a previous owner in Zagreb in 1971.<sup>7</sup> *Treći vijenac svom dragom dala* (*The Third Wreath She Gave to Her Beloved*, **fig. 3**) is displayed in the Croatian Parliament building, the Hrvatski Sabor, in a salon off the raised viewer level.<sup>8</sup> The Sabor has no known documentation of when

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friend Vinko Hotko. Đurđica Klancir, "Nerasvijetljene tajne Tuđmanove umjetničke zbirke" [Unexplained Secrets of Tuđman's Art Collection], *Globus*, December 22, 2000, 74–76. The fact that this painting was frequently published in articles about Vanka in the 1920s and 1930s suggests that it stayed in Vanka's studio until the 1934 exhibition he held before his immigration to the United States.

5 In the catalog for the May 1920 Association of Yugoslavian Artists "Lada" exhibition in the Hrvatski umjetnički salon in Zagreb, Vanka listed it under its full title: *Lijepa Jela tri vijenca splela, drugi vijenac domaćinu dala* (*Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths, The Second Wreath She Gave to the Host*). *Lada 1920.: Izložba "Lade"* [Lada 1920: Lada Exhibition] (Zagreb: Tisak nadbiskupske tiskare Zagreb, 1920). This catalog and all others mentioned in this publication are available online through the Digital Collection of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Digitalna zbirka Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti).

6 In recent decades, the work was shown in the exhibition *Stjepan Radić* held in 1991 and the exhibition *Slike Velikog Rata* [Images of the Great War] held June 12, 2014–January 11, 2015 and curated by Marina Bregovac Pisk. Both exhibitions took place in the Croatian History Museum (Hrvatski povijesni muzej).

7 Jiroušek, "Naše slike," 118–119; Marina Bregovac Pisk (Curator of the Collection of Paintings, Graphics, and Sculpture, Hrvatski povijesni muzej), email message to author, March 7, 2014.

8 This painting does not bear an inscription or a signature. This is the title used for the piece in the catalog of Vanka's departing exhibition *Maksimilijan Vanka: MCMXXXIV*, April 1–14, 1934, Zagreb Art Pavilion (Umjetnički paviljon, Zagreb).





Fig. 3. Postcard color reproduction of Maksimilijan Vanka's painting *Treći vijenac svom dragom dala* (*The Third Wreath She Gave to Her Beloved*), ca. 1916–1934, oil on canvas, 200 cm x 205 cm, Croatian Parliament.

the work was acquired, but it happened after 1956, as archival documentation indicates this painting was offered to the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts from a private collector that year.<sup>9</sup>

That each of the paintings seems to have taken its own route, through various owners, to a distinct space of cultural state authority – the Office of the President, the Croatian History Museum, and the Croatian Parliament – reveals that Vanka's folkloric paintings, including the triptych that is the focus of this paper, have come to be seen over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as having national significance. In contrast to their contemporary reception, in this paper, I explore what can be known about the original aim and reception of this triptych made in the last years of the Habsburg Empire. The origins of these three paintings and some of the earliest interpretations of Vanka's folkloric works offer a stark contrast to their contemporary nationalist reception and reveal the changing and competing meanings of folkloric imagery.

<sup>9</sup> Maksimilijan Vanka file, Archive of Fine Arts in Zagreb (Arhiv za likovne umjetnosti), a division of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Art. In this document, the work had an alternative title, which is also on a plaque added to the frame probably in the postwar period: *Proslava žetve* (Celebration of the Harvest).

## THE ORIGINS OF *BEAUTIFUL JELA WOVE THREE WREATHS*

The dating of these three paintings has presented problems in the scant literature about Vanka's *oeuvre*.<sup>10</sup> The second painting in the triptych (but perhaps the first completed), *Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths*, clearly indicates the production year 1916 in Vanka's signature.<sup>11</sup> This should provide a basis for estimating the dates of the other two works, but the fact that these works originally comprised a triptych has not been acknowledged in any publication on Vanka's work since the 1930s. This has led to the misdating of the other two paintings. The first painting in the triptych, inscribed *So That Our Fields May Be Fertile*, bears no date and has been misdated to the early 1930s in a recent exhibition catalogue.<sup>12</sup> However, a photograph in the artist's possession depicts Vanka and a group of people, some of whom are in military uniform, gathered around the painting and is dated June 21, 1917, showing the work was in fact completed much earlier than the 1930s (fig. 4).<sup>13</sup> The third painting, *The Third Wreath She Gave to Her Beloved*, was probably begun at the same time as the other two, around 1916–1917, but does not seem to have been completed in the early 1920s. It was never published or exhibited until Vanka's 1934 farewell



**Fig. 4.** Photograph of Maksimilijan Vanka with *So That Our Fields May Be Fertile*, dated 21 June 1917, Vanka-Brasko Archive, Doylestown, PA.

<sup>10</sup> The two most complete exhibitions of Vanka's work up to this point include David Leopold, ed., *The Gift of Sympathy: The Art of Maxo Vanka* (Doylestown, PA: James A. Michener Art Museum, 2001), which mentions very few of Vanka's Croatian, pre-immigration works, and Nevenka Posavec Komarica, ed., *Maksimilijan Vanka, 1889–1963: Retrospektivna izložba [Maksimilijan Vanka, 1889–1963: Retrospective Exhibition]* (Zagreb: Galerija Klovičevi dvori, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> The signature painted in the lower left corner in red paint reads: VANKA 916.

<sup>12</sup> Komarica, ed., *Maksimilijan Vanka, 1889–1963*, 30.

<sup>13</sup> The photograph is located in the Vanka-Brasko Family Archive, Rushland, Pennsylvania and a copy is in the archive of Strossmayerova Galerija, Zagreb. In addition to the dated photograph, the painting appeared in publication as early as 1923: Jiroušek, "Naše slike," 117.

exhibition in Zagreb's Umjetnički paviljon, held before the artist immigrated to the United States.<sup>14</sup>

The best historic evidence that these three works comprise a triptych and that all three pieces were at least begun by the early 1920s, is a 1923 article on Vanka's folkloric paintings in the literary and cultural journal *Vijenac* in 1923. It is unsigned, but attributed to Antun Jiroušek (1873–1949), an art historian and critic at the time, and soon-to-be director of Zagreb's Museum of Arts and Crafts from 1925 to 1933. Jiroušek's account is one of the only to describe the works together: "The artist conceived the third large painting under the influence of known folk verses: *Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths*. It is a triptych, of which two paintings are already made."<sup>15</sup>

This question of dating may seem of minor importance, but the argument in this paper hinges on the original context of this triptych. What little interpretation exists of these three paintings situates them in the interwar context, where these images of folk culture would be read as engaging with the growth in popularity of the Croatian Peasant Party in the latter half of the 1920s, a nationalist movement that caused a corresponding surge in folk culture revival that took the form of an increased popularity of folk dress, folk singing and dancing performances, and images of folk culture.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, some of Vanka's later works did engage with this movement after the assassination attempt, wounding and subsequent death in 1928 of Croatian Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić with images of strong, independent peasants, who often return the viewer's gaze.<sup>17</sup> However, this paper argues that Vanka's early triptych emerged out of a starkly different late Habsburg context, where images of folk culture often took on very different connotations, connected to Habsburg imperial multiculturalism rather than nationalisms.

To begin, Vanka's biography pegs him as product of Habsburg cosmopolitanism. He was an illegitimate child, probably of Habsburg nobility, and it is unlikely he was ethnically Croat through his parentage.<sup>18</sup> However, he was raised until the age of eight by a Croatian peasant wet nurse, which left a large impression on him and his artworks.<sup>19</sup> He completed his school and fine arts

14 This dating is based on Jiroušek's remark in 1923 that, "This painting remained unfinished in Brussels." Jiroušek, "Naše slike," 118. Although the author can find little evidence that the painting was in Brussels, the fact that an image of the painting was not published and it was first shown to the public in 1934 seems to support that it was not completed in the early 1920s. Perhaps it was never fully completed considering it bears no inscription with folk lyrics like the other two paintings.

15 Jiroušek, "Naše slike," 118–119. Additional evidence that these three works compose a triptych includes the fact that two of the works are described as belonging to a triptych in the catalogs for the *Izložba "Lada"* (Lada Exhibition), held May 1920 in the Hrvatski umjetnički salon, Zagreb and for Vanka's departing exhibition *Mak-similijan Vanka* held April 1–14, 1934 in the Zagreb Art Pavilion (Umjetnički Paviljon).

16 See for example the inclusion of *Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths* in the 1991 Stjepan Radić exhibition at the Hrvatski povijesni muzej in Zagreb, which attempts to place the work in the interwar context.

17 Of Vanka's interwar works, of particular note are his *Zagorska Nevjesta* (*Zagorje Bride*, 1925) which appeared on the cover of *Ženski list* and the 1928 poster for the X. Zagrebački zbor (Zagreb Trade fair) designed together with Zdenka Sertić.

18 Although he knew the identity of at least his mother, Vanka never revealed his parentage publicly.

19 The closest thing to an account of Vanka's young childhood can be read in Louis Adamic, *Cradle of Life: The Story of One Man's Beginnings* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936). Adamic was good friends with Vanka and based parts of the book on discussions with Vanka about his life.



education before the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy. He enrolled in Zagreb's newly formed School for Art and Craft (Viša škola za umjetnost i umjetni obrt) from 1908 to 1910 to study with Croatian symbolist painter Bela Csikoš-Sessija. Contributing further to his cosmopolitan background, in 1911 he continued his studies at the Royal Academy of Arts in Brussels with symbolist painters Jean Delville and Constant Montald. Few Croatian art students chose to study in Brussels, but Vanka selected this location in part because he was a relation of the Belgian queen.<sup>20</sup>

## CHANGING RECEPTION OF VANKA'S FOLKLORIC MOTIFS

While Vanka painted portraits and landscapes, he would become most well-known before his immigration to the United States for painting scenes of Croatian folk culture. His first big success while studying in Brussels was the painting *Proštenjari* (The Supplicants) completed in 1913, which, according to critic Ivo Hergešić, “won him a gold medal and many international accolades.”<sup>21</sup> The painting depicted a group of men and women in the folk dress of the Gračani region just north of Zagreb gathered around an outdoor altar. It is notable that his first major folkloric work, produced only three years before beginning the *Beautiful Jela* triptych, was a hit not so much with Croatian audiences (although the work did circulate in Croatia as a postcard) but with audiences outside Croatia and even outside the Habsburg Empire. In other words, *The Supplicants* was likely not appealing to foreign audiences for its Croatian nationalist sentiment, as Vanka's works are often received today, but instead these viewers were more drawn to the perceived exoticism and distinctiveness of the small and distant South Slavic folk culture depicted therein. Given the way that the folk cultures of Austria-Hungary were often displayed in world's fairs and imperial museums of art and crafts, it is not surprising that foreign audiences and even audiences within the Empire would perceive Vanka's folkloric works as emblematic of Austria-Hungary's rich multiculturalism. These Habsburg displays encouraged citizens and foreigners alike to view the empire as culturally diverse but politically unified.<sup>22</sup> Imperial multiculturalism could be celebrated, but only in ways that did not threaten the integrity of the Empire with nationalism. Vanka's works created before the fall of the Empire conformed with their intricate depictions of folk ritual and the weavings and embroideries on folk dress.

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20 This is reported by Louis Adamic, *My America, 1928–1938* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938), 167.

21 Ivo Hergešić, “Maksimilijan Vanka – prigodom izložbe u Umjetničkom paviljonu” [Maksimilijan Vanka – On the Occasion of the Exhibition in the Art Pavilion], *Hrvatska revija* VII, no. 4 (1934): 215.

22 For more on this see Diana Reynolds Cordileone, “The Austrian Museum for Art and Industry: Historicism and National Identity in Vienna 1863–1900,” *Austrian Studies*, vol. 16 (2008): 123–141; Rebecca Houze, “At the Forefront of a Newly Emerging Profession? Ethnography, Education and the Exhibition of Women's Needlework in Austria-Hungary in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Design History* 21, no. 1 (2008): 19–40.

Furthermore, the responses from Croatian critics at the time surprisingly indicate that they also did not perceive Vanka's *The Supplicants* as nationalist, particularly because of Vanka's painting style. Despite the fact that the painting depicted Croatian folk culture, early critics of Vanka's work, including Izidor Kršnjavi and Andrija Milčinović, critiqued this work for being too Spanish in its style.<sup>23</sup> Critics frequently repeated that Vanka's early works were especially similar to the works of contemporary Spanish painters Ramón and Valentin de Zubiaurre (two brothers) and Ignacio Zuloaga.<sup>24</sup> Kosta Strajnić summed up these critical viewpoints well, saying "his religious compositions function more with foreign artificiality than with direct honesty."<sup>25</sup> Vanka was seen as mixing national influences in his works, or not clearly belonging to one authentic national school of painting, and was accused of being derivative, a common fate of artists on the periphery.

Vanka completed his studies in Brussels in 1914, and with the outbreak of the war was eventually forced to return to Zagreb.<sup>26</sup> Despite the local critiques, Vanka's original intent with the *Beautiful Jela* triptych, which was begun only a few years after the completion of *The Supplicants*, seems to have been to build off the international success of *The Supplicants* by making a new set of works that would appeal to broader European audiences with its display of Croatian folk culture. Vanka's triptych engages with ethnographic specificity to draw attention to Croatian folk culture. All three paintings take their content and inscriptions from the lyrics of the same popular folk song, *Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths*. However, "Jela" is not the same young woman in the three paintings. In each painting "Jela" appears as a different young woman, wearing the folk dress of three distinct regions.<sup>27</sup> *So That Our Fields May Be Fertile* depicts the blessing of the wheat in the folk dress of the Moslavina region located south of Zagreb around the town of Sisak. *Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths* depicts

23 Izidor Kršnjavi, "Izložba Maksimilijana Vanke" [Maksimilijan Vanka Exhibition], *Narodne Novine*, no. 264 (November 13, 1915): 1; Andrija Milčinović, "Dešković i Vanka" [Dešković and Vanka], *Savremenik: mjesečnik Društva hrvatskih književnika*, VIII (1913): 750–751; Kosta Strajnić, "Mladja umjetnička generacija" [The Younger Artistic Generation], *Savremenik* X, no. 11 and 12 (December 1915), 426–429.

24 "We are not sure in which nationality we must classify Miss [sic] Vanka, who paints Croatian subjects obviously imitating the Zubiaurre brothers." [D. A.], "Le Salon triennial – Les artistes étrangers" [The Triennial Salon – Foreign Artists], *Le Soir*, May 25, 1914, 2.

25 Strajnić, "Mladja umjetnička generacija," 429.

26 When the war broke out, it was with the Belgian Queen's permission that Vanka, now a citizen of an enemy empire, was allowed to stay and work with the Belgian Red Cross during the German invasion for a time before he was forced to flee.

27 I owe a debt of gratitude to Vesna Zorić, Museum Advisor at the Etnografski muzej in Zagreb, for assistance with the identification of the geographical origin of folk dress in these paintings. Any mistakes of identification are my own. Jiroušek also helps identify the regions of folk dress in the paintings: "*The First Wreath* (in our reproduction) *She Gave to Mary*, so that *Our Fields May Be Fertile* shows the blessing of the wheat as is the custom in Moslavina. The painting is located in Brussels. *The Second Wreath, She Gave to the Host* (in our reproduction) shows the end of harvest as our nation celebrates it in Pokuplje. This is located in a private collection in Zagreb. *The Third Wreath She Gave to Her Beloved*, captures that moment when [moma] gives the wreath to the most beautiful young man in the circle, from which an engagement develops and a folk wedding, and is shown exactly as is customary in Đakovo region. This painting remained unfinished in Brussels." Jiroušek, "Naše slike," 118–119.

an end-of-the-harvest tradition in the folk dress of Kupinec or Bratina, villages just southwest of Zagreb in the Jaskansko polje region. *The Third Wreath She Gave to Her Beloved* depicts the folk dress of the village of Rečica just east of Karlovac. Through that maneuver, “Jela” seemingly stands in for all the young women maintaining Croatian tradition.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, it is telling that the language Croatian critics used to describe Vanka’s folkloric motifs takes a nationalist turn after World War I. Only after the fall of Austria-Hungary and the creation of a Yugoslav state could the ethnographic study of South Slav folk cultures be openly acknowledged as something that lent legitimacy to the nationalist movements.<sup>29</sup> Not coincidentally, it was right after World War I that the ethnographic collection in Zagreb received its own museum. It was at that moment that critics began to take notice of the nationalizing potential of Vanka’s folkloric works. Jiroušek’s 1923 article, which provided important evidence that these three works compose a triptych, was also one of the first to openly romanticize Vanka’s work in a nationalist way: “Vanka tells us in his paintings how the artist feels while observing the life of the Croatian peasant. From these paintings gushes out enormous devotion and honest love towards the Croatian village.”<sup>30</sup> Jiroušek’s post-World War I commentary is evidence that it was only with the fall of the empire that Vanka’s ethnographic specificity was openly received as Croatian nationalism, an interpretation which has continued up until today.<sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The present-day locations of Vanka’s *Beautiful Jela* triptych in three state collections suggest to contemporary viewers that the artist painted these images of folk culture in order to encourage Croatians to imagine themselves as an independent ethnic nation. However, this paper argues that when properly dated and contextualized to the last years of the Habsburg Monarchy, a different artistic intent emerges. Although this triptych was created at a historic juncture in the years leading up to and during World War I, when almost all Croatians wanted more self-governance, few Croatians imagined that the fall of a huge Empire or a fully independent Croatian state was a tangible possibility. More likely, Vanka’s triptych reveals his attention to ethnographic specificity, which Vanka did not intend as a statement on ethnic nationalism, but as a window

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28 It is noteworthy that Vanka only depicts folk dress from Central Croatia in these paintings and his other folkloric works. He does not choose to geographically delineate the three historic regions of Triune Kingdom (Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia) through folk dress, even though he had a house on Korčula and was familiar with Dalmatian culture, which might be understood as a more nationalist expression.

29 Although it must also be acknowledged that Croatian nationalism was also suppressed within the boundaries of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Strong expressions of individual nationalisms were perceived as a threat to the new Yugoslav state. A careful balancing act played out in the interwar years.

30 Jiroušek, “Naše slike,” 118–119.

31 Another strong example of this romanticization of Vanka’s work that follows includes Olga Baldić-Bivec, “Maksimilijan Vanka,” *Ženski list* 5, no. 12 (December 1929): 16–18.

for elite European audiences into the folk traditions of a remote corner of the Habsburg Monarchy.

Further complicating nationalist readings of this triptych is Vanka's cosmopolitan upbringing and approach. A rare quote from the artist reveals that he did not understand his work on the same nationalist terms as some interwar critics. Vanka chose the word "Slavic" rather than "Croatian" to describe the inspiration for his works: "I am happy and overjoyed when I am among those to whom I am closest according to maternal milk, because there that pure real Slavic generosity warms and inspires me; there I regularly feel ... that I cannot pull my folk from its milieu to my paintings, but that as an artist I must get closer to my folk in my paintings."<sup>32</sup>

Vanka, like many other Croatian and South Slav intellectuals, supported the efforts in the last years of Austria-Hungary for South Slavs to be united in a single Yugoslav state either within or outside the Empire.<sup>33</sup> Vanka was actively involved in the Zagreb chapter of the Yugoslav arts organization Lada. In fact, *Beautiful Jela Wove Three Wreaths* was first exhibited in a Lada exhibition in 1920, the earliest documented exhibition of one of these three paintings in Zagreb.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike our usual sense of a triptych, there is no evidence that the works were ever exhibited together. *The Third Wreath She Gave to Her Beloved* was not exhibited until Vanka's 1934 departing exhibition.<sup>35</sup> There is no evidence that the most fully executed of the three works, *So That Our Fields May Be Fertile*, was ever publicly exhibited, but the work had a lively print life, circulating in Croatian journals and as a postcard.<sup>36</sup> I would speculate that after the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy and the violence of World War I, Vanka was unsure about the reception of these works by the original European audiences for whom he had intended them, and thus did not exhibit them together.

Contrary to simplistic readings, close examination reveals that folk culture held a plurality of meanings in Vanka's work and that of his Croatian contemporaries. Before the interwar period, Vanka's work flaunted the

32 "Ja sam sretan i presretan kad sam među onima, kojima sam po materinjem mlijeku najbliži, jer me ondje zagrijava i oduhovljuje ona čista i prava slavenska širokogrudnost; tu redovno osjećam – ispovijeda obrazovani otmjeni i tankočutni Vanka – da ne smijem svoj narod iz njegovog milieu-a na svoje slike navlačiti, već da se ja kao umjetnik moram u svojim slikama približiti svome narodu." Jiroušek, "Naše slike," 118.

33 Scholar Andrew Wachtel has described how Ivan Meštrović (and I would add other intellectuals and artists around Vanka's generation) "matured in the waning years of Austro-Hungarian rule, the period when the synthetic model of Yugoslav culture was developed, and the period in which it captured the imagination of a good portion of young South Slav intellectuals." Andrew B. Wachtel, "The Synthetic Yugoslav Culture of the Interwar Period," in *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992*, ed. Dejan Djokić (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 241.

34 The exhibition took place in May 1920 in the Hrvatski umjetnički salon, Zagreb. *Lada 1920.: Izložba "Lade"* (Zagreb: Tisak nadbiskupske tiskare Zagreb, 1920).

35 *Maksimilijan Vanka: MCMXXXIV*, April 1–14, 1934, Zagreb Art Pavilion (Umjetnički paviljon, Zagreb).

36 For example, *So That Our Fields May Be Fertile* is pictured in "Iz hrvatske umjetnosti" [From Croatian Art], *Svijet* 1, no. 7 (March 20, 1926): 119; and "Izložba Maksimilijana Vanke u Salonu Ullrich od 7.-20. o. mj" [Maksimilijan Vanka's Exhibition in Salon Ullrich from 7th to 20th of this Month], *Svijet* 5, no. 12 (March 15, 1930): 294–295.

uniqueness of Croatian folk culture on the periphery while claiming command of traditional academic style of painting in order to engage with Western European audiences in a way that yielded to Austria-Hungary's desire for political unity in cultural diversity. Vanka's triptych gains greater significance if we acknowledge the ways in which folkloric works intersect with the complex 20<sup>th</sup> century history of Croatia. Images of folk culture were understood differently in the context of multi-national Austria-Hungary than in the contexts of interwar and postwar Yugoslavia, and naturally took on new significance in the new Republic of Croatia. To acknowledge the changing nature and reception of Vanka's folkloric works and that of his contemporaries is to fully acknowledge the shifting identities and experiences of Croatians over the last century.





# Art

and

**the State**

in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# The Politics of Competitions and Exhibitions

**Antonia Tomić**

THE ECHO OF IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ'S  
PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL  
FINE ART EXHIBITION HELD IN ROME IN  
1911 IN HIS HOMETLAND

**Sanja Žaja Vrbica**

THE 1906 IMPERIAL-ROYAL AUSTRIAN  
EXHIBITION IN LONDON: REPRESENTING  
DALMATIA

**Irena Kossowska**

THE STRATEGY OF SELF-PRESENTATION:  
THE 1930S OFFICIAL EXHIBITIONS OF  
AUSTRIAN AND HUNGARIAN ART IN  
WARSAW

**Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić**

1930S COMPETITIONS FOR THE DECORATION  
OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE  
KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA IN BELGRADE  
AND CROATIAN ARTISTS

**Giovanni Rubino**

LOOKING AT ZAGREB: THE PUBLIC GALLERY  
AS A POPULARIZER OF KINETIC ART AND  
THE NEO-AVANT-GARDE ATTITUDE

**Antonia Tomić**

Drniš City Museum

# THE ECHO OF IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ'S PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINE ART EXHIBITION HELD IN ROME IN 1911 IN HIS HOMETLAND

**Keywords:** Ivan Meštrović,  
International Fine Arts  
Exhibition in Rome (1911),  
Drniš, Saint Rochus, Dositej

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## Abstract

*The International Exhibition of Art held in 1911 in Rome was of great importance to Ivan Meštrović. The young artist rejected the invitation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to exhibit in the pavilion of Austria or Hungary and, instead, initiated the participation of the Kingdom of Serbia. This decision was a way to publicly express his political beliefs and anti-Monarchical tendencies. Ivan Meštrović dominated the Pavilion with 77 works, mainly selected from his Kosovo cycle, in which he aspired to visualize the Vidovdan Temple. The exhibition was well-covered in the media, and the Serbian Pavilion was notable mostly because of Meštrović's works. Written correspondence with family and friends, in particular with doctor Filip Davidović Marušić, describes how Meštrović's great success was celebrated in his native region. In those years, Meštrović began to receive orders from local authorities for public monuments, showing that they considered the symbolic potential of his early work acceptable and appropriate for new public monuments. Unfortunately, however, World War I prevented their realization.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a formative period for the young Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962), both in the field of artistic expression and in the field of national and political self-determination. The search for his own authentic artistic expression was combined with his desire to reshape the recognizable iconography of South Slavic mythology based on the myth of the Battle of Kosovo.<sup>1</sup>

The group of sculptures that Meštrović presented at the International Exhibition in Rome in 1911 was created over a period of several years. He developed and worked on his idea for the Temple of Vidovdan mostly during his stay in Paris (1908–1909). Some of the sculptures had already been presented

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<sup>1</sup> The Kosovo Myth originated from Serbian historical heritage and is closely linked to Serbian nationalism and Orthodoxy, but Ivan Meštrović completely reconstructed it – historically, morally and artistically. Therefore, it is not surprising that his artistic interpretations did not sit well with orthodox Serbian nationalists. For more about Ivan Meštrović's reinterpretation of Kosovo Myth see Duško Kečkemet, *Život Ivana Meštrovića (1883.–1962.–2002.)* [The Life of Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962–2002)], vol. 1, (Split: Školska knjiga, 2009), 305–306.

at exhibitions in other European cities,<sup>2</sup> and provoked mixed reactions from audiences. Negative responses were mainly caused by their political connotations, while his sculptural skills mostly received positive reactions. Among these exhibitions, the most significant were two held in 1910: the 35th Art Nouveau Exhibition, which was a solo exhibition in Vienna, and the *Meštrović-Rački Exhibition* held in Zagreb. At the 35th Art Nouveau Exhibition,<sup>3</sup> Meštrović exhibited 62 works, including 25 fragments of the Vidovdan Temple.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of that exhibition, Viennese cultural circles perceived a new style developed under the influence of the Croatian folk heritage and oral literature. However, according to Irena Kraševac's observations, this exhibition was only a prelude to the extensive artistic and political program presented at the International Exhibition in Rome.<sup>5</sup> The exhibition was not without scandal, as the Austrian government intended to buy the sculpture *Memory* but, due to its obvious political connotations, ultimately did not.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, at the *Meštrović-Rački Exhibition* in Zagreb's Art Pavilion Meštrović exhibited 92 sculptures, 37 of which were related to the Vidovdan Temple.<sup>7</sup>

120 By the middle of 1910, preparations for the great International Exhibition in Rome had already begun. Meštrović received invitations from both Austria and Hungary to exhibit – each of the halves of dual Monarchy had their own pavilion – but he declined both of them. Instead, he sent a letter to Belgrade on his own initiative, asking openly whether the Kingdom of Serbia would have its own pavilion because Croatian artists were willing to join their Slavic brothers. At the insistence of the Hungarian Government, the Provincial Government for the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia asked Meštrović and other young artists gathered in the Društvo hrvatskih umjetnika “Medulić” (Association of Croatian Artists “Medulić”) to give up the idea of exhibiting in the Serbian Pavilion because Hungary intended to provide a hall for them, but they resolutely refused. Their decision was sealed by the exhibition, *Despite an Unheroic Age*, which was held at the end of 1910 in the Art Pavilion in Zagreb. According to Meštrović, for this exhibition “a dozen of us younger artists made over a few months an *ad hoc* cycle inspired by folk songs, with the intention of transferring it to Rome.”<sup>8</sup>

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2 For more on this topic, see Irena Kraševac, *Ivan Meštrović i secesija: Beč–München–Prag 1900–1910* [Ivan Meštrović and Secession: Vienna–Munich–Prague 1900–1910] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, Fundacija Ivana Meštrovića, 2002), 127–148.

3 A digitized exhibition catalogue is available at the Belvedere Digital Library, accessed November 18, 2021, [https://digitale-bibliothek.belvedere.at/viewer/image/1415194440575/1/LOG\\_0000/](https://digitale-bibliothek.belvedere.at/viewer/image/1415194440575/1/LOG_0000/)

4 Sandi Bulimbašić, “Prilog identifikaciji djela Ivana Meštrovića na izložbama u prva dva desetljeća 20. stoljeća” [A Contribution to the Identification of Ivan Meštrović's Works at the Exhibitions in the First Two Decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 39 (2015): 156.

5 Kraševac, *Ivan Meštrović i secesija*, 124.

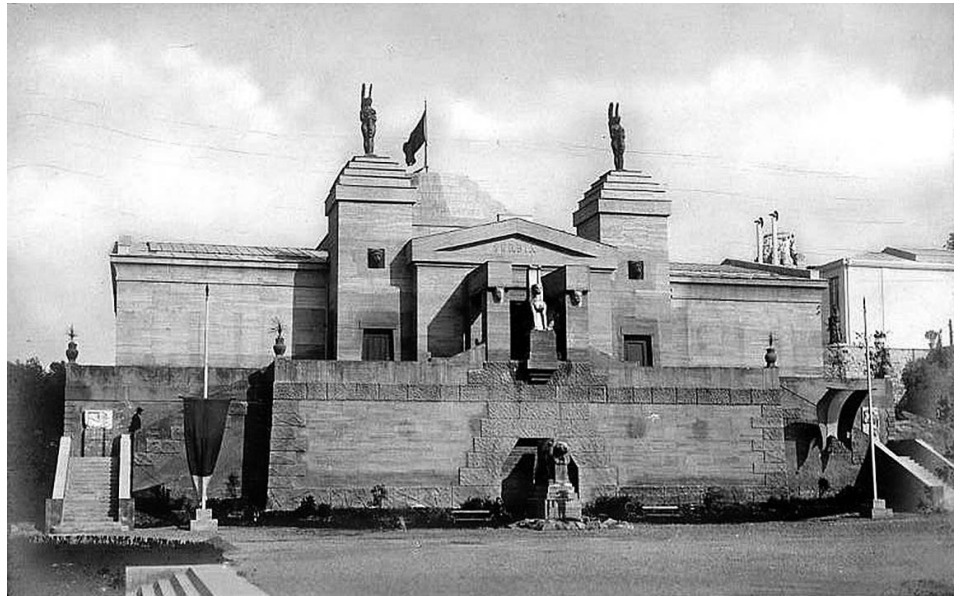
6 Kečkemet, *Život Ivana Meštrovića*, 202; Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje* [Memories of Political People and Events] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1969), 16–17.

7 Bulimbašić, “Prilog identifikaciji djela Ivana Meštrovića,” 156; Kečkemet, *Život Ivana Meštrovića*, 206; Kraševac, *Ivan Meštrović i secesija*, 123.

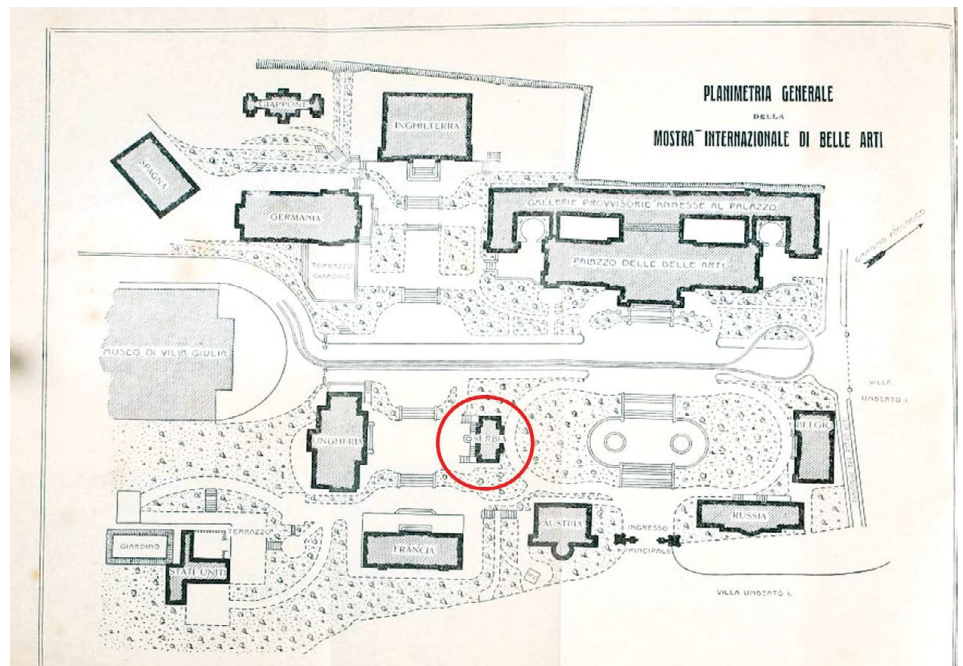
8 Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene*, 17. All translations are by the author. See also Sandi Bulimbašić, *Društvo hrvatskih umjetnika “Medulić” (1908.–1919.): umjetnost i politika* [The Association of Croatian Artists “Medulić”



**Fig. 1.** The Serbian pavilion in Rome, 1911, postcard, Il museo del Louvre, Rome, accessed on November 24, 2021, <https://www.ilmuseodelouvre.com/prodotto/esposizione-internazionale-di-belle-arti-roma-1911-4-cartoline/>.



**Fig. 2.** Planimetria Generale della Mostra Internazionale di belle arti [General plan of the International Fine Arts Exhibition], 1911, in: *Catalogo della Mostra di Belle Arti* (Roma, 1911), accessed on November 24, 2021, <https://archive.org/details/catalogodellamo-s00inte/page/n5/mode/2up?view=theater>. The Serbian Pavilion is marked in red by the author.



The Kingdom of Serbia received an invitation to participate in the exhibition in 1908, but Meštrović's proposal to join was a key incentive for them to decide to participate. The pavilion was designed by the Serbian architect Petar S. Bajalović with a large share of Meštrović's ideas, since the architectural and artistic concept was supposed to present the appearance of the future Vidovdan Temple (**fig. 1**). The Serbian pavilion was officially opened on April 10, 1911, and out of a total of 222 exhibited works, 77 were Meštrović's, while out of six halls, four featured Meštrović's works. It is an interesting coincidence that

(1908–1919): Art and Politics] (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2016), 163–225; Kečkemet, *Život Ivana Meštrovića*, 210–211; Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene*, 16–17; Petar Prelog, *Hrvatska moderna umjetnost i nacionalni identitet* [Croatian Modern Art and National Identity] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2018), 94–97.

the pavilion of the Kingdom of Serbia was located in the immediate vicinity of Austrian and Hungarian pavilions, which probably provoked even more political interpretations and emphasized the revolt of Croatian artists (fig. 2). Although neither the name of the pavilion nor the catalogue allowed the term “Croatian” to be mentioned, the great success of Croatian artists resonated in the media, and Meštrović himself won the first prize for sculpture.<sup>9</sup>

## LOCAL REACTIONS TO MEŠTROVIĆ’S ROMAN TRIUMPH

It is interesting to see how Meštrović’s success in Rome was accepted in his hometown in as much as the artist, who came from a small provincial village, had achieved world-class renown. The Dalmatian press of the time dedicated numerous articles to him, which have been elaborated in detail by Sandi Bulimbašić and Duško Kečkemet. Valuable personal impressions are preserved by private letters that Meštrović received from his homeland.

Doctor Filip Davidović Marušić (1874–1944) was the main link between Meštrović and his family in Otavice in the pre-war period. In March 1911, he wrote to Meštrović to say that they were reassured by his letter from Rome because his father was very upset by the news of the great damage to the sculptures intended for exhibitions in Rome that happened during transport to Belgrade.<sup>10</sup> At the time of writing, the works were almost ready for the exhibition, as the opening took place on April 11. In the letter, he also mentioned a fountain, which had been a topic in their correspondence since 1909, and will be discussed in more detail later in the text. In May, Marušić wrote a long letter congratulating Meštrović on his great success at the international exhibition, stressing that all “our and Serbian newspapers” were full of news about him, and describing the celebration in Otavice:

Secondly, 15 days ago, the ‘Sokol’ club from Drniš together with the brass band went to Otavice to greet your parents and your family home, and the mayor as *starosta*,<sup>11</sup> and I as *podstarosta* (*substarosta*) accompanied the troop. Your father greeted us with Slavic hospitality by offering us bread and salt at the entrance. Your old man was overjoyed and blissful. Half of the citizens of Drniš and many villagers gathered in Otavice. Several photos

9 Katarina Ambrozić, “Paviljon Srbije na Međunarodnoj izložbi u Rimu 1911. godine” [Pavilion of Serbia at the International Exhibition in Rome in 1911], in *Zbornik radova Narodnog muzeja*, III, ed. Draga Garašanin et. al. (Beograd: Narodni muzej, 1960–1961), 238–239; Bulimbašić, *Društvo hrvatskih umjetnika “Medulić”*, 227–242; Zvezdana Elezović, “Kosovske teme paviliona Kraljevine Srbije na međunarodnoj izložbi” [Kosovo Themes of the Pavilion of the Kingdom of Serbia at the International Exhibition], *БАШТИНА*, no. 27 (2009): 261–267; Kečkemet, *Život Ivana Meštrovića*, 222–240; Vesna Barbić, “Meštrović i arhitekti” [Meštrović and Architects], in *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, book 423, Class of Fine Arts Book XIII, ed. Andre Mohorovičić (Zagreb: JAZU, 1986), 152–154.

10 Filip D. Marušić, Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], March 23, 1911, Ident. No. 550 A3. Owned by Mate Meštrović, Letters in Storage of Atelijer Meštrović, Zagreb (hereafter cited as AM).

11 Chairman of “Sokol”, from Czech.

12 Filip D. Marušić, Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], May 18, 1911, Ident. No. 550 A4. Owned by Mate Meštrović, AM.



**Fig. 3.** Ivan Meštrović, *St. Rochus*, 1911, bronze, Drniš City Museum (The relief disappeared during the Homeland War).

were taken by our humble amateurs; I am sending you only two, and I will send the rest of them when they are done.<sup>12</sup>

Ivan Meštrović also received a congratulatory message from the Municipality of Vrlika while in Rome. Mayor Joso Kulišić began the letter with words: “Asan-Aginica conquered and touched Fortis, Goethe, Grimm and Miller and your Marko with other heroes conquered modern Europe and the world.”<sup>13</sup> Congratulations were also published in the Šibenik political newspaper *Naprednjak*, which salute the “embodiment of our hopes and our aspirations” in Meštrović’s success.<sup>14</sup> Most of the negative criticism was due to the concealment of Meštrović’s Croatian name,<sup>15</sup> but it should be noted that Meštrović’s attitude towards the nation and Yugoslavism was partly conditioned by the fact that he grew up in an environment in which Serbs and Croats lived in harmonious coexistence.

The success Meštrović achieved at the exhibition in Rome certainly contributed to local orders and commissions. In the summer of 1911, he stayed in his native Otavice, during which time he made

a relief for the Municipality of Drniš depicting *Sveti Rok* (St. Rochus) as the Municipal Coat of Arms (**fig. 3**). The political periodical *Naprednjak* reported on the installation of the work on the Municipal building: “A few days ago, the sculptor Meštrović left us. During his stay he made the municipal coat of arms, which now adorns the façade of the municipal building. This coat of arms depicts St. Rochus, as he is usually portrayed with a dog and in pain. The work is artistic and perfect, and cost the municipality 2,000 crowns.”<sup>16</sup> The article also mentions that Meštrović would build a well for the city the following year.

Meštrović’s close friend, doctor Filip Davidović Marušić, wrote to him about the enthusiasm of local people: “The day before yesterday, they put your coat of arms on the Municipality, everyone likes it, you can constantly see a group of people watching and stopping in front of it.”<sup>17</sup> If Marušić was

13 Joso Kulišić, Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], [the date of the letter is not recorded], 1911, Ident. No. 625 A3. Owned by Mate Meštrović, AM. Asan-Aginica (Hasanaginica) is a folk ballad that was composed between 1646 and 1649. It was transmitted in oral form for generations, until it was written down in 1774 by the Italian travel writer and ethnographer Alberto Fortis.

14 “Bilješke. Živio Meštrović” [Notes. Long live Meštrović], *Naprednjak*, November 24, 1911, 2.

15 For more on such negative reviews, see Norka Machiedo Mladinić, “Političko opredjeljivanje mladog Meštrovića” [The Political Orientation of the Young Meštrović], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 1 (2009): 153–161.

16 Kruno, “Drniš” [Drniš], *Naprednjak*, November 21, 1911, 2.

17 Filip D. Marušić, Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], November 9, 1911, Ident. No. 550 A5. Owned by Mate Meštrović, AM.



precise in recalling the day of the installation, the relief was installed on the November 7, 1911 (fig. 4). The plaster model according to which it was cast has not been preserved, but from written correspondence with the foundryman Srpek from Vienna, it is known that the cost of its casting was 300 crowns. The model for the figure of the saint was one Božo Čulina from Drniš.<sup>18</sup>

The fountain or well mentioned in article was an earlier idea of Meštrović's, and he tried to use the fame he gained at the exhibition in Rome to ensure its realization in Drniš. In 1909, Dr. Marušić wrote that Poljana Square would be a good location for the fountain, specifically on the site of the demolished Manojlović (Malivuk) house.<sup>19</sup> In the previously mentioned letter from March 1911, Marušić writes that he will go to the Municipality again to negotiate the fountain, which implies that the commission had not been precisely defined before. This is confirmed

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by Roko Stojanov's letter from January 1911 informing Meštrović that Mayor Ivan Skelin and Secretary Josip Regner claim that there is no agreement between the Municipality of Drniš and the artist. The Council had not approved the project and the Municipality's finances were too modest to indulge in it.<sup>20</sup> However, after the big celebration in Otavice on the occasion of Meštrović's first prize for sculpture in Rome, Dr. Marušić wrote to Meštrović that Mayor Skelin promised to include a fountain in the Municipality's budget for the following year, 1912. The poor financial situation of the Municipality of Drniš was constant, but in the celebratory euphoria over the artist's success, Skelin made a promise that he would not be able to fulfil. In his letters, Marušić also mentions to Meštrović that he might commission a project for a family villa, but for an unknown reason, this project also remained unrealized.

Meštrović's Roman success also led to an attempt to realize another monument – the monument to Dositej Obradović (1739–1811) in the village of

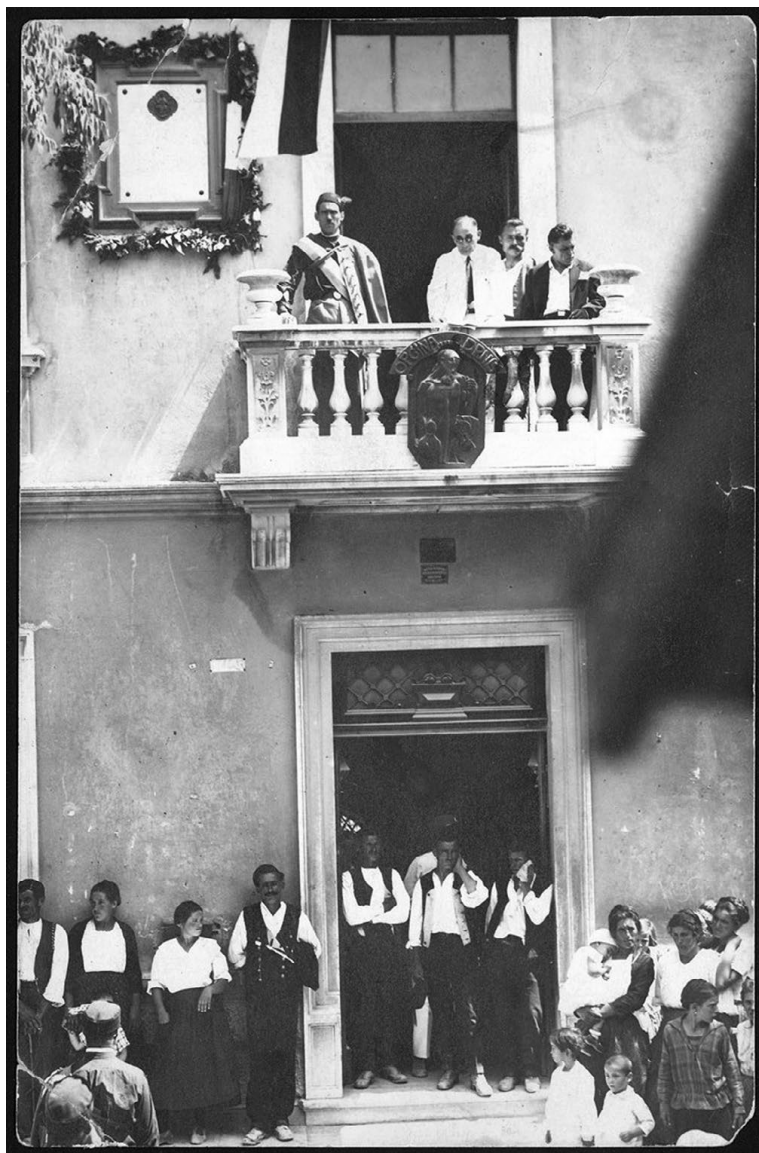


Fig. 4. The Municipal Building in Drniš, August 16, 1928, Drniš City Museum.

18 Vesna Barbić, *Meštrović: Drniš–Otavice* (Drniš, Zagreb: Centar za kulturu, obrazovanje i informacije, 1983), 7.

19 Filip D. Marušić, *Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću* [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], August 24, 1909, Ident. No. 550 A1. Owned by Mate Meštrović, AM.

20 Roko Stojanov, *Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću* [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], January 28, 1911, Ident. No. 815 A1. Owned by Mate Meštrović, AM.



**Fig. 5.** Ivan Meštrović, *Dositej Obradović, av. Dositej Obradović srpskohrvatski prosvjetitelj (Dositej Obradović Serbo-Croatian enlightener)*, 1911, bronze medal, Drniš City Museum. Photograph by Antonia Tomić.

**Fig. 6.** Ivan Meštrović, *Dositej Obradović, ru. Članu utemeljitelju Dositejeva spomenika na dalmatinskom Kosovu (To the Founding Member of Dositej's Monument in Dalmatian Kosovo)*, 1911, bronze medal, Drniš City Museum. Photograph by Antonia Tomić.

Kosovo near Knin, in particular because 1911 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of this Serbian revivalist. In Knin, the idea of building a house of culture dedicated to Obradović accompanied by a monument made by Meštrović developed. Since the elections for the Imperial Council were held in June 1911, just before the feast of St. Vitus (sveti Vid), an important Serbian holiday,<sup>21</sup> a group of politicians including Josip Smodlaka, Juraj Biankini, Melko Čingrija and Drniš Mayor Ivan Skelin gathered in Dalmatian Kosovo to celebrate Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day). Meštrović and Dr. Filip D. Marušić joined them.<sup>22</sup> This was an opportunity for the two of them to share more casual conversations and to improve their acquaintance, which facilitated their later communication.

A Central Committee consisting of Serbs and Croats from Drniš, Knin and Vrlika was formed to organize fundraising for the monument and oversee its implementation. The president was Vladimir Jović, and the other members were Dr. Hugo Monti, Sava Đ. Omčikus, Petar Požar, Đordje Jovičić, Dr. Filip Marušić, Dušan Miović, Petar Drezga, Ivo Miović, Simo Manojlović, Krsto Kulišić, Stjepan Roca, Josip Perković, and Simo Korolija.<sup>23</sup> To raise funds for the monument, Meštrović made a medallion, 2,000 copies of which were cast in bronze and sold at a price of ten crowns apiece, while 100 copies in silver were priced at 100 crowns apiece (**fig. 5, fig. 6**). A memorial document was offered in exchange for donations of one crown. All donors and founders were to be inscribed on a parchment to be included on the pedestal.<sup>24</sup> Despite

21 According to the Julian calendar the feast is celebrated on June 15, while according to the Gregorian calendar it is on June 28.

22 The newspapers *Narodni list* and *Sloboda* reported on political elections and on the celebration of Vidovdan, see *Narodni list*, June 21, June 24, June 28, July 1, and July 5, 1911; see *Sloboda*, June 17, June 28, and July 1, 1911.

23 “Domaće vijesti” [Local News], *Narodni list*, December 15, 1911, 3.

24 “Meštrović i Dositeje Obradović,” *Dubrovnik*, November 11, 1911, 2; Karlo Kosor, “Drniš u ogledalu tiska za hrvatskog narodnog preporoda u Dalmaciji: 1860.–1921.” [Drniš in the Mirror of the Press for the Croatian National Revival in Dalmatia: 1860–1921], in *Povijest Drniške krajine*, ed. fra Ante Čavka (Split: self-published,





Fig. 7. The Meštrović Family Home in Otavice shortly after construction, FGM-453, Meštrović Gallery, Split.

initial enthusiasm, the fundraiser did not go as well as hoped. In January 1912, Dr. Marušić wrote to Meštrović that 1,500 crowns had been raised at a lunch for St. Sava; he also mentioned the total figure of 10,000 crowns, and noted that more sketches of the monument should be sent to make it easier to raise funds.<sup>25</sup> It became clear that the monument would not be completed until Vidovdan in 1912, and in June the Committee issued an official statement that the realization of the monument would be prolonged.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, World War I broke out, and the idea of a monument fell completely into oblivion.

Not all of Meštrović's projects in and around Drniš had such a bad fate. The largest project realized before World War I was of a private nature: the design and construction of a new family house in Otavice. Since the success of the exhibition in Rome was accompanied by a cash prize, Meštrović was able to embark on the realization of his first architectural work. The artist's daughter Marija states that the project was conceived a few days after he received the award in Rome, and the construction of the house was supervised by engineer Viktor Procunkijević.<sup>27</sup> However, a postcard dating

from 1910 that is preserved in the Archives of the Meštrović Atelier includes a sketch very similar to the later family house,<sup>28</sup> suggesting that Meštrović planned to build a new family home even before he won the award, and that he was merely waiting for the right opportunity (fig. 7). Construction work lasted until the end of 1912, a fact that is confirmed by a letter from Dr. Marušić from

1995), 388; Vojin D. Kalinić, "Kulturni preporod Srba u sjevernoj Dalmaciji od 1848. do 1914. godine" [Cultural Revival of Serbs in Northern Dalmatia 1848–1914] (PhD diss., University of Belgrade, 2014), 156–158.

25 It is not clear whether 10,000 crowns were collected or whether this is the amount that was still missing because the letter is damaged in the middle of the paper. See Filip D. Marušić, Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], January 29, 1912, Ident. No. 550 A7. Owned by Mate Meštrović, AM.

26 Kalinić, "Kulturni preporod Srba," 158.

27 Barbić, "Meštrović i arhitekti," 156; Zorana Jurić Šabić, *U Meštrovićeovom rodnom kraju* [In the Native Land of Ivan Meštrović] (Split: Muzeji Ivana Meštrovića, 2010), 21; Zorana Jurić Šabić, *Crkva Presvetog Otkupitelja* [The Church of the Most Holy Redeemer] (Split: Muzeji Ivana Meštrovića, 2020), 47; Marija Meštrović, *Život i djelo Ivana Meštrovića* [Life and Work of Ivan Meštrović] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2011), 73, [first edition: Maria Meštrović, *Ivan Meštrović – The making of a Master* (London: Stacey International, 2008)].

28 Ana Deanović, "Meštrovićevi prostori" [The Architecture of Ivan Meštrović], in *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, book 423, Class of Fine Arts Book XIII, ed. Andre Mohorovičić (Zagreb: JAZU, 1986) 21, 106–107.

January 1913 which states: “Your house with a roof now looks great, and in every way the house has succeeded perfectly.”<sup>29</sup> During 1912, Meštrović wrote to Šime Grubišić that the work would take longer than he had expected. In letters written during October and December, Meštrović cites Drniš as the place of composition, which means that he himself supervised the work at the time. In April 1913, while in Rome, he commissioned Grubišić to make two wooden beds with the same carpenter who made wooden windows.<sup>30</sup>

The house consists of several combined architectural segments: one part is a two-storey building with a porch on the ground floor and a terrace on the first floor, covered with a gabled roof, while the other part has three floors, two in a simple rectangular shape and the third on an octagonal plan with a tent roof. The house, with its recognizably Art Nouveau characteristics, was completed before World War I, and today stands out among local family houses due to its proportions, its construction from hewn stone and generally because of its modular architectural form. With money from the Rome prize and from the sale of the sculptures he presented there, Meštrović raised enough funds to provide his parents with a magnificent home that, compared to their old house, looked like a manor house.

## CONCLUSION

The International Fine Arts Exhibition in Rome was a major art event, but also a testing ground for political views and positioning on the global political map. The aim of Serbian Pavilion was to represent a newly-created Yugoslav national artistic style and to reflect the Yugoslav national idea. These intentions were evident in the selection of artists and their works. Ivan Meštrović imposed himself as a key artistic figure during planning the Serbian performance at the exhibition. The fact that he played a large part in the design of the pavilion and that he was also a member of the jury that selected the other exhibitors suggests that he was consciously aware that the Roman exhibition would be a suitable platform for establishing himself as an artist on the international stage.

His courageous appearance came at a politically opportune time, when other European states wanted to weaken the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and art served as one of the available weapons. However, it would be wrong to claim that Meštrović's work was exclusively a means to a political end. He managed to stand out at the Roman exhibition through his artistic expression, which was much bolder and more eclectic than the critics of the time were accustomed to. With the works from *Vidovdanski ciklus* (the Vidovdan cycle), he won the first prize for sculpture, which secured him a place on the world art scene. Great international success, as expected, was celebrated in his local community.

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29 Filip D. Marušić, Pismo Ivanu Meštroviću [Letter to Ivan Meštrović], January 22, 1913, Ident. No. 550 A10. Owned by Mate Meštrović, AM.

30 Ivan Meštrović, Letters to Šime Grubišić, 1912–1913, Vice Iljadica Personal Fund (1869–1953), HR-DAŠI-181, Državni arhiv u Šibeniku [State Archive in Šibenik].

The echoes of the Roman exhibition, according to the available documentation, can be viewed in two ways – from the position of local authorities and from the position of the artist himself. The press was full of praise for Meštrović, and the common people identified with an uneducated young man from Otavice who, due to his work, found himself among the leading names in the European art scene. But at the same time, he was expected to make some kind of contribution to his homeland. This is evident in the attempt to erect a monument to Dositej Obradović in Dalmatian Kosovo, because the media reported that Meštrović would make the statue almost for free. Simultaneously, the Meštrović tried to obtain orders from local authorities on the basis of his newly acquired fame. Years before the Roman exhibition, he attempted to persuade the mayor of Drniš to commission a fountain for the town. Although the mayor initially opposed such an idea, in the euphoria over the award in Rome, he promised to provide funds for the fountain. Unfortunately, after the celebrations subsided, local authorities became aware of the modest state of the city treasury, while the city government also changed hands in the meantime – the city was taken over by the Stranka prava (Party of Rights), which was not predisposed to Meštrović's Yugoslav ideas.

However, one public sculpture was realized for the town of Drniš: the relief depicting St. Rochus, which constitutes the coat of arms of the Municipality of Drniš. Apart from being Meštrović's first work made for public display in the city, it is also a symbolic reminder of his great success in Rome. The same symbolism is borne by another "first" work by Meštrović – a family house in Otavice, which represents the first architectural project of the artist. Although the Roman Award was not followed by the construction of a magnificent public monument, Meštrović still achieved satisfaction on a private level.

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## THE 1906 IMPERIAL-ROYAL AUSTRIAN EXHIBITION IN LONDON: REPRESENTING DALMATIA\*

### Abstract

*The Imperial Exhibition, which took place at Earl's Court in 1906, offered insight into the industrial goods, ethnographic heritage, natural features and artistic production of the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was staged to display the economic prosperity and picturesque varieties of the kingdom. At that time, the region of Dalmatia was under the direct administration of Vienna, and the organization of the exhibition took place under the authority of the ministries of Vienna. Numerous obstacles appeared during the organisation of the Dalmatian section, and the final goals of the project, as well as the results presented to the Austrian authorities, Dalmatian exhibitors and the British audience, can be traced through the local press and artists' biographies. Commercial interests overshadowed animosities that would soon culminate in the Great War, but Dalmatian artists and producers nevertheless used this opportunity for self-presentation and economic development.*

**Keywords:** Imperial-  
Royal Austrian Exhibition,  
Dalmatia, London, Earl's  
Court, 1906

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### INTRODUCTION

The 1906 Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition in London was opened on May 5 and lasted until October 6. It was organized at Earl's Court in London, an exhibition area that hosted seasonal expositions, sending "...visitors through on imaginary tours through time and space."<sup>1</sup> London saw the opening of several exhibitions at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the large Paris Exhibition in 1902; the Italian Exhibition (Venice by Night) in 1904; the Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition in 1905; the Palestine in London Exhibition in 1907; and, the Balkan States Exhibition in 1907. In 1906, Austrian industrial products and the country's natural attractions were presented to a British public, representing another in a long line of spectacles offered to London audiences.<sup>2</sup>

The coastal region of Dalmatia in Croatia was known as the Kingdom of Dalmatia during this period. As the southernmost crown land of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and part of Cisleithania, it extended from the Quarnero in the north to the hills near Lake Skadar in Montenegro in the south, between

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1 Alexander C.T. Geppert, "True Copies: Time and Space Travels at British Imperial Exhibitions, 1880–1930," in *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600–2000*, ed. Hartmut Berghoff, Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider and Christopher Harvie (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 223.

2 Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 245.

the hinterlands and the Adriatic Sea. As part of the Habsburg Empire, it was therefore included in the Austrian Exhibition along with national displays in the Bohemian and Galician-Polish pavilions.

A typical feature of these kinds of exhibitions was the positioning of modernity and tradition side by side, with historical and contemporary elements interlaced at every turn. Earl's Court also became a large amusement park with music pavilions and fanciful attractions such as the Cavern of the Sirens, the Temple of a Thousand Eyes, the Helter Skelter Light House, a gigantic wheel and a reproduction of a salt mine. The official guide to this exhibition was equipped with all kinds of information about which railway lines visitors could take to reach it, and there was also an enormous amusement area containing a variety of different restaurants and buffets, which had been organised to attract and keep the attention of visitors of various ages and educational backgrounds.<sup>3</sup>

## THE ORGANISATION AND STAGING OF THE EXHIBITION

This large-scale exposition was organised and staged by the Austrian government, with the cooperation of Austrian Chambers of Commerce and Industrial Societies, the Lower Austrian Trades Association, and the Austro-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in London. The entire exhibition was under the patronage of the Prince of Wales. This attempt to assemble and concentrate the production of the Austrian empire in one place had British royal support, a fact that was highlighted during the exhibition period with photographs and articles illustrating the king's interest in the exhibition's amusement areas, noting that he visited the "Tyrol village, Queen's Palace (...) art galleries and Picturesque Austria, and lunched in Vienna restaurants."<sup>4</sup>

The royal support of the Habsburgs was also emphasised from February 1906 onwards. While preparations for the exhibition were entering their final phase, the Austro-Hungarian Consul General in London stated that: "Emperor Francis Joseph takes a keen interest in all matters connected with this project. (...) His Majesty expressed the hope that the undertaking would prove a brilliant success, and displayed great anxiety that only articles which were typical of the highest quality of Austrian art should be sent to England."<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the exposition's official title, the Imperial-Royal Exhibition, as well as the royal engagement on both sides, demonstrated mutual political respect and implied stronger future economic ties. Emperor Franz Joseph's 76<sup>th</sup> birthday was also celebrated at the exhibition: the buildings in Earl's Court were decorated with flags, mottoes and bunting during the day, and illuminated

<sup>3</sup> All this information is taken from the *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue* (London: Gale & Polden, 1906), HathiTrust Digital Library, accessed June 15, 2021, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=gri.ark:/13960/t6h16w15b&view=1up&seq=2>.

<sup>4</sup> "The King at the Austrian Exhibition in Earl's Court," *The Graphic*, May 26, 1906, 666.

<sup>5</sup> "Austrian Exhibition," *The Airdrie and Coatbridge Advertiser*, February 10, 1906, 2.



with fairy lights and Chinese lanterns in the evening. Fireworks and music performed by three bands also amused visitors, many of whom were Austrians, according to the newspapers.<sup>6</sup>

Austrian industrial products, manufactures, fine and decorative arts, food and pleasure parks, rural regions and history were combined to demonstrate the social, civil and industrial progress of the Empire, but the title of the exhibition, which stressed the royal-imperial element, had an anachronistic echo that overshadowed the concept of proclaimed modernisation. In his introduction to the *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue* (1906), Dr. Rudolf Kobatsch explained the origins and concept of the Austrian Exhibition in London as arising from the desire to present unknown industrial products to world markets:

In order, therefore, to bring before the most important and largest public in the world – the inhabitants of Great Britain and the British Colonies – an imposing representation of Austria’s natural and acquired advantages, as well as its industrial and artistic activity, the idea has occurred to some patriotic Austrians to organize an Austrian Exhibition in London, this being, doubtless, the finest market in the universe.<sup>7</sup>

Commercial relations between the two countries were the main goal of this complex event, but presenting Austria as “the old country of education and industry,”<sup>8</sup> where united nations lived in prosperity, was also underlined and visible in the concept. However, just a quick look at the organising committee, the displays and the representation concept is enough to reveal the marginal position of the provinces – the kingdoms of Bohemia, Galicia and Dalmatia.

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## THE EXHIBITION AREA

The central parts of Earl’s Court were reserved for presenting Austrian industry and mining goods, crafts and potential tourist destinations. The Queen’s Palace sections displayed decorative and applied arts, scientific appliances, furniture and jewellery. The Royal Galleries section hosted fine arts and the “Trip through Austria”, as well as exhibits presenting the city of Vienna and a health resort to visitors. The Imperial Court sections contained machinery, metal goods, timber, graphic art and tobacco. The wing which led to the amusement area, meanwhile, was reserved for the Bohemian, Galician and Dalmatian sections.<sup>9</sup>

The organisation of the Dalmatian section was guided by the President of the Association for the Promotion of the Lace and Home Industries of the

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6 “A Merry Evening at Earl’s Court,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 20, 1906, 5.

7 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 23.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 12.

Kingdom of Dalmatia, Count Johann Harrach, and Felix Stiassny, President of the Dalmatian Committee. It faced many obstacles from the very beginning. According to the *Official Guide & Catalogue*, which stressed the role of the official committee, Dalmatian producers were encouraged to participate by two Dalmatians – Juraj Biankini and Dr. Josip Luxardo – who repeatedly published articles in Dalmatian newspapers, while Nikola Nardelli, the Governor of Dalmatia (and of Dalmatian origin himself), also helped in its promotion.<sup>10</sup>

Dalmatian newspapers of the time displayed clear suspicions of a presentation concept that had been organised in Vienna. Zadar's *Narodni list*, the official newspaper of the Dalmatian capital, criticised Dalmatian indolence, noting that as of January 15, 1906, only a few potential exhibitors had submitted their products for inclusion in the project.<sup>11</sup> Potential exhibitors from Dalmatia were motivated by the news that separate pavilions were to be secured for their products, and that the Dalmatian government was also involved in the organisation of the exhibition, with Nikola Nardelli, the vice-president of the organisation board, also responsible for motivating producers to participate.<sup>12</sup> On a local level the situation is visible in Dubrovnik newspapers – Dubrovnik's Chamber of Crafts appealed to producers from the region to send products to Vienna for the London exhibition until January 20, emphasising that there was no fee, and that all costs would be met by the Dalmatian Board in Vienna.<sup>13</sup> The Austrian authorities were extremely eager for a Dalmatian section to be present at the exhibition, because the absence of any one region of the Empire would suggest to English audiences the existence of internal tensions and the weakness of the government. Potential exhibitors were thus invited to participate several times, and any lack of faith in the organisation was done away with by the guarantee that the shipping costs of all items to Vienna, and from thence to London, would be paid for by the Viennese government.

The Dalmatian section was staged in Elysia, a depiction of a “provincial town in Upper Austria”<sup>14</sup> within the idea of an exterior frame of the exhibition, where the Austrian character was stressed by recurring emblems and the colour scheme. The Austrian exhibition had carefully designed visual characteristics, with continuously repeated emblems and national colours. The existing buildings were also subordinated to this concept in terms of decoration.<sup>15</sup> The display was situated in two pavilions over an area of 100 square metres. The larger pavilion was devoted to “Art and Industry”, where products from

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10 Ibid., 123.

11 “Londonska izložba i dalmatinska indolencija” [The London Exhibition and Dalmatian Indolence], *Narodni list*, January 25, 1906, 1.

12 “Dalmacija na londonskoj izložbi” [Dalmatia at the London Exhibition], *Crvena Hrvatska*, December 14, 1905, 3.

13 “Za londonsku izložbu iz Dalmacije” [For the London Exhibition, from Dalmatia], *Prava Crvena Hrvatska*, January 6, 1906, 3.

14 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 127.

15 Ibid., 126–127.

Fig. 1. Argent Archer, Dalmatian pavilion, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.



mostly traditional industries and mineral goods were displayed, along with pictures and sculptures by Dalmatian artists.<sup>16</sup> The carefully stage-managed picture of Dalmatia corresponds to the official policy – Dalmatia, as the most backward province in that period, but also a highly important strategic region, has become a tourist destination whose products are intended for this promising industry. The ubiquitous encouragement of the craft of lacemaking was supposed to provide employment for the female population, and offer tourists local souvenirs. The rural character of the country was articulated by the display of numerous ethnographic products, and was supposed to suggest an image of a country without history or science which possessed only the occasional modern artist (**fig. 1**).

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The imperial view of Dalmatia is best reflected in the compendium *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild*, the eleventh volume of which was published in 1892 and dedicated to Dalmatia.<sup>17</sup> It offered an overview of the history of the region, the most significant cities, notable natural features and contemporary economic conditions. An imbalance between this historical depiction and the bleak reality is particularly noticeable here. The disparity between the rich history of this country as the ancient meeting-point between East and West, and the underdeveloped contemporary economic situation, remained outside the exhibition space, because the Dalmatia presented was reduced to a mere magnet for a fast-growing industry – tourism. Dalmatia's rich

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 123–124.

<sup>17</sup> *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild: Dalmatien* [The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Words and Pictures: Dalmatia], vol. 11 (Vienna: k.k. Hof-und Staatsdruckerei, Alfred von Hölder, 1892), accessed July 25, 2021, <https://austria-forum.org/web-books/kpwde11de1892onb>.



Fig. 2. Argent Archer, Exhibition hall with Dalmatian exhibits and portrait of Archduchess Maria Josepha, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.

heritage was presented to the London public by the Archaeological Museum of Split, which was also the only Dalmatian cultural institution represented at the exhibition. The museum's curator, Frane Bulić, offered a collection of books and ancient artefacts kept in the museum building in Split. The Archaeological Museum's collection suggested that the region possessed an ancient history and was home to numerous ancient monuments, thus emphasising Dalmatia's attractiveness as a tourist destination.

Inherent to this conception were the private collectors who likewise responded to the call for exhibitors and offered ancient weapons and ethnographic treasures from their private collections for display. The invitation to visit this land of beautiful nature and interesting local products was further emphasised by the display of the Duke of Coburg-Gotha's hunting trophy – a small stuffed jackal – because hunting was also frequently advertised as entertainment for potential visitors in this era (fig. 2).

The scenography was complemented by portraits of Archduchess Maria Josefa and Count Johann Harrach zu Rohrau in fashionable urban clothes, which presented a stark contrast to the rural scenography of the Dalmatian products. The Archduchess' portrait demonstrated her patronage and dedication to the development of lacemaking and the preservation of traditional folk textiles in Dalmatia. She travelled to the eastern coast of the Adriatic multiple times, in 1902, 1907 and 1909, and visited most of Dalmatia over the course of these visits, focused on the educational institutions, archaeological sites and natural

18 Stanko Piplović, "Marija Jozefa zaštitnica narodne umjetnosti Dalmacije" [Maria Josepha, Protector of the Home Industry of Dalmatia], *Ethnologica Dalmatica*, no. 9 (2000): 139–147.

attractions, and encouraged the development of local crafts.<sup>18</sup> The portrait of Count Johann Harrach, the President of the Association for the Promotion of the Lace and Home Industries of the Kingdom of Dalmatia, hinted at his role in the organisation of the exhibition and his contributions to the preparation of the Dalmatian products for the London exhibition. The portraits of these patrons, displayed in the centre of the exhibition space in a raised position, further enhanced the impression of an undeveloped and backward region, over which the government and the imperial family ruled, stimulating and directing the region's development. This binary code was also evident in the disposition of the pavilion toward the city of Vienna, with paintings of prominent buildings, portraits of great composers and their houses, the amusements of Viennese citizens and much evidence of its rich history and civilizational achievements; a contrast between the cosmopolitan and the provincial was therefore visible in many parts of Earl's Court.

In this picture of the united nations of the Habsburg Empire, Dalmatia was presented as a country without history, lacking its own intellectual forces, possessing only splendid natural beauty waiting to be discovered by tourists. The artworks of the six artists invited to participate in the exhibition had to reflect this visually. These artworks included two landscapes by Emanuel Vidović, ten landscapes by Marko Rašica, and five landscapes by Leontine von Littrow. Vlaho Bukovac, a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague at that time, sent ten figural paintings and portraits depicting religious themes. Antonietta Bogdanović Cettineo sent a portrait and Ivan Meštrović sent a few plaster figural models, dubbed "Sculptures" in the official Fine Arts catalogue of the Imperial-Royal Austrian exhibition.<sup>19</sup> These artworks feature apolitical themes, and there are no historical compositions depicting, for instance, events from Croatian history. The selection of artworks thus served as an illustration of the exhibition's narrative of unity and satisfaction under the Habsburg crown (**fig. 3**).

The selection of artists was organized by the Committee for the Exhibition of Fine Arts, and the members of this committee were representatives of art associations – the Society of Austrian Artists Secession; the Artists League Hagen, Vienna; the Society of Artists Manes, Prague; the Society of Polish Artists Sztuka, Cracow; the Society of Lovers of Fine Arts, Lemberg; the Artists Association, Vienna; the Art Gallery Künstlerhaus and Art-Union, Salzburg; and the Artists League Sava, Ljubljana.<sup>20</sup> The other members were August Denk, the President of the Lower Austrian Industrial Association, and Dr. Max Graf Wickenburg, from the Ministry of Public Instruction, while the

19 Joseph Urban, *Imp. Royal Austrian Exhibition: London, Earl's Court, 1906: Fine Arts* (Vienna: Christoph Reisser Söhne), 129–133, Internet Archive, accessed July 15, 2021, <https://archive.org/details/improyalaustrian-00urba/page/128/mode/2up>.

20 Urban, *Imp. Royal Austrian Exhibition: Fine Arts*, 3–4.

21 *Ibid.*, 3–5.





Fig. 3. Argent Archer, Part of Dalmatian pavilion with paintings and folk costumes, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.

director was Adolf Schwarz, Imperial Councillor.<sup>21</sup> The delegate representing the eight women artists of the Vienna group was John Quincy Adams, while the Dalmatian selection, which appeared last in the catalogue, had no delegates.<sup>22</sup>

136 The selection of the artists and artworks for the Secession section did not include Gustav Klimt and the other founding members of the society.

The Dalmatian artists were united in a single space within the exhibition – Elysia – as they did not form a group and were heterogeneous in terms of their artistic biographies. Vlaho Bukovac was a professor at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts and a state employee, and Emanuel Vidović and Ivan Meštrović were already established artists who had previously exhibited at Hagenbund and Secession exhibitions in Vienna. Marko Rašica, meanwhile, was a student of the Fine Art Academy in Vienna, and the two female painters were also unknown to the audience. Although they did not appear in the exhibition, Dalmatia did in fact have more educated and established artists in that period than this selection would suggest, including Mato Celestin Medović and Josip Lalić, among others (fig. 4).

The selected artists were mentioned in the list of artworks displayed in the Royal Galleries section, under the title “Dalmatian Artists Exhibition in Elysia”, but their works were displayed along with Dalmatian wines, ethnographic materials, food products and other commercial goods, far from the main galleries. Another Croatian artist, the young and talented Antonija Krasnik, exhibited her works in London, but in the hall of the Association of the Eight Viennese Lady-Artists: two works entitled *St. George* and *A Horse’s Head*, both

22 Ibid., 3.

23 Ibid., 117.

Fig. 4. Argent Archer, Interior of Dalmatian pavilion, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.



in plaster.<sup>23</sup>

According to the memoirs of Marko Rašica, a student of the Viennese Fine Arts Academy at that time, members of the Organisation Board came to the Academy and invited him to present his *plein air* paintings of Dubrovnik landscapes, which he had created during his summer visits to Dubrovnik and painting sessions on Dubrovnik's islands and the surrounding region.<sup>24</sup> His student works were displayed in the Elysia pavilion and in the "Trip through Austria" section, the central exhibition area intended for promoting the natural beauty of different parts of the Monarchy.

The Organisation Board was aware of its own backwards position compared to regions that were well-known to tourists, namely Italy and France, so the narrative of the Monarchy's propaganda relied on natural diversity, stressing a contrast between the "mighty glaciers of Tyrol and subtropical coasts of Dalmatia, the ancient forests of Bohemia and Bukowina, and the fairy-like magnificence of the Karst's caves, the fabulous height of the Dolomites, and the Danube, the most beautiful river in central Europe" and a "landscape (that) never changed," Italy.<sup>25</sup> Driven by the desire for a place alongside France and Italy among countries that were attractive to tourists, they emphasised both the unique features of the regions under the Austrian crown, as well as the similarities to famous French locations: the Opatija (Italian: Abbazia; German: Sankt Jakobi) health resort was dubbed "The Austrian Nice", for instance.<sup>26</sup> The

24 Sanja Žaja Vrbica, *Marko Rašica* (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2014), 47.

25 *Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition, Official Guide & Catalogue*, 117.

26 *Ibid.*, 33.



Fig. 5. Argent Archer, Degustation of exhibited Dalmatian vines, 1906, photograph, The State Archives in Zadar.

natural beauties of Habsburg Austria were displayed in 250 large-scale photos arranged in a line that was occasionally interrupted by larger pictures, and above this a painted frieze of mountains and the Adriatic coast was displayed.<sup>27</sup>

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After five months each side could be satisfied with the exhibition's achievements; Earl's Court had hosted visitors in large numbers, sometimes 50,000 in a single day, spread all over the huge Earl's Court business and entertainment area, drawn to the exhibition by the advertisements that reappeared regularly in newspapers until the exhibition's final days.<sup>28</sup> The Dalmatian artists were noticed by the British press, despite being almost overlooked by visitors, as they were out of the main building. One journalist who discussed the works of all the Dalmatian artists at the exhibition concluded that "They are well worth visiting in Elysia."<sup>29</sup> It seems that the separate display, albeit one that combined art with liqueurs, honey, olive oil and oysters, didn't exclude artists, but rather prompted writers to highlight their location, in order to encourage more visitors to experience the artworks for themselves.<sup>30</sup> Croatian papers also triumphantly cited the comments made in London articles by the art connoisseurs.<sup>31</sup> Their success was also material, as Marko Rašica stated in his *Memoires* (1959) (fig. 5).<sup>32</sup>

27 Ibid., 118.

28 During the whole period in which the exhibition was open to visitors, advertisements appeared constantly in many newspapers, stressing in particular the last two weeks and last days. "Last Weeks, Austrian Exhibition, Earl's Court," *The Globe*, September 10, 1906, 10; "This Day," *The Morning Post*, October 4, 1906, 1; "Last 2 Days," *The Daily News*, October 5, 1906, 1.

29 "Art and Artists," *The Morning Post*, June 1, 1906, 9.

30 "Austrian Art at Earl's Court," *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, June 9, 1906, 584.

31 "Laskav engleški sud o našim umjetnicima" [The Flattering English Opinion on Our Artists], *Narodni list*, June 25, 1906, 1.

32 Vrbica, Marko Rašica, 48.

Austrian publications repeated the praises of the British press concerning the selection of artistic and industrial products available and the good organisation. They expressed optimism about future trade contracts. They also continually emphasised the involvement of the Austrian government, and the dedication to the organisation of the entire project, which presented the country's natural beauty and the diversity of its industrial production.<sup>33</sup> Alongside praise for the government's role in the organisation of the exhibition, emphasis was also placed on the interest that the Dalmatian pavilion excited in London visitors, and in particular the sale of ethnographic items.<sup>34</sup> Attention was drawn many times to the artists whose work was displayed at Earl's Court, along with notes on the Dalmatian section within Elysia. Emphasis was most often placed on the quality of the works by Vlaho Bukovac, along with the names of all the artists and titles of the artworks displayed.<sup>35</sup> Marko Rašica, who was a student at the time, likewise attracted the attention of critics, with his prominent depictions of "southern light and sea," but he was reduced to a contributor to the achievements of the collective group of "Austrian artists".<sup>36</sup>

The London publication *The Studio* dedicated a special issue to the artists from those regions that were at that time a part of the Monarchy. It was entitled *The Art-Revival in Austria* and was published in the summer of 1906, while the exhibition was open, and included a text on modern art written by Ludwig Hevesi. In this overview of the genesis of modern artistic movements, the author emphasised the significance of Art Nouveau and Gustav Klimt, whose work had not appeared at the exhibition in London. Following a section on Hagenbund, he discussed artists from other parts of the Monarchy, beginning the chapter with the introductory sentence, "The contribution of the Slav races to the artistic assets of the Monarchy is very considerable,"<sup>37</sup> in a manner typical of the era. He listed Polish and Czech artists, and named Vlaho Bukovac among the professors of the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, along with a short explanation about "the Parisian *pointillist*, a Dalmatian..."<sup>38</sup> This is unsurprising, as Vlaho Bukovac was the most prominent artist within the Dalmatian section, and his figural compositions were also singled out by English art critics as being worthy of notice.<sup>39</sup>

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33 "Die Eröffnung der Oesterreichischen Ausstellung in London" [Opening of the Austrian Exhibition in London], *Neue Freie Presse*, May 7, 1906, 8; "Neueste nachrichten. Telegramme des Telegraphen-Korrespondenz Bureau. Die Österreichische Ausstellung in London" [Latest news. Telegrams from the Telegraph Correspondence Bureau. The Austrian Exhibition in London], *Wiener Abendpost*, May 7, 1906, 1.

34 "Die Österreichische Ausstellung in London" [The Austrian Exhibition in London], *Das Abendblatt*, May 10, 1906, 1.

35 "Österreichische Ausstellung in London" [Austrian Exhibition in London], *Neue Freie Presse*, August 22, 1906, 6.

36 Paul Althof, "Die Österreichische Kunst in London" [Austrian Art in London], *Neue Freie Presse*, August 9, 1906, 7.

37 Ludwig Hevesi, "Modern Painting in Austria," *The Studio*, Special Summer number, (1906), A xi.

38 *Ibid.*, A xii.

39 "Art and Artists," *The Globe*, June 6, 1906, 3.



The goals relating to business and entertainment were for the most part achieved for all participants, as stated in the newspapers, which sang the praises of the exhibition with the usual enthusiasm reserved for such events. The Dalmatian organizers hoped to enter the large British market, but tourism was an unexpected benefit, as in the summer of 1906 a campaign for tourist visits to Dalmatia had already begun, entitled "Little Travelled Dalmatia".<sup>40</sup> British journalists highlighted lessons from small industries within the Austrian Empire, such as Dalmatian textile products, finding them "bright, and well-made, and artistic, and often beautiful textile products..." and opining that "England in (the) matter of real education, can sit at the foot of Austria..."<sup>41</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The short-term, largely private commercial success and the moral uplift that the Imperial-Royal Austrian Exhibition provided could not, however, change the harsh reality – the poverty and the economic backwardness of Dalmatia. The repressive political system of the Habsburg Monarchy constantly restrained the unification of Croatian territories. This slowed down the modernization process, and integration thus remained an unfulfilled goal. Infrastructural problems prevented any progress, the construction of a railway connection between the provinces of Slavonia, Dalmatia and Continental Croatia was not realized during the rule of the Monarchy, and the economic stagnation of Dalmatia incited a constant attitude of indignation in Viennese political circles.

The image of united nations living in harmony under the Austrian Empire was an illusion, presented by the organisation committee in London as a show presented for the exhibition's audience. Behind this temporarily staged picture, however, rumours of political disagreements and dissatisfaction grew stronger. They would culminate, in the following decade, in the Great War.

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40 "Little Travelled Dalmatia," *Evening Telegraph and post*, August 2, 1906, 6.

41 [E.E.W.], "Village Industry, The Practical Side of Earl's Court, Lessons from Austria," *The Standard*, June 30, 1906, 5.



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## THE STRATEGY OF SELF- PRESENTATION: THE 1930S OFFICIAL EXHIBITIONS OF AUSTRIAN AND HUNGARIAN ART IN WARSAW

### Abstract

*During the interwar decades, the dynamics of travelling exhibitions in Europe were to a large extent connected to cultural policies established in the particular nation-states of the continent, substantially reconfigured after World War I. The rationale behind this article is to juxtapose the strategies of self-presentation adopted by the two former pillars of the Habsburg Empire – Austria and Hungary. A comparison of two art exhibitions staged in Warsaw, namely an Austrian exposition inaugurated in May 1930 and a Hungarian show organized in April 1939, reveals a meaningful difference between the political goals set by the respective governments: that is, the Austrians' rhetoric of openness to the cultures of other nations, as opposed to the ethno-nationalist zeal of Hungarians who kept reinforcing their statehood, simultaneously reaffirming close cultural relations with their newly gained neighbour – the Second Polish Republic. This paper demonstrates that these two events were emblematic for the cultural diplomacy of both countries in the 1930s, despite the time span separating them and the curators' personal artistic preferences.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Pursued by governmental agencies of the nation-states newly constituted in Central Europe after the Great War, self-promotional strategies were an important cultural factor which in present day art historiography remains a significantly under-researched topic. What is missing is an exploration of the theme of touring art exhibitions exported by the particular countries of the region and circulated throughout the continent. The dynamics of staging visual arts across geopolitical borders resulted in a dense network of cultural exchange between major centres and peripheral localities. Organized on the basis of bilateral and multilateral international agreements, travelling shows – representative of the official cultural policy of political entities – constituted a form of *soft power* diplomacy and served predominantly to manifest national distinctiveness. Warsaw, as much as other Central European capitals, became an arena of self-promoting practices carried out as part of cultural diplomacy in the region.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Irena Kossowska, *Artystyczna rekonkwista. Sztuka w międzywojennej Polsce i Europie* [Artistic Reconquest: Art in Interwar Poland and Europe] (Torun: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2017), 69–150, 159–318.

Regarding an examination of diverse strategies of artistic self-presentation adopted by the newly established states, the rationale behind this article is to juxtapose the two former pillars of the Habsburg Empire – Austria and Hungary – both of which strove to gain a new position on the substantially reconfigured map of the continent and empower their connections within the European cultural circuit. A comparison of two art exhibitions staged in Warsaw, namely an Austrian presentation inaugurated in May 1930 and a Hungarian show organized in April 1939, is very telling, if not exhaustive, in this respect. Both exhibitions were mounted at the premises of Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych (Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts, further referred to as Zachęta). The focus of the discussion will be the correlation of the curatorial practices conducted by Austrians and Hungarians with the cultural policies implemented by the respective governmental agents at the time of the Warsaw exhibitions.

## HANS TIETZE AND THE AUSTRIAN MENTALITY

Following the dismantling of the Habsburg Empire in the aftermath of World War I, Austria – with its substantially diminished territory and weakened economy – counted its postwar losses.<sup>2</sup> From being a multinational, multiethnic and multicultural power with a dual political, legal and administrative system, it was transformed into a small and politically insignificant country. Nevertheless, the *raison d'être* of the Second Polish Republic required support of the newly established Republic of Austria, since the consolidation of the Versailles system was a guarantee of political sovereignty and the future economic development of the Polish state. It was in the interest of Poland that the provisions of the Peace Treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which defined the political status of Deutschösterreich (German-Austria, a name changed to Republik Österreich in October 1919) prohibiting Austria's accession to the German Reich, should be complied with.<sup>3</sup> Austria's merger with Germany would entail a threat of strengthening the Reich, which revealed marked revisionist tendencies towards Poland. Thus, the idea of *Anschluss*, widespread in post-imperial Austria,<sup>4</sup> was firmly rejected by successive governments in Warsaw, who perceived independent Austria as a crucial player in sustaining the new political order in Central Europe.<sup>5</sup>

2 Henryk Wereszycki, *Historia Austrii* [The History of Austria] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1986, 289); Wiesław Balcerzak, *Powstanie państw narodowych w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej* [The Rise of Nation-States in Central and Eastern Europe] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974), 187–213; Wiesław Balcerzak, "Polska-Austria w okresie międzywojennym," [Poland-Austria in the Interwar Period], *Studia z dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, vol. 27 (1992): 103–120.

3 Jerzy Kozeński, *Sprawa przyłączenia Austrii do Niemiec po I wojnie światowej 1918–1922* [The Question of Incorporation of Austria into Germany after World War I 1918–1922] (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1967), 202–235; Katarzyna Kołodziejczyk, "Stosunki polsko-austriackie w okresie dwudziestolecia międzywojennego" [Polish-Austrian Relations in the Interwar Period], *Studia z dziejów ZSRR i Europy Środkowej*, vol. 12 (1978), 61–90.

4 Jerzy Kozeński, *Austria 1919–1968: Dzieje społeczne i polityczne* [Austria 1919–1968: Social and Political History] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1970), 52–71.

5 Balcerzak, *Powstanie państw narodowych*, 149; Kozeński, *Sprawa przyłączenia Austrii do Niemiec*, 23.

Proper political relations with the Second Polish Republic were also important for Austria. After the end of the rule of the Social Democratic Party, which perceived the authorities in Warsaw as antagonists of Germany and a hotbed of nationalist tendencies, the nature of Polish-Austrian relations improved. Having taken power in 1920, the Christian Social Party strove to obtain financial and economic aid for the impoverished republic not only from western powers, but also from Central European countries, including Poland. *Soft power* instruments were meant to ease diplomatic tensions and stimulate economic exchange between Poland and Austria.<sup>6</sup> A favourable political climate for cultural cooperation prevailed in 1929–1930 under the chancellorship of Johann Schober,<sup>7</sup> a non-party politician, who renounced the concept of the accession of Austria to Germany.

This article examines the extent to which the strategy of artistic self-presentation adopted by the organisers of the Austrian exhibition staged in Warsaw reflected the objectives of Schober's cabinet. The presentation, inaugurated at Zachęta on 10 May 1930, was held under the auspices of the President of the Second Polish Republic, Ignacy Mościcki, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, August Zaleski. On the Austrian side, patronage was provided by the Minister of Education, Heinrich von Srbik.<sup>8</sup> The main organizer of the event – the Ständige Delegation der Künstlervereinigungen (Permanent Delegation of Artists' Associations) – entrusted the function of the exhibition's curator to Teodor Klotz-Dürrenbach, who himself participated in the show with several oil paintings and prints. Monumental in scope and abundant in exhibits (474 works executed by 100 painters, sculptors, printmakers and designers), the display presented art created in the years 1918–1930 – a period distinguished by numerous efforts undertaken by the Austrian authorities to overcome the political isolation of the country and to maintain the important role Vienna had played until recently in the domain of culture. Export art exhibitions were instrumentalised by the Austrian cultural policy-makers to promote a pacifist image of Austria already during the Great War.<sup>9</sup> This purpose was achieved, among others, by the *Propaganda-Ausstellung* which travelled to Stockholm and Copenhagen in the autumn of 1917 and the winter of 1918, respectively.

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6 Zbigniew Tomkowski, "Powstanie Pierwszej Republiki Austrii" [Establishment of the First Republic of Austria], in: *Z dziejów Austrii i stosunków polsko-austriackich*, ed. Zbigniew Tomkowski, (Łowicz: Mazowiecka Szkoła Humanistyczno-Pedagogiczna, 2000), 15–40.

7 Balcerzak, "Polska-Austria w okresie międzywojennym," 109.

8 An eminent historian and fanatical German nationalist, Srbik advocated the concept of establishing a pan-German *Reich*, which would encompass an economically and politically united *Mittleuropa* stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea. See Alan Sked, "Re-Imagining Empire: The Persistence of the Austrian Idea in the Historical Work of Heinrich Ritter von Srbik," *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2018): 37–57.

9 Elizabeth Clegg, *Art, Design and Architecture in Central Europe 1890–1920* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 284.

Although Austria became significantly impaired after 1918, with its borders narrowed to the German-speaking zone, the historic cultural and social ties created among the nationally, ethnically, and religiously heterogeneous population of the Habsburg Empire left a lasting mark on society. In the introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue, Hans Tietze (1880–1954), a recognized art historian representing the *milieu* of the Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte, wrote: “There appeared a type of Austrian who, being in fact German, [on the one hand] obliterated many of the rough qualities of their race through numerous relationships with foreigners; on the other hand, they enriched their character with many features acquired from them.”<sup>10</sup>

Tietze was an ideal candidate to carry out the mission of introducing the Polish audience to the contemporary Austrian art world. In his theoretical writings and critical discourse he placed emphasis on the social and cultural context of art, refraining from tackling questions of racial and ethnic purity as expressed in the visual arts. Undoubtedly, any reflection of pan-German and pro-*Anschluss* convictions in the exhibition scenario would have been devastating for the reception of the presentation in Warsaw. Assuming a socio-psychological perspective, Tietze perceived contemporary artistic phenomena as an expression of the essential characterological traits of the Austrian society. According to him, the psychological disposition that distinguished Austrians encompassed perseverance, sincerity and kindness, as well as a lack of fanaticism and chauvinism. Consequently, what Tietze regarded as typically Austrian values incarnated in the visual arts were the “lightness and liberty of creativity, suppleness and grace that blur extreme contradictions.”<sup>11</sup>

In observance of the ‘evolutionary’ paradigm of the art historical models promoted by Franz Wickhoff and Alois Riegl, Tietze presented domestic art as a continuation of the tradition of the Habsburg monarchy. As he argued,

Despite the fact that Austrian artists include representatives of foreign nations – Italians and Dutchmen, Northern Germans and Czechs, Poles and Hungarians, who settled permanently in Austria a long time ago – Austrian art remains independent and distinct. Even though it does not strive to develop its own, idiosyncratic type at all costs, it can nevertheless leave its genuine mark on foreign influences.<sup>12</sup>

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10 Hans Tietze, “Wstęp” [Introduction], in *Przewodnik po wystawie Towarzystwa Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych nr 54* [Guide to the Exhibition No. 54 at the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts] (Warszawa: TZSP, 1930), 5, my translation. On Tietze’s theoretical and art historical writings see: Edwin Lachnit, *Die Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte und die Kunst ihrer Zeit: Zum Verhältnis von Methode und Forschungsgegenstand am Beginn der Moderne* [The Vienna School of Art History and the Art of its Time: On the Relationship between Method and Research Topic at the Beginning of Modernism] (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), 98–110; Anselm Wagner, “Hans Tietze: Die Methode der Kunstgeschichte” [Hans Tietze: The Method of Art History], in *Hauptwerke der Kunstgeschichtsschreibung*, eds., Paul von Naredi-Rainer, Johann Konrad Eberlein and Götz Pochat (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2010), 440–443. A collection of articles authored by Tietze was published in 2007 under the title *Lebendige Kunstwissenschaft: Texte 1910–1954* [Vital Art Studies: Texts 1910–1954], eds. Almut Krapf-Weiler with the collaboration of Hans H. Aurenhammer, Alexandra Caruso, Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber and Susa Schintler-Zürner (Vienna: Schlebrügge, 2007).

11 Tietze, “Wstęp,” 7.

12 *Ibid.*, 6, my translation.

Taking into account multiculturalism, which was peculiar to the Habsburg Empire, and the imprint it left on the social tissue of the Austrian republic, Tietze credited Austria as a unifying force for the artistic tendencies coming from various parts of the continent. Referring to the postwar reorganization of Vienna's museums, which he conducted himself, he remarked: "Austria's *raison d'être* has been and still is to be the cultural mediator between the North and the South, the East and the West (...) this remains the fundamental goal of our land."<sup>13</sup>

According to Tietze, a fully original and indigenously Austrian artistic idiom had not been formed; what was created instead was a conglomerate of influences, a multicultural amalgam, which was covered with a veneer of good taste and moderation. Tietze maintained that moderate realism and modest decorativeness were typically Austrian features exemplified in the works of such masters as Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach,<sup>14</sup> Moritz von Schwind, and Hans Makart. It would be difficult to comment uncritically on this opinion, based on the *a priori* assumption of the existence of aesthetic moderation in Austrian art. The monumentality of Fischer von Erlach's classicising Baroque, the meticulous depiction of details and complex narration of Schwind's multipartite compositions, as well as the exuberant decorativeness and sensuality of Makart's painting, do not confirm his diagnosis. Tietze considered Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller to be a typical Viennese, though, "not an Austrian in the broader sense of the word," as he observed.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the subcategory of Austrianness – "Viennese-ness" – that connoted the elaborate naturalism and the aura of sentimentalism evoked by Waldmüller's paintings, was inconsistent with the concept of restrained realism defined by the critic himself. More importantly, it was incompatible with the fact that the bulk of works on display at Zachęta, meant to be representative of Austrian art, came from Viennese artistic circles, while only a few participants in the show were connected with Graz or Klagenfurt. Despite the apparently objective assumptions of the exhibition's organizer, the export presentation was designed on the basis of a centralist model that marginalized provincial centres which, as a matter of fact, began to develop and strengthen after 1918, being supported by the national government.<sup>16</sup>

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13 Hans Tietze, *Die Zukunft der Wiener Museen* [The Future of Vienna's Museums] (Wien: Schroll & Co., 1923), 12.

14 Derived from Roman Catholic tradition, Baroque was perceived, by Tietze among others, as an Austrian national style opposed to the Protestant German paradigm. See Andreas Nierhaus, "Austria as a 'Baroque Nation'. Institutional and Media Constructions," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 15 (2016): 7.

15 Tietze, "Wstep," 6.

16 Due to the lack of documentation of the Warsaw event, which was supposedly destroyed during World War II, the rationale behind this decision remains unclear, especially with regard to artists of traditionalist profiles who quit "red Vienna" in the post-war period to settle in the provinces. Yet the selection of participants could have been the result of simplified logistics carried out during the preparation of the exhibition.



## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF AUSTRIANNESS

Adopting 1918 as a historical milestone in constructing the scenario for the Warsaw exhibition was essential not only for historical and political, but also for cultural reasons. The deaths of Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Koloman Moser, and Otto Wagner in this particular year brought an end to the innovative era and revolutionary ferment in the artistic life of turn-of-the-century Vienna. Consequently, the audience at the Zachęta gallery could not contemplate any paintings of Schiele and Klimt; neither were works of other Expressionists – early Albert Paris von Gütersloh, young Anton Faistauer, Oskar Kokoschka or Max Oppenheimer, presented. Thus, the introduction of 1918 as the demarcation line might be perceived as an attempt to depict Austrian art as moderate and balanced, as indicated in the introductory essay by Tietze. In his 1923 book titled *Neue Malerei in Österreich*, Anton Faistauer identified Expressionism with radicalism, which implied over-intellectualization and undesirable abstraction.<sup>17</sup> Tietze, for his part, underscored the distance separating the works on display at Zachęta from revolutionary modernism on the one hand and from conservative academicism on the other. Moreover, his statement that no true Impressionists or Expressionists ever appeared in Austrian art starkly contradicted his own fascination with Kokoschka's idiom of Expressionism.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the exclusion of expressionist idioms and the specific formula of Austrian modernism – Kineticism – in favour of neo-realist exemplars might have been seen as evidence of a social and moral stabilization in the new, post-imperial Austria. On the other hand, such an approach was entirely consistent with the dominant position of neo-humanist ideology centred on the slogan of a “return to order” spreading throughout Europe in the interwar period. The overlapping trends of neo-realism and new classicism gained momentum in the visual arts at the time as a counterreaction against avant-gardism and modernist positions.<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, the Cézannesque tectonics of composition and the expressionist treatment of form – the features that shaped Austrian modernism in the interwar decades – manifested themselves in the artistic material presented in Warsaw to a minimum extent. The exhibition's organizers

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17 Anton Faistauer, *Neue Malerei in Österreich. Betrachtungen eines Malers* [New Painting in Austria. Remarks of a Painter] (Zürich, Leipzig, and Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1923).

18 Paradoxically, Tietze appreciated Kokoschka's expressionist art already in 1909 when he commissioned the young twenty-three year-old artist to paint a wedding portrait of him and his wife Erica Conrat (*Hans Tietze and Erica Tietze-Conrat*, Museum of Modern Art, New York). On the relationship between Tietze and Kokoschka see Catherine M. Soussloff, *The Subject in Art: Portraiture and the Birth of the Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 61–82.

19 For more on this topic see Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France between the Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Marla Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Robert Storr et al., *Modern Art Despite Modernism* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2000); Wieland Schmied, *Der kühle Blick. Realismus der zwanziger Jahre* [The Cool Gaze. Realisms of the Twenties] (München: Prestel, 2001); *Les années 1930. La fabrique de 'l'Homme nouveau'* [The 1930s: Making of a 'New Man'], ed. Jean Clair (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2008); Kenneth E. Silver, *Chaos & Classicism: Art in France, Italy, and Germany, 1918–1936* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2011).

provided only one room for works that could be categorized as a very moderate variant of this broad trend. What is noteworthy, though, is that this narrow group of exponents of modernism included both German Austrians – among others, Oskar Laske, Ernst Huber, Wilhelm Thöny, and Alois Leopold Seibold – and non-German nationals: Heinrich Révy (a Croat by origin), Louise Merkel-Roméé (of Jewish descent) and Frieda Salvendy (an artist with Slovak background).

Although the imperative of national expression in the visual arts was widely spread in interwar Europe, it did not limit the landscape and genre topics presented at Zachęta to domestic motifs. The inclusion of Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, and Croatian landscapes in the exhibition scenario could have resulted partly from an emotional attachment to the homeland in the case of those artists who were not native German Austrians. On the other hand, such a decision might have been determined by nostalgia for the lost empire, which until recently had extended over a large, multinational, and multiethnic territory of Central Europe. Moreover, it might be seen as evidence of Hagenbunds' willingness to cooperate with artists of non-German derivation from the successor states.<sup>20</sup> A member of the Permanent Delegation of Artists' Associations, Hagenbund might have contributed to the selection of exhibits shown in Warsaw. The exposition at Zachęta also attracted attention to landscapes painted during study trips made by artists seeking picturesque motifs in France, Italy, Germany, and even Egypt. Such a diversification of representations transcending national borders was meant to exemplify the openness of Austria to other cultures and to confirm the Europeanness of Austrian art.

In the eyes of Polish critics, the dominant aspect of the artistic material presented at Zachęta was the moderately realistic convention of representation, in some variants decorative and colour-oriented, yet in others akin to New Objectivity.<sup>21</sup> However, Austrian neo-realism was not treated in exclusive terms as a unique visual language predisposed to express Austrianness. In both Tietze's interpretation and Polish critics' opinions, realism was a carrier of typically Austrian mental traits on a par with muted new classicism and restrained modernism. The recognition of moderation as a superior aesthetic

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20 Clegg, *Art, Design and Architecture in Central Europe 1890–1920*, 230. For more on the association see *Hagenbund: A European Network of Modernism, 1900 to 1938*, eds. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Matthias Boeckl and Harald Krejci (Vienna: Belvedere, Hirmer Verlag, 2014).

21 Jan Kleczyński, "Wystawa sztuki austriackiej w Zachęcie. Malarstwo i przemysł artystyczny" [Exhibition of Austrian Art at Zachęta. Painting and Applied Arts], *Kurier Warszawski*, no. 148 (1930): 18; Wiktor Podoski, "Wystawa współczesnej sztuki austriackiej" [Exhibition of Contemporary Austrian Art.], *Rzeczpospolita*, no. 139 (1930): 8; Konrad Winkler, "Wystawa współczesnej sztuki austriackiej w Tow. Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych" [Exhibition of Contemporary Austrian Art. at Zachęta], *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 141 (1930): 8; "Warszawa. Wystawa współczesnej sztuki austriackiej (Franciszek Siedlecki)" [Warsaw. Exhibition of Contemporary Austrian Art (Franciszek Siedlecki)], *Sztuki Piękne*, no. 6 (1930): 239; "Warszawa. Wystawa współczesnej sztuki austriackiej (Wacław Husarski)" [Warsaw. Exhibition of Contemporary Austrian Art (Wacław Husarski)], *Sztuki Piękne*, no. 6 (1930): 239; "Warszawa. Wystawa współczesnej sztuki austriackiej (Tytus Czyżewski)" [Warsaw. Exhibition of Contemporary Austrian Art (Tytus Czyżewski)], *Sztuki Piękne*, no. 6 (1930): 239.

category in relation to contemporary Austrian art excluded extreme tendencies and attitudes that were either radically modernist or deeply conservative. Hence, the leading concept structuring the Austrian scenario was the idea of a ‘middle way’ neutralizing all extremes and sustaining the seminal role of Vienna as cultural centre at the crossroads of European artistic trends – a function that was successfully fulfilled during the Habsburg era. Seen from that perspective, post-World War I Austria appeared to be “the cultural mediator between the North and the South, the East and the West”, as Hans Tietze claimed.<sup>22</sup>

## MAGYARISM: ARTISTIC SELF-PROMOTION OF THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY

Assuming a comparative perspective, I now shift the focus of the article to the official exhibition of Hungarian art launched in Warsaw on 22 April, 1939. The presentation was held under the patronage of the ultra-right regime of Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya.<sup>23</sup> The implementation of authoritarian rule by Horthy was meant to enhance the country’s national cohesion, weakened after the cataclysm of World War I.<sup>24</sup> In this situation, the idea of national identity – rooted in over one thousand years of Christianity – became a priority in political discourse in Hungary.<sup>25</sup> Kunó Klebelsberg, the Minister of Culture in the government of Count István Bethlen, was tasked with consolidating the nation institutionally and intellectually under the slogan of “neonationalism”,<sup>26</sup> whose main points of reference were the history, culture, and religion of Magyars, who dominated Slavic and Jewish minorities. The strategy adopted in this cultural policy was conducive to the expansion of traditionalist trends at the expense of cosmopolitan avant-gardes, who were dismissed as an ethnically foreign *milieu* that supported the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic.<sup>27</sup> The

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22 Tietze, *Die Zukunft der Wiener Museen*, 12.

23 After Admiral Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya, supported by the Romanian, Czechoslovak, and Serbian armies, overthrew the Hungarian Soviet Republic in August 1919, the National Assembly appointed Horthy the Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary on 1 March 1920. At the time of the Great Depression, this first rightist dictatorship in Europe suffered a severe economic crisis despite István Bethlen’s rule that brought stabilisation to the political scene. Bethlen, who formed an alliance with Fascist Italy (1927), had to step down in 1931 to give way to the far right, supported by the Third Reich. Under the leadership of Béla Imrédy, in 1938 Hungary revised the Treaty of Trianon signed in June 1920. As a result of the First Vienna Arbitration, in which Germany and Italy played a major role, Hungary regained a part of its former territory and was allowed to build up its armaments. February 1939 saw the appointment of the government of Pál Teleki, who – while Germany annexed Czechoslovakia – took over all the region of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, thus establishing a common border with Poland. See Jerzy Snopek, *Węgry. Zarys dziejów i kultury* [Hungary. An Outline of History and Culture] (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYT, 2002), 303–396.

24 Snopek, *Węgry. Zarys dziejów i kultury*, 251–256, 303–396.

25 György Szűcs, “Among the Décor of History – Pessimism and Quests for Intellectual Paths in the 1920’s,” in *In the Land of Arcadia: István Szőnyi and his Circle 1918–1928*, eds. György Szűcs, András Zwickl and Ferenc Zsákovics (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2001), 49–54.

26 *Ibid.*, 50.

27 After the defeat of the Dual Monarchy in World War I, the Hungarian Democratic Republic was proclaimed in 1918. Reduced territory due to the Triple Entente’s demands, the dramatic economic situation, and political isolation led to the intensification of revolutionary sentiments in the society. Consequently, on 21 March 1919 Communists and Social Democrats proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic, which lasted until 1 August 1919. See Éva Forgács, “History Too Fast,” in *State Construction and Art in East Central Europe, 1918–2018*, eds. Agnieszka Chmielewska, Irena Kossowska and Marcin Lachowski (New York and London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), 24.

idea of strengthening the national identity was also the basis of the curriculum in the Budapest Higher School of Plastic Arts, which was reformed in the 1920s and served to cultivate the domestic trend of realism moderately modernised under the influence of Western ‘-isms’ in the artists’ colony in Nagybánya.<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, subsequent Hungarian governments left domestic cultural institutions wide open to art presentations coming from abroad, thus transforming Budapest into an important exhibition centre in Central Europe.<sup>29</sup> Bálint Hóman, the Hungarian Minister of Religion and Education from 1932 to 1942, strove to sign bilateral cultural agreements with Hungarian allies: Germany, Italy, Austria and Poland. Several exhibitions of contemporary Polish art held in the Hungarian capital contributed to the strengthening of Polish-Hungarian cultural ties.<sup>30</sup> In 1927 the Hungarians upheld the dialogue by showing a travelling exhibition of their native art to Polish audiences in Warsaw, Poznań, and Krakow.<sup>31</sup> A bilateral agreement on Polish-Hungarian cultural exchange was signed in Warsaw in 1934. Pursuant to it, the Hungarian Cultural Institute was opened in 1935, whereas the spring of 1939 saw the opening of the Polish Institute in Budapest.<sup>32</sup> A subsequent phase of interstate cooperation was established thanks to the official exhibition of Hungarian art shown in Kraków in March 1939 and then transferred to the Zachęta gallery in Warsaw.<sup>33</sup> The political significance of this cultural event was evident due to the involvement of the highest state authorities: the members of the honorary committee included Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki and the Minister of Foreign Affairs István Csáky and their respective Polish counterparts: Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski and Józef Beck. Polish President Ignacy Mościcki also bestowed his patronage on the exhibition.

Vast and retrospective in scope, the Warsaw exhibition was curated by Tibor Gerevich (1882–1954), the Dean of the Faculty of the History of Art

28 György Szücs, “Pomiędzy nadziejami a rozczarowaniami. Sztuka na Węgrzech po obchodach tysiąclecia państwa (1896)” [Between Hopes and Disappointments. Art in Hungary after the Millennium of the State], in *Złoty wiek malarstwa węgierskiego (1836–1936)*, ed. Magdalena Ludera (Kraków: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2016), 50–52.

29 Ferenc Tóth, “The ‘Novecentists’ at the Mücsarnok Exhibition of 1936,” in *Róma – Budapest. A Novecento művészei Magyarországon / Rome – Budapest. Artists of the Novecento in Hungary*, eds. György Szücs and Ferenc Toth (Balatonfüred: Vaszary Villa Galéria, 2013), 17, 24.

30 Waclaw Felczak and Andrzej Fischinger, *Polska – Węgry. Tysiąc lat przyjaźni* [Poland – Hungary. A Thousand Years of Friendship] (Warszawa: K.A.W. 1979), 67–70; Gábor Tokai, “Kontakty artystyczne Polski i Węgier w okresie międzywojennym” [Artistic Contacts between Poland and Hungary in the Interwar Period], in *Dialog czarno na białym. Grafika polska i węgierska 1918–1939*, eds. Katalin Bakos and Anna Manicka (Warszawa–Budapest: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2009), 46–56; Lidia Klein, “Oblicze rycerskie i chrześcijańskie. Polsko-węgierskie kontakty artystyczne w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym” [Knightly and Christian Image. Polish-Hungarian Artistic Contacts in the Interwar Period], in *Dialog czarno na białym*, eds. Bakos and Manicka, 70–74.

31 Tokai, “Kontakty artystyczne Polski i Węgier,” 46–61; Klein, “Oblicze rycerskie i chrześcijańskie,” 70–74.

32 Tóth, “The ‘Novecentists’ at the Mücsarnok Exhibition,” 17, 24.

33 It is worth noting that the Zachęta institution became a bastion of conservatism in the 1930s and was perceived as a beacon of national art of 19<sup>th</sup>-century derivation. See Katarzyna Nowakowska-Sito, “TOSSPO – propaganda sztuki polskiej za granicą w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym” [TOSSPO – Propagation of Polish Art Abroad in the Interwar Period], in *Sztuka i władza*, eds. Dariusz Konstantynów, Robert Pasieczny and Piotr Paszkiewicz (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 2001), 145–146.

and Christian Archaeology of the Budapest University of Science, an expert in the art of the 1920s and 1930s, and a successor to the doctrines promulgated by the Vienna School of Art History.<sup>34</sup> Conforming to the theory of diverse idioms of the collective *Kunstwollen* (artistic will) of a particular era endorsed by Riegl, Gerevich presented native artistic phenomena as embedded in a national tradition and at the same time closely related to European art. In an introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue, he ascribed the concept of national art to almost all periods of Hungarian history, simultaneously underscoring the Hungarian affiliation with Western culture, instilled in Hungary together with Christianity. Gerevich contextualized Hungarian artistic heritage in a very skilful manner. He argued that “Hungarian art processes foreign influences in line with its taste, tradition as well as financial, social, and economic conditions.”<sup>35</sup> Yet, according to his narrative, a major breakthrough that allowed native culture to fully flourish happened as late as in 1867 – the year of the establishment of the dual Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Thus, 1867 constituted a threshold in the chronological order of the Warsaw presentation.

Highly recognized historical paintings by Mihály Munkácsy (*Prison Cell of the Condemned*, 1869–1870), Bertalan Székely (*Discovery of the Body of King Louis the Second*, 1860), and Gyula Benczúr (*László Hunyadi’s Farewell*, 1866), shown in the retrospective part of the presentation, served to connote patriotic meanings.

150 For Gerevich, the recognition that was shown in Europe to Benczúr – a painter who collaborated with Karl von Piloty and competed with Hans Makart – was an irrefutable proof that Hungary was a part of mainstream European art. On the other hand, the artist’s *emploi* demonstrated his love for the motherland and sound knowledge of its history.<sup>36</sup>

Domestic landscapes, episodes from the everyday life of the people and folk motifs depicted by such renowned realists as Géza Mészöly and László Paál and such idiosyncratic impressionists as László Mednyánszky also fulfilled the role of carriers of national content.<sup>37</sup> Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian art was marked by Impressionism – “individualistic and national in character,”<sup>38</sup> as Gerevich claimed, and intrinsic to the output of the artists’ colony at Nagybánya.<sup>39</sup> Gerevich attributed the rich chromatic palette of the exponents of this unique milieu – Károly Ferenczy, István Csók, Béla Iványi-Grünwald, József Koszta

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34 Jan Bakoš, *Discourses and Strategies: The Role of the Vienna School in Shaping Central European Approaches to Art History & Related Discourses* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2013), 142, 187, 192, 199.

35 Tibor Gerevich, “Sztuka węgierska” [Hungarian Art.], in *Wystawa sztuki węgierskiej* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych, 1939), 8.

36 Jeremy Howard, *East European Art 1650–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006), 41–42, 45–46.

37 Anna Szinyei Merse, *Wnurcie impresjonizmu. Malarstwo węgierskie w latach 1870–1920* [In the Trend of Impressionism. Hungarian Painting in the Years 1870–1920] (Kraków: TPSP, 2000).

38 Gerevich, “Sztuka węgierska,” 9.

39 *The Art of Nagybánya. Centennial Exhibition in Celebration of the Artists’ Colony in Nagybánya* (Budapest: Hungarian National Gallery, 1966).



and János Vaszary – not only to the impact of French Impressionism, but also to their fascination with native folk art. Underscoring in almost every paragraph the importance of native elements, he employed the notion of national art as the main conceptual category of his essay, at the same time eliminating from the historiography of Hungarian art those trends which were too strongly connected with the cosmopolitan art scenes of Vienna and Paris, such as Symbolism and Secession.<sup>40</sup> As an adherent of Horthy's official cultural policy, he did not include in the scenario proponents of radically progressivist trends, many of whom actively supported the democratic system and communist rule of 1918–1919.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, he annihilated the revolutionary avant-garde in the catalogue essay, only incidentally mentioning a few representatives of early modernism.

On the other hand, in Warsaw Gerevich presented several works by István Szőnyi, an emblematic figure of the first wave of Hungarian neoclassicism that modernised the tradition of the Nagybánya colony.<sup>42</sup> The artists associated with Szőnyi whose works were displayed at Zachęta included Vilmos Aba-Novák, Károly Patkó, Mária (Masa) Feszty, and Nándor Lajos Varga as well as Ernő Jegesa as a representative of the younger generation. Free from a formal organisational structure and indifferent to clamorous manifestoes, Szőnyi's circle created pictorial idioms parallel to the French new classicism and the classicising wing of the German New Objectivity. However, the idiosyncratic features of Szőnyi's neoclassicism were determined primarily by the addition of cubo-expressionist aesthetics to this amalgam of stimuli. Szőnyi's acolytes depicted the topoi of museum art – iconographic motifs borrowed from ancient mythology and biblical themes, nudes inscribed in an idyllic or dramatized landscape, as well as almost sculpturesque portraits.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, they manifested an anti-urban attitude, glorified the native landscape and peasants, depicted local scenery and provincial surroundings. Creating images of an earthly Arcadia, they conveyed symbolic meanings by reflecting the essential relationship of human existence to nature.

## TIBOR GEREVICH AND THE HUNGARIAN ROMAN STYLE

Despite its distinctive character, Gerevich did not outline, even concisely, the early phase of neoclassicism in his introduction. Instead, he focused on the second wave of the current, which was sponsored by the Hungarian

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40 Judit Szabadi, *Art Nouveau in Hungary: Painting, Sculpture and the Graphic Arts* (Budapest: Corvina, 1989).

41 *Hungary in Revolution, 1918–1919: Nine Essays*, ed. Ivan Völgyes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971).

42 Tamás Kieselbach, Judit Szabadi et al., *Hungarian Modernism 1900–1950. Selection from the Kieselbach Collection* (Budapest: Kieselbach Galéria, 1999).

43 András Zwickl, "The Pictures of the Ideal and the Real – The Arcadia Painting of the Szőnyi Circle," in *In the Land of Arcadia*, eds. Szűcs, Zwickl and Zsákovics, 55–56.

government and recognised as official national art in the 1930s. Referred to as the *Római iskola* (Roman School), this new formula of classicism developed as a result of scholarships in Rome funded by governmental agencies for students and graduates of the Higher School of Plastic Arts in Budapest since 1928. The scholarship system was initiated by Gerevich himself who claimed – not without satisfaction – that the Italian experience led to the rise of the “Roman Hungarian style”.<sup>44</sup> Evocative of religious content and based on traditionalist motifs – depictions of the Hungarian provinces, picturesque towns, and villages embedded in the native landscape – the art of the young generation of Hungarian neoclassicists, following in the footsteps of adherents to *Novecento Italiano*, was interpreted as the “imperative of the moment” by Gerevich.<sup>45</sup> Hence, emotionalism, which was typical of the earlier phase of Hungarian Neoclassicism, was extinguished and substituted with museum clichés – *quattrocento* and *cinquecento* conventions of representation – imposed on the perception of the surrounding reality.

Members of the Roman School also included sculptors, to whom Gerevich dedicated a substantial paragraph in his essay and an important place in the exhibition. Carved portraits, quasi-portraits, genre scenes, and statues of saints on display at Zachęta oscillated stylistically between realism and historicising styles: Neo-Medievalism, Neo-Renaissance and academic Neoclassicism. Executed in a classicising convention by Dezső Erdey, it was the sculptural bust of Regent Horthy – the leader of the nation – that constituted the ideological centre of the exhibition. What is worth noting though is that besides commemorating national heroes, the protagonists of the Roman School created religious art. “One of the happiest manifestations of contemporary artistic life in Hungary is the revival of Christian art,” wrote Gerevich.<sup>46</sup> The revival of religious art in Hungary – stimulated by the “Christian-nationalist regime”<sup>47</sup> and emphasised at the Warsaw exhibition – was also praised by some Polish reviewers.<sup>48</sup>

However, the Roman School did not enjoy much recognition in Warsaw.<sup>49</sup> The policy of laying a foundation for national modern art by means of an

44 It is worth noting that Gerevich was an ardent admirer of Italian art, both ancient and modern. Serving as a director of Collegium Hungaricum in Rome, he was the main instigator of close artistic contacts between the Kingdom of Hungary and Benito Mussolini’s Italy. See Tóth, “The ‘Novecentists’ at the Műcsarnok Exhibition,” 18.

45 Gerevich, “Sztuka węgierska,” 10.

46 Ibid., 11.

47 Szücs, *Among the Décor of History*, 49.

48 Mieczysław Skrudlik, “Współczesna sztuka węgierska i estońska” [Contemporary Hungarian and Estonian Art], *Goniec Warszawski*, no. 125 (1939): 9.

49 Tadeusz Pruszkowski, “Wystawa sztuki węgierskiej w Tow. Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych” [Exhibition of Hungarian Art at Zachęta], *Gazeta Polska*, no. 127 (1939): 5; Witold Bunikiewicz, “Węgierska sztuka w Warszawie” [Hungarian Art in Warsaw], *Kurier Warszawski*, no. 118 (1939): 18; Stefania Podhorska-Okołów, “Wystawa sztuki węgierskiej w Zachęcie” [Exhibition of Hungarian Art at Zachęta], *Przegląd polsko-węgierski*, no. 2 (1939): 6, 7; Konrad Winkler, “Sztuka węgierska w Warszawskim Towarzystwie Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych” [Hungarian Art at the Warsaw Zachęta], *Robotnik*, no. 139 (1939): 4.

institutionalised framework established for adapting foreign models turned out to be unconvincing. On the contrary, the common denominator of the critical accounts was the emphasis on Hungarians' sensitivity to colour. Impressionism was perceived as emblematic for Hungarian art, owing to the trend's specific luminism, its drift towards realism or its transformation into various idioms of Post-Impressionism. According to the reviewers of the Warsaw show, it was in this current and its offshoots that the "tribal temperament"<sup>50</sup> of the Magyars was revealed. However, the exploration of such qualities as the expression of attachment to the motherland and the enhanced painterly rendering of compositions did not provide an opportunity to clearly define the specificity of Magyar art. Although some critics raised the issue of "tribal" uniqueness, the discussion of the idiosyncratic features of Magyarism in art gave way to a psychologising and generalising description of the nation. Trivialising Hippolyte Taine's philosophy of culture and the Rieglean theory of nationally diversified idioms of *Kunstwollen*, the commentators relied on stereotypes under the pretext of conducting a vivisection of the Hungarian mentality. Thus, Gerevich's strategy of presenting 'Hungarianness' as expressed in contemporary art proved ineffective and failed to meet the expectations of political authorities in Budapest.

## CONCLUSION

Embedded in the theoretical models of the Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte, both Tietze's and Gerevich's narratives, which underscored the specific features of their native cultures, reveal striking lapses and flaws in argumentation. It is clear, however, that both the Austrian and the Hungarian show perfectly fitted into the framework of interwar cultural diplomacy based on the instrumental treatment of official art exhibitions touring European cultural centres. In both cases the emphasis put on the identity paradigm entailed the exclusion of several sections of the domestic art scene in an attempt to synchronize the tendentially constructed self-image of the nation with the current political agenda.

Yet, the juxtaposition of the two exhibitions hosted in Warsaw reveals a significant difference between the political goals set up by the Austrian and Hungarian governments in 1930 and 1939 respectively: namely, the Austrians' rhetoric of openness to the cultures of other nations (the successors of the Habsburg Empire in the first place), free from the issue of Germanic racial purity, as opposed to the ethno-nationalist zeal of Hungarians, who in the late 1930s continually reinforced their statehood, simultaneously reaffirming close cultural relations with their newly gained neighbour – the Second Polish Republic.

What might arouse doubts in the comparison presented in this paper is lack of temporal synchronisation: a several-year-long time span separating the years

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50 Winkler, *Sztuka węgierska w Warszawskim Towarzystwie Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych*.

1930 and 1939, which was a period characterised by considerable dynamics of political changes in both countries. Nevertheless, I consider this juxtaposition as justified due to the fact that Austrians' determination to present their country as neutral in international cultural relations was a long-lasting trend that continued until the *Anschluss*. The nationalistically-profiled cultural policy of Hungary was equally enduring and reached its climax in the late 1930s. Thus, I consider both the Austrian exhibition of 1930 and the Hungarian one of 1939 to be emblematic events for the cultural diplomacy of both countries and treat the comparison thereof as a clear indicator of the differences between self-presentation strategies implemented by both states on the international scene.

The examination of both exhibitions provokes one to ask the question about the curators' personal preferences and the relations, animosities, and alliances in the artistic milieu. Due to the fact that the documentation of organisational procedures (specifically, the correspondence exchanged between the curators, ministry officials, and the institution hosting both events) have not been preserved in Polish archives, it is difficult to conclude whether the artistic priorities of individual decision-makers could be an important factor influencing the construction of the scenarios of these shows. In my opinion, export exhibitions were so essential in creating a particular country's *soft power* instruments that the organisers' personal aesthetic predilections had to be subjected to the general line of the country's self-presentation even though they could impact details of the scenarios, such as the selection of particular artworks or artists representing the same trend or sharing similar artistic attitudes. Considering the general concept and structure of the exhibitions, it was crucial to create an image of the native artistic scene that would strengthen the political message of the state authorities.

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**1930S COMPETITIONS FOR THE  
DECORATION OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY OF THE KINGDOM OF  
YUGOSLAVIA IN BELGRADE AND  
CROATIAN ARTISTS\***

**Abstract**

**Keywords:** art competition,  
National Assembly in  
Belgrade, 1930s, Vladimir  
Filakovac, Dragutin Filipović,  
Frano Kršinić, Mate  
Meneghello Rodić, Petar  
Pallavicini, Vanja Radauš

*The paper is dedicated to three competitions for the decoration of the National Assembly building in Belgrade in 1936 and 1937, and the participation of numerous Croatian artists who received awards for their frescoes and sculptures. Based on archival and periodical sources, the paper analyzes various aspects of the competition and its role in establishing the visual narrative of the state and the representation of its multinational political identity. Special emphasis is placed on the interpretation of the works of Croatian artists who created monumental frescoes and statues for various representative spaces of the National Assembly, thus visually shaping the interior of a key political institution in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

The first competition for the decoration of the National Assembly in Belgrade in 1936 was one of the largest public contests in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the interwar period, and attracted great interest from artists from different parts of the country, who applied with approximately 356 artworks.<sup>1</sup> In a centrally organized state that was experiencing nationalist-based turmoil, the National Assembly was a building of special political importance, which is why great attention was paid to its decoration. A jury composed of prominent representatives of the cultural and social life of the three entities – Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia – chose the frescoes and sculptures in the entrance and communication zones, major representative spaces and parts of the building dedicated to social contents. Three competitions were held in 1936 and 1937, in which numerous Croatian artists received awards, ranging from already established authors who had experience in memorial sculpture (Frano Kršinić) or had participated in the decoration of sacral and public buildings (Mate Meneghello Rodić) to painters and sculptors who created frescoes and sculptures of monumental proportions

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1 “Podjeljene su nagrade za umjetnička djela u novoj Narodnoj skupštini” [Prizes Awarded for Works of Art in the New National Assembly], *Novosti*, November 6, 1936, 19.



for representative public institutions for the first time (Sergije Glumac, Vanja Radauš, Dragutin Filipović).

Until now, there has been no detailed discussion about the involvement of Croatian artists in the decoration of the Belgrade National Assembly,<sup>2</sup> and the information published in the texts dedicated to the building and its interior decoration was mostly reduced to recording the authors of the completed paintings and sculptures.<sup>3</sup> In the biographies of the second- and third-prize winners, information about their participation in the competitions is usually not mentioned or is mentioned inadequately,<sup>4</sup> except in the case of Sergije Glumac.<sup>5</sup> Based on archival and periodical sources, this paper analyzes the participation of Croatian artists in competitions for the creation of artworks for the National Assembly building, as well as the implementation, requirements and results of a competition of that scope. Furthermore, the finished artworks and the conditions for their completion are interpreted in detail, and for the first time, all Croatian painters and sculptors who won second and third prizes are documented. Special attention is given to the role of the National Assembly's representative spaces as a platform for the realization of artworks of monumental scale and symbolic significance, and emphasis is also placed on the modalities of using an artistic program to send political messages in the context of the turbulent political situation in the then Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

## 156 THE BUILDING

The monumental building of the House of the Parliament in Belgrade was dedicated in October 1936, 29 years after Serbian King Petar I Karađorđević laid the foundation stone on August 27, 1907.<sup>6</sup> (**fig. 1**) Preparations for the construction of the building began in 1892, when the project for the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbia was commissioned from the Serbian architect Konstantin Jovanović, but the construction of his neoclassical edifice

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2 Finished works for the National Assembly are mentioned only in a few monographs of awarded painters and sculptors, e.g. Jelica Ambruš, *Vladimir Filakovac 1892–1972*. (Osijek: Galerija likovnih umjetnosti; Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2009.), 200–201.

3 Basic information about the first competition and the awarded artists, as well as the catalog of completed works, were published in: Milojko Gordić, “Ukrašavanje zgrade Narodnog parlamenta Kraljevine Jugoslavije od 1936. do 1939. godine” [Decoration of the Building of National Assembly of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia between 1936 and 1939], *Nasleđe*, no. 2 (1999): 95–104. See also: *Dom Narodne skupštine: umetničke vrednosti / The National Assembly: Artwork: 1936–2016*. (Beograd: Služba Narodne skupštine Republike Srbije, 2016); Aleksandar Rastović, Mirjana Roter Blagojević and Igor Borozan, *Narodna skupština: ogledalo volje naroda Srbije / National Assembly: Mirroring the Will of Serbian People* (Novi Sad: Pravoslavna reč, 2022).

4 In Grgo Antunac's monograph, it is incorrectly stated that he received the second prize for the sculpture of King Petar II (instead of Petar I). Vesna Mažuran-Subotić, *Grgo Antunac* (Zagreb: Gliptoteka HAZU, 2001), 11. Juraj Škarpa's biography incorrectly states that he won several awards (for *Maritime Affairs*, *Agriculture*, *Tsar Dušan* and *King Petar I*). Vinko Zlamalik, “Kronologija” [Chronology], in *Juraj Škarpa* (Zagreb: Gliptoteka HAZU, 1988), 25–26.

5 In the first competition, Glumac won the third prize for the fresco in the Small Plenary Hall. For more on this topic, see: Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić, *Sergije Glumac: grafika, grafički dizajn, scenografija* [Sergije Glumac: Print, Graphic Design, Stage Design] (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2019), 146–147.

6 Marko Popović, “Zdanje Narodne skupštine – pravci istraživanja i principi obnove” [The National Assembly Building – Research Directions and Principles of Reconstruction], *Nasleđe*, no. 4 (2002): 13.

**Fig. 1.** National Assembly in Belgrade, early 1940s, photograph, private collection.



was postponed for financial reasons. With the adoption of the new Constitution in 1901 and the introduction of a bicameral parliament, the issue of construction became relevant once again, and another competition was held that selected Jovan Ilkić's project "made in the spirit of academicism with elements of the Italian Renaissance."<sup>7</sup> The future of the building in the subsequent years was a complex and turbulent one, and its construction was marked by several phases and various delays, as well as project alternations resulting from changes of the constitution and the political situation in Serbia before and after 1918. During the next three decades (1907–1936), the project of the architect Jovan Ilkić faced financial difficulties and two Balkan Wars, and the formation of the new, much larger Yugoslav state after World War I also necessitated reconstruction. After Ilkić's death in 1917, his son Pavle was hired to renew the design in the 1920s, but then, in 1929, King Aleksandar I Karađorđević proclaimed his dictatorship. A new phase in the history of the construction of the House of Parliament came after the death of the King Aleksandar Karađorđević in 1934, and was marked by the appointment of Nikolaj Krasnov, an architect of Russian origin employed by the Ministry of Construction, who created a project for the design of the entire interior decoration – from the furniture to the lighting.<sup>8</sup>

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## FIRST COMPETITION – JUNE 1936

In the months prior to the completion of the National Assembly, special attention was paid to the future decoration of the edifice's representative

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 9–11. See also: Aleksandar Kadrijević, "U traganju za uzorima Doma Narodne skupštine" [In Quest of the Models for the National Assembly Building], *Nasleđe*, no. 6 (2005): 45–53.

<sup>8</sup> Popović, "Zdanje Narodne skupštine," 13–18.

spaces. Based on the decision no. 2743 of the Assembly President Stevan Ćirić from June 19, 1936, a competition for the creation of artistic works for the National Assembly building was announced in the *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije* on June 24, 1936. It included the paintings and sculptures in the representative areas of the building – from the vestibule, the Conversation Hall (today the Central Hall), the Great and Small Plenary Halls, and the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers, to the stairway, the Great Club and the buffet – and clearly defined all participation requirements.<sup>9</sup>

The paintings had to be frescoes, and the style monumental. In choosing the content, the jury left “complete freedom to the artists, on the condition that they choose images from our national life and our national history, paying attention to the style and purpose of the building itself and its interior chambers.”<sup>10</sup> Artists submitted conceptual sketches in tempera, in the dimensions of 1:10 (Small and Great Plenary Hall) and 1:5 (Cabinet of the Council of Ministers, Great Club and the buffet), a detail of the fresco in real size and original material in the format of 50×50 centimeters. The competition called for the creation of frescoes on the front walls of the Great Plenary Hall (24×5.5 and 2×3×6.3 meters, prize 200,000 dinars) and the Small Plenary Hall (14.30×5.6 meters, 120,000 dinars), three paintings 1.92×2.10 meters on the ceiling of the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers (30,000 dinars per painting), two frescoes 1.7×5 meters on the side wall in the Great Club Hall (50,000 dinars per painting), and three semicircular paintings on the front wall of the buffet – one measuring 2.36×3.32 (35,000 dinars) and two 1.78×3.38 and 1.48×2.84 meters (30,000 dinars per painting).<sup>11</sup>

Unlike the paintings, the content of the sculpture program was defined in detail. The four male statues in the vestibule were supposed to represent “state organization and legislation in the figures of Prince Kocelj, King Tomislav, Tsar Dušan and King Petar I the Liberator.”<sup>12</sup> In the Conversation Hall, four female figures symbolically embodied agriculture, crafts, industry, and maritime affairs, and two decorative figures in the niches of the main staircase represented justice and education. The first prizes were: 100,000 dinars per sculpture for four standing white marble figures in the vestibule niches (they were 3 meters high together with a 20 centimeters plinth), 90,000 dinars for each of the four white marble figures in the niches of the Conversation Hall (they were 2.40 meters high together with a 20 centimeters plinth), and 60,000 dinars for each of the two figures in gilded bronze on the staircase (1.80 meters

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9 All the information on the competition and quotes from the competition text are from: “Konkurs za izradu umetničkih radova u zgradi Narodne skupštine” [Competition for the Creation of Works of Art in the National Assembly Building], *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, June 24, 1936, 3.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid. The second and third prizes were: Great Plenary Hall (10,000 and 7,000 dinars), Small Plenary Hall (7,000 and 5,000 dinars), Cabinet of the Council of Ministers (4,000 and 3,000 dinars), Great Club (6,000 and 4,500 dinars) and buffet (4,000 and 3,000 dinars).

12 Ibid.

high together with a 10 centimeters plinth).<sup>13</sup> For the sculptural works, the artists had to submit plaster models in a ratio of 1:4, as well as details in plaster and in the original size.

The competition was open to all artists who were citizens of Yugoslavia, living in the Kingdom or abroad. It was anonymous, and the artists entered with a code and sealed envelopes with personal data. The deadline for the delivery of sketches for the paintings in the Great and Small Plenary Halls was three months, and for all other painting and sculpture two months from the date of announcement of the competition in the *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*. The National Assembly would become the owner of all awarded sketches, but the artists retained the author's rights.<sup>14</sup> With the subsequent decision of the Committee for the Completion of the National Assembly Building, all defined deadlines were extended until October 1, 1936.<sup>15</sup>

The members of the jury were prominent cultural figures from different parts of Yugoslavia, appointed on the basis of the so-called national key: Serbian architect Aleksandar Deroko, associate professor at the University of Belgrade; Serbian art historian Milan Kašanin, director of the Museum of Prince Pavle; Croatian painter Branko Šenoa, professor at the Royal Academy of Arts in Zagreb; Toma Rosandić, a Croatian sculptor living in Belgrade; Slovenian art historian France Stelè, conservator of the National museum in Ljubljana; and, the already mentioned Nikolaj Krasnov, architect of the Ministry of Construction. The technical reviewer for the jury was engineer Vladislav Čeh, head of the Parliament's Technical Department. The jury was in charge of selecting fresco sketches and sculpture models, and its members could intervene and make suggestions to selected artists on the changes or improvements in the content, style and formal aspects of selected artworks. Before transferring the sketches to the walls and making sculptures in marble or bronze, artists had to have the jury's written permission, and the jury was also the one to determine when a work was completely finished.<sup>16</sup> The jury began evaluating artworks on October 26, 1936; the sessions were held in the Assembly building in Vračar and went on for eleven days.<sup>17</sup>

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13 Ibid. The second and third prizes were: vestibule (8,000 and 5,000 dinars), Conversation Hall (6,000 and 4,000 dinars) and staircases (4,000 and 3,000 dinars).

14 Ibid.

15 *Produljenje rokova za predaju skica umetničkih radova za novu zgradu Narodne skupštine* [Extension of Deadlines for Submission of Sketches of Works of Art for the New Building of the National Assembly], August 8, 1936, Folder 387, Box 125, Fond 72. National Assembly of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Archive of Yugoslavia, Belgrade (hereafter cited as AJ-72-125-387).

16 "Konkurs za izradu umetničkih radova u zgradi Narodne skupštine" [Competition for the Creation of Works of Art in the National Assembly Building], *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, June 24, 1936, 3.

17 Letter to the jury members regarding the start of the jury process, AJ-72-125-387; VII zapisnik [Minutes no. 7], 1, AJ-72-125-387.

## RESULTS OF THE FIRST CONTEST AND SUBSEQUENT COMPETITIONS

Croatian painters and sculptors triumphed in the first competition for the decoration of the National Assembly in Belgrade and received awards for most of the works that were commissioned in the contest, except for the fresco painting for the Great Plenary Hall.<sup>18</sup> They won the following awards:

- the painting for the Small Plenary Hall: the first prize was not awarded, second prize went to Mirko Rački for the painting under the code title *Omikron* (Omicron), and third prize to Sergije Glumac for the sketch under the code title *Bogatstvo Jugoslavije* (The Wealth of Yugoslavia);
- the painting for the Great Club: Vladimir Filakovac received the first prize for the work under the code title *Obala* (Shore);
- paintings for the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers: the first prize was not awarded, and the second prize went to Mirko Rački for the work under the code title *Omicron*;
- the statue *Kralj Tomislav* (King Tomislav) in the vestibule: Vanja Radauš won the first prize for the sculpture under the code title *Reks I*, and Marin Studin was awarded the third prize for his work under code 14;
- the statue *Knez Kocelj* (Prince Kocelj) in the vestibule: Marin Studin received the second prize for the work under code 14;
- the sculpture *Poljoprivreda* (Agriculture) in the Conversation Hall: Vanja Radauš received the second prize for the work under the code title *Ceres*;
- the sculpture *Zanat* (Crafts) in the Conversation Hall: Petar Pallavicini received the first prize for the work under the code A 4;
- the sculpture *Pomorstvo* (Maritime Affairs) in the Conversation Hall: Petar Pallavicini received the first prize for his work under the code A II, and Juraj Škarpa the third prize for his work under the code title *Strela* (Arrow);
- the figure of *Prosveta* (Education) for the niche of the main staircase: Frano Kršinić received the first prize for the work under the code X, and Joza Turkalj the second prize for the work under the code title *9 u krugu* (9 in the circle);
- the figure of *Pravda* (Justice) for the niche of the main staircase: Frano Kršinić received the first prize for the work under the code X, and Joza Turkalj the second prize for the work under the code title *9 in the circle*.<sup>19</sup>

Croatian sculptors participated in the competition with several models for various sculptures, and Vanja Radauš was awarded for all submitted models. Petar Pallavicini received an award for his sculptures of the *Crafts* and *Maritime*

<sup>18</sup> The first prize was won by the Serbian painter Milo Milunović, and the other prizes went to the Slovenian Tone Kralj and the Serb Mladen Josić.

<sup>19</sup> "Rezultat konkursa za izradu umetničkih radova u zgradi Narodna skupštine" [Results of the Competition for the Creation of Works of Art in the National Assembly Building], *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, November 7, 1936, 1.



**Fig. 2.** Article featuring sketches and models of awarded works by Frano Kršinić, Petar Pallavicini, Milo Milunović and Vladimir Filakovac, in: *Politika*, November 11, 1936, 7.



*Affairs* in the Conversation Hall, and also proposed sketches for the *Education* and *Justice* sculptures in the niches at the bottom of the staircase, which were not awarded. Dalmatian sculptor Marin Studin submitted models for all four statues in the vestibule, and received awards for *King Tomislav* and *Prince Kocelj*. Sculptor Joza Turkalj was awarded for *Justice* and *Education*, and submitted sketches for *Agriculture* and *Crafts* as well.<sup>20</sup>

After the announcement of the results, all the submitted works were exhibited in the Manjež building (**fig. 2**), where they could be viewed free of charge between November 10 and 16, 1936. The awarded authors were to report immediately to the Presidency of the National Assembly for further arrangements regarding the execution of frescoes and sculptures, and all the other artists were to collect the non-awarded works in the Technical Department between November 20 and December 1, 1936.<sup>21</sup>

The competition aroused great public interest, the results were published in the daily press throughout the Kingdom of Yugoslavia,<sup>22</sup> and the exhibition

20 A list of all the authors who participated in the competition is not preserved in the archival documentation, but only a list of awarded artists. By comparing the serial numbers under which the applied sketches were received (they are listed in Minutes no. 7) with their codes and the list of awarded artists, it can be inferred for which other works the awarded authors also sent sketches and models. Data reconstructed based on: VII zapisnik, 9–23, AJ-72-125-387.

21 “Rezultat konkursa za izradu umetničkih radova u zgradi Narodna skupštine,” 1.

22 “Podjeljene su nagrade za umjetnička djela u novoj Narodnoj skupštini,” 19; “Veliki umetnički konkurs završen: Nagrade za slikarske i vajarske radove u novoj skupštini” [Big Art Competition is Over: Prizes for Paintings and Sculptures in the New Assembly], *Politika*, November 6, 1936, 8.

of awarded and non-awarded works in the six rooms of the former National Assembly attracted a large audience.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, both the competition and the organized exhibition did not pass without criticism. On the one hand, the importance of the project was highlighted, since the selected works of art “would leave a mark on the artistic level, content and form of our present-day society for hundreds and hundreds of years to come.”<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, the implementation of the competition was criticized on several levels – from the unfavorable timing of the announcement during the summer and the short deadline given the scope of the task, to the insufficiently high prizes and the composition of the jury,<sup>25</sup> as well as the topics and realization of individual works.<sup>26</sup>

The participation and great success of the Zagreb artists in the competition for the decoration of the National Assembly was reported by the Zagreb daily press at the time, and *Novosti* published the statements of award-winning artists Frano Kršinić, Vanja Radauš and Sergije Glumac, accompanied by their portraits and photos of the awarded works by Kršinić and Radauš.<sup>27</sup>

During the June 1936 competition, the first prizes were not awarded for works in several key spaces of the National Assembly – the fresco in the Small Plenary Hall, the three paintings on the ceiling of the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers, and the statues of Tsar Dušan and King Petar in the vestibule. For this reason, on November 7, 1936, the *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije* published the results of the first competition as well as a new call for the creation of artworks. The conditions and the jury were the same, and the deadline for submitting the sketches was January 15, 1937.<sup>28</sup> Croatian artists again triumphed at that competition, winning two first prizes: the Split painter Mate Meneghello Rodić for the fresco in the Small Plenary Hall (work code 33) and the Zagreb sculptor Dragutin Filipović for the sculpture of Tsar Dušan in the vestibule (work code 324). Vanja Radauš participated in the competition for the sculpture of Tsar Dušan and won the second prize for the sketch under the code title *Imperator*.<sup>29</sup> The awards given to the Zagreb artists once again

23 “U Manježu su izložene skice slikarskih i vajarskih radova kojima će se ukasiti nova zgrada Narodne skupštine” [Sketches of Paintings and Sculptures That Will Decorate the New Building of the National Assembly are Exhibited in Manjež], *Politika*, November 11, 1936, 7.

24 Đorđe Popović, “Slikarski i vajarski radovi za Narodnu skupštinu” [Paintings and Sculptures for the National Assembly], *Pravda*, November 16, 1936, 4.

25 Ibid.

26 For example, Stojanović believed that, in terms of content, Filakovac’s successfully portrayed fishermen pulling a fishing net “certainly cannot replace the great events of our history and the struggle for people’s rights”. Sreten Stojanović, “Izložba skica sa konkursa za novu zgradu Narodne skupštine” [Exhibition of Sketches from the Competition for the New Building of the National Assembly], *Vreme*, November 11, 1936, 11.

27 [I], “Veliki uspjeh zagrebačkih umjetnika” [Great Success of Zagreb Artists], *Novosti*, November 8, 1936, 23.

28 “Ponovni konkurs za izradu umetničkih radova u zgradi Narodne skupštine” [New Competition for the Creation of Works of Art in the National Assembly Building], *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, November 7, 1936, 1. This time, for the paintings in the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers, each participant was required to submit all three paintings, and the prize was 60,000 dinars.

29 IX zapisnik [Minutes no. 9], AJ-72-125-387. Jury sessions were held on February 9–12, 14 and 16–18, 1937. Again, no awards were given for paintings in the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers.

received media attention, and the new success was reported by *Novosti* with an interview with Filipović and Radauš.<sup>30</sup>

In the second, repeated competition, the 16 proposals did not yield the winner for the sculpture of King Petar I the Liberator in the vestibule,<sup>31</sup> while the second prize went to Grga Antunac for his work under the code title *Sliva*.<sup>32</sup> Since no adequate model was chosen in two consecutive tenders, the jury proposed to the President of the Assembly that the creation of the monument be entrusted to Ivan Meštrović or, if he did not accept, to Antun Augustinčić; if still no agreement was reached, the jury would propose “a third suitable person.”<sup>33</sup> The negotiations were obviously not successful, and there was also a significant change that happened in the meantime – the sculpture dedicated to King Petar as the recent ruler who had also laid the foundation stone for the National Assembly was replaced by the historical figure of Đorđe Petrović Karađorđe, the founder of the Karađorđević dynasty. On March 19, 1937, the President of the Assembly decided to announce the competition for the creation of the statue of Karađorđe according to the conditions for the creation of sculptures in the vestibule from the 1936 competition and with a deadline of July 1, 1937, but without explaining the reasons for the replacement of the depicted ruler.<sup>34</sup> The creation of the statue was eventually entrusted to Frano Kršinić.

## EXECUTION OF AWARD-WINNING WORKS – FROM CONTRACT TO COMPLETION

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In the months following the first competition, the jury and the artists defined the parameters of the contract, which specified the conditions and various aspects of future realizations – from deadlines and work schedules to payment dynamics. In February 1937, the first prize-winning painters and sculptors received a standardized decision form, which was also a contract with detailed conditions for the execution of the works. The artists were obliged to comply with the conditions of the competition and accept the remarks of the jury. The sculptors had to do the work at their own expense, pack and secure the finished sculptures for transport and load them onto the train. The National Assembly accepted the costs of rail transport of the finished statues, their transfer to the place of installation, and the costs of transport insurance, but without the

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30 [M.], “Lijep uspjeh zagrebačkih kiprara Dragutina Filipovića i Ivana Radauša te Grge Antunca na konkursu za izradbu figura u zgradi nove Narodne skupštine” [Notable Success of the Zagreb Sculptors Dragutin Filipović, Ivan Radauš and Grga Antunac at the Competition for the Creation of Sculptures in the Building of the New National Assembly], *Novosti*, February 19, 1937, 10.

31 Figura kralja Petra [Figure of King Petar], Belgrade, February 18, 1937, AJ-72-125-387. The jury session was held on February 9–11, 1937.

32 IX zapisnik, AJ-72-125-387.

33 Figura kralja Petra, Belgrade, February 18, 1937, AJ-72-125-387.

34 “Konkurs za izradu figure ‘Karađorđe’ u jednoj od niša u glavnom vestibulu zgrade Narodne skupštine” [Competition for the Creation of the Sculpture of “Karađorđe” in One of the Niches in the Main Vestibule of the National Assembly Building], *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, March 29, 1937, 3.

liability for damages during transit and installation and all other possible costs incurred during delivery. The Parliament undertook to create a scaffolding for the installation of the statues, with the condition that the authors themselves unpack and install the sculptures. The painters were obliged to create cardboard versions in their studios at their own expense, according to the selected sketch and in colors that were suitable for the fresco technique, and to submit them to the jury for inspection and acceptance, and then make the painting according to the defined parameters. The National Assembly undertook to prepare the space for the frescoes and build a mobile scaffolding with curtains, remove the plaster and install a wire mesh for the application of new paint. The deadline for making models in clay and cardboard for the frescoes, which the jury had to review, was three months from the conclusion of the contract, and for finished frescoes and sculptures four months after the jury accepted the work. The method of payment of the total amount of the contracted fee was also clearly defined: the artist received 10% upon signing the contract and accepting the conditions, 40% after the jury approved the model in clay or the sketch on cardboard, and the other 50% after the jury accepted the installed sculpture and the finished fresco transferred to the wall. The Assembly also paid half of all taxes.<sup>35</sup>

164 The completion of the awarded works did not go smoothly; the archival documentation and the artist's correspondence with the Technical Department and the President of the National Assembly make it possible to reconstruct all the challenges and difficulties they faced at different levels, which then give an insight into the modalities of the realization of monumental works of that type during the interwar year. Soon after signing the contract, the Zagreb sculptors Radauš, Filipović and Kršinić started making sculptures of King Tomislav, Tsar Dušan and the allegorical figures of Justice and Education, and the clay models were ready for the jury as early as April 1937.<sup>36</sup> The realization of the artworks was affected by changes in the market, which is why the artists requested allocation of funds to settle the advance fee for the stone they had ordered for carving the accepted models.<sup>37</sup> They also asked for an increase in the contracted amounts due to the rise in the price of materials for making sculptures.<sup>38</sup> The

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35 All mentioned data is from: Decision of the President of the National Assembly on the creation of the figure of *Education*, Belgrade, February 25, 1937, Folder 388, Box 126, AJ-72 (hereafter cited as AJ-72-126-388); Decision of the President of the National Assembly on the creation of a fresco on the front wall in the Great Club Hall, Belgrade, March 5, 1937, Folder 389, AJ-72-126 (hereafter cited as AJ-72-126-389).

36 Letter from Vanja Radauš to the Technical Department of the National Assembly, Zagreb, April 6, 1937, AJ-72-126-388. Radauš writes on behalf of himself, Kršinić and Filipović and notes that they will be ready by April 20 and that in case of a longer wait, the models will dry. He also states that they have contacted Ljubljana artists who have not yet started working on sculptures and will be finished only at the end of May.

37 For example, Vanja Radauš for the statue of King Tomislav. Letter from Vanja Radauš to the Technical Department of the National Assembly, Zagreb, May 4, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.

38 Vanja Radauš, Frano Kršinić, Tine Kos, France Gorše and Petar Pallavicini have attached invoices for stone and bronze and were asking for their costs to be reimbursed – 20,000 dinars for the marble sculptures (*King Tomislav* and *Prince Kocelj*), 10,000 dinars for the sculptures of stone (*Agriculture*, *Maritime Affairs*, *Industry* and *Crafts*) and 8,000 for Kršinić's gilded bronze figures of *Justice* and *Education*, so a total of 96,000 dinars. Letter from V. Radauš, F. Kršinić, T. Kos, F. Gorše and P. Pallavicini to the President of the National Assembly S. Čirić, Zagreb, November 27, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.



financial aspect affected the completion of works, so they were looking for a way to reduce the costs of sculptures' transportation and installation. Since most of the awarded sculptures were made by artists from Zagreb and Ljubljana, a joint train transport to Belgrade was proposed,<sup>39</sup> but this proved difficult due to the delay in the completion of some sculptures,<sup>40</sup> and in the end, the statues of Kršinić, Radauš and Filipović were delivered separately.<sup>41</sup> Financial reasons, difficulties with the supply of materials and public procurement procedures influenced the extension of the planned deadlines. It was thus only in October 1937 that the task of installing the sculptures was awarded to the most favorable bidder, Dobra Milenović, an entrepreneur from Belgrade,<sup>42</sup> who in the end did not install all of the sculptures. Most of the work was completed by the end of 1937,<sup>43</sup> but Filipović's sculpture *Tsar Dušan* and Kršinić's *Karadžorđe* were only moved to the vestibule in the second half of 1938.<sup>44</sup>

## WORKS OF ART AS CARRIERS OF (POLITICAL) MESSAGES

A competition of this importance gave artists the opportunity to try their hand at creating works of monumental proportions for a building of great political significance. The entire interior of the National Assembly was richly decorated, and the paintings and sculptures intended for key representative halls, communication zones and areas of social content also represented the bearers of messages about the political, social, economic and cultural life of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The art program emphasized the foundations on which the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was built – from the depiction of personalities who played a prominent role in the history of the people of the joint state to symbolic figures representing activities that ensure economic development (industry, crafts, agriculture and maritime affairs), legal order (justice) and social and intellectual progress (education). The focus was also on

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39 For example, the National Assembly requested exemption from municipal excise duties for statues made in Zagreb and Ljubljana. Letter from the President of the National Assembly to the President of the City Council Vlado Ilić, Belgrade, October 2, 1937, Folder 390, AJ-72-126 (hereafter cited as AJ-72-126-390).

40 In early October 1937, Kršinić wanted to deliver the finished sculptures, and stated that Radauš would be finished soon, and Filipović only later. Letter from Frano Kršinić to the engineer [Vladislav Čeh], Zagreb, October 1, 1937, AJ-72-126-390.

41 The Zagreb company Slavija was paid 16,785 dinars for the transport of *King Tomislav*, and an amount of 17,285 dinars was provided for *Tsar Dušan*. This included delivery from the studio to the National Assembly (pick-up in Zagreb, transport and loading on the train, freight to Belgrade, transfer from the train to the National Assembly and insurance for the estimated value of the sculpture of 70,000 dinars and handling costs). Otprema spomenika "Cara Dušana Silnog" od vajara g. Filipovića [Transport of the Monument of Tsar Dušan the Mighty by the Sculptor Filipović], Zagreb, November 10, 1937, AJ-72-126-390; Troškovnik br. 1457 [Cost Sheet no. 1457], Zagreb, October 13, 1937, AJ-72-126-390.

42 Builders Bora P. Panić and Gruja Milovanović and stonecutter Avanti Bertoto also made offers, and Milenović's offer of 34,968 dinars was accepted. Komisijjski zapisnik [Commission Minutes], October 16, 1937, AJ-72-126-390.

43 Report on the work performed on the installation of sculptures in the National Assembly building, January 19, 1938, AJ-72-126-390.

44 Letter to the President of the National Assembly with the estimate for moving the figures to the vestibule, August 18, 1938, AJ-72-126-390.



different aspects of life of the multinational and multiconfessional state, which was indicated through the visual arts program.

### Vestibule – Foundations of the State

The entrance area of the National Assembly had a strong symbolic and political message, and its decorations emphasized the role and significance of the building, as well as the foundations of the leading states of the multinational Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The representative vestibule is marked by the intertwining of architecture, sculpture and craftsmanship and the richness and colourfulness of the materials used: its marble floor, polychromatic stucco decorations, marble columns, monumental dome and four marble sculptures of former rulers placed in the niches and in accordance with the renaissance models (**fig. 3**). Four monumental, slightly stylized sculptures represent figures that symbolize the historical development of the three nations / constituent peoples: Tsar Dušan, King Tomislav and Prince Kocelj, and the founder of the royal dynasty Karađorđe. As it has already been mentioned, three of them were made by Croatian artists – *King Tomislav* by Vanja Radauš, *Tsar Dušan* by Dragutin Filipović and *Karađorđe* by Frano Kršinić – while *Prince Kocelj* was done by the Slovenian artist Tine Kos.

*King Tomislav* was the young artist Vanja (Ivan) Radauš' first sculpture for a public building. The first Croatian king to be crowned in 925, who is considered to have expanded the Croatian state by unifying the Croats of Pannonia and Dalmatia, was depicted in a dignified pose with a crown on his head, a sword in his right hand and a book in his left. The jury chose Radauš's model from among the seven submitted works and assessed it in the following way: "Plastically successful. Conceptually excellent. The spirit of the statue is convincingly achieved by its plastic directness and seriousness of the idea."<sup>45</sup> Despite Radauš's desire to start the work as soon as possible, the completion of

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**Fig. 3.** Vestibule with sculptures *King Tomislav* and *Tsar Dušan*. Photograph by Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić.

the sculpture of King Tomislav was delayed, and the block of Nebregovo white marble, roughly hewn with dimensions of 3×1.1×1.15 meters, was not paid for until the beginning of October 1937.<sup>46</sup>

The awarded proposal for the sculpture of Tsar Dušan, selected in the second competition from November 1936, was made by the now almost completely forgotten 24-year-old sculptor from Glina, Dragutin Filipović, whose model was chosen from among 20 sketches.<sup>47</sup> Filipović's sculpture of a Serbian ruler from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, during whose reign Serbia had the largest territory, was given a very high rating by the jury. They thought that it embodied the idea, that it was well placed and "expressive in attitude and gesture", while "the detail of the hand reveal a master sculptor."<sup>48</sup> Filipović was asked to adapt the physiognomy of the head to the "authentic figure of Tsar Dušan"<sup>49</sup> and, in March 1937, received four photographs through an intermediary from Milan Kašanin, the director of the Prince Pavle Museum.<sup>50</sup> Filipović's sculpture depicted the emperor with an expressive face and in an imposing moving pose, holding his Code of Law in his left hand at head level, and with a scepter in his right hand suggestively pointing to an important legal document of medieval Serbia. The completion of the sculpture and its transport were covered by the daily newspaper *Novosti*, which also announced that the marble for the sculpture was delivered from Prilep and that it was carved by the sculptor Grga Antunac (fig. 4).<sup>51</sup>



Fig. 4. Vanja Radauš, *King Tomislav*, 1937, marble / Dragutin Filipović, *Tsar Dušan*, 1937, marble / Frano Kršinić, *Karadordže*, 1938, marble. Photographs by Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić.

46 Invoice of the *Industrija mramora i granita sa strojnim uredjajem Jaroslav Strecha*, Zagreb [Marble and Granite Industry with Machinery Jaroslav Strecha, Zagreb], Zagreb, October 5, 1937, AJ-72-126-388. The block cost 15,000 dinars.

47 *Figura cara Dušana* [Figure of Tsar Dušan], Beograd, February 18, 1937, AJ-72-125-387.

48 *Ocena i napomena žirija za figuru Cara Dušana nagrađenu izvođenjem* [Evaluation and Comments of the Jury for the Figure of Tsar Dušan Awarded with the Execution], February 25, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.

49 Ibid.

50 Letter from Milan Kašanin to the President of the National Assembly, Belgrade, March 26, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.

51 [Mk], "Kipar Dragutin Filipović dovršio je kip cara Dušana za Narodnu skupštinu" [Sculptor Dragutin Filipović Completed the Statue of Tsar Dušan for the National Assembly], *Novosti*, November 18, 1937, 11.

According to the propositions of the first competition, three sculptures in the vestibule were dedicated to key figures in the national history of Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia – King Tomislav (10<sup>th</sup> century), Tsar Dušan (14<sup>th</sup> century) and Prince Kocelj (9<sup>th</sup> century) – while the fourth person was supposed to represent a recent ruler, King Petar I Karađorđević, who died in 1921.<sup>52</sup> After the second competition, Petar I was replaced by Karađorđe, a historical figure from an earlier period, the leader of the uprising in which Belgrade and parts of Serbia were liberated from Ottoman rule in 1806. The statue of Karađorđe was ultimately awarded to Frano Kršinić, a professor at the Royal Academy of Arts in Zagreb, and another award went to the sculptor Petar Pallavicini.<sup>53</sup> At the end of September 1937, the jury accepted the model *Zakletva 2* (Oath 2), on the condition that the sculptor pay attention to the proportions between the hands, head and body and the appearance of the costume, achieve greater static in the figure's attitude and make the head more masculine.<sup>54</sup> Kršinić soon made the changes to the sculpture according to the remarks of the jury, which accepted the new clay model already at the session held in late December,<sup>55</sup> after examining the model a few days earlier in Zagreb.<sup>56</sup> The sculpture was supposed to be carved in the famous Belgrade stonework company Bertoto, but by the end of February 1938, the stone for the sculpture had not yet been delivered,<sup>57</sup> and the carving and installation were prolonged until August.<sup>58</sup>

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The monumental sculpture depicted Karađorđe with his right hand raised at the moment of taking an oath, while his left hand rested on a saber, and he was dressed in a stylized suit that “preserved the forms of the folk costume.”<sup>59</sup>

## Central Hall and Staircases – Affirmation of Economic and Intellectual Progress and Legal Order

The former Conversation Hall is the second largest space in the building, richly decorated and with a portal-like structure. In the more narrow parts of the hall, on the side of the doors and flanked by pilasters with Corinthian columns, there are two niches with marble sculptures that symbolize commerce in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Four female figures personify the four branches of the economy: *Agriculture* and *Industry* were made by the Slovenian sculptor

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52 He was the father of King Aleksandar I Karađorđević, the grandfather of the 13-year-old heir to the throne Petar II Karađorđević and the uncle of the then regent and viceroy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Prince Pavle Karađorđević.

53 Kršinić submitted the work under the code title *Ustanak* (Rebellion), and Pallavicini under the code 804. Spisak skica umetničkih radova [List of Sketches of Works of Art], AJ-72-125-387; XIV zapisnik [Minutes no. 14], AJ-72-125-387; “Nagrade Kršiniću i Palavićinju,” *Novo doba*, July 8, 1937, 4.

54 XIX zapisnik [Minutes no. 19], AJ-72-126-388. Jury session was on September 22, 1937.

55 XXIII zapisnik [Minutes no. 23], AJ-72-126-388. Jury session was on December 27, 1937.

56 Letter to Branko Šenoa, Belgrade, December 22, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.

57 Letter from Frano Kršinić, Zagreb, February 28, 1938, AJ-72-126-388.

58 Telegram from Frano Kršinić to the engineer [Vladislav] Čeh, AJ-72-126-388. He authorizes Grassi to install the sculpture because he is prevented from coming in person.

59 Đorđe Oraovac, “Skulpture u Narodnoj skupštini” [Sculptures in the National Assembly], *Umetnički pregled*, no. 2 (1939): 55.





**Fig. 5.** Petar Pallavicini, *Maritime Affairs*, 1937, marble / *Crafts*, 1937, marble. Photographs by Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić.

**Fig. 6.** Frano Kršinić, *Justice*, 1937, gilded bronze / *Education*, 1937, gilded bronze. Photographs by Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić.

France Gorše, and the figures of *Crafts* and *Maritime Affairs* were created by a Croatian artist who lived in Belgrade, Petar Pallavicini, a professor at the Art School. The sculptures in the niches followed the idealized model of the female figure that is common in the decoration of public buildings. A nude figure symbolizing maritime affairs holds a ship and has a dolphin under her feet, while *Crafts* is shown with tools in her hands. The jury received 12 sketches for the *Crafts* and 16 for the *Maritime Affairs*, and both of Pallavicini's sculptures were evaluated as well-posed and beautifully modeled (**fig. 5**).<sup>60</sup>

The sculptures in the niches of the staircases leading to the first floor and the diplomatic chambers were made by Frano Kršinić and personify Justice and Education, the backbones on which the state is based. Kršinić depicted female figures with the attributes of justice (scales) and education (a torch), and followed the same model as Pallavicini (**fig. 6**). He had to cast the figures of *Justice* and *Education* in bronze and gild them with real gold leaves.<sup>61</sup> Both sculptures completely satisfied the jury, which accepted them unconditionally, with the assessment that they fully fit the purpose and were well executed.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, Milan Kašanin and the other members of the jury wanted to own the head (a detail of *Education*) and were informed about the price of its execution in bronze.<sup>63</sup> In October 1937, Kršinić transported the sculptures *Justice* and *Education* to Belgrade and, in accordance with the requirements,<sup>64</sup> soon installed them personally.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> VII zapisnik, 18–19, AJ-72-125-387.

<sup>61</sup> Decision of the President of the National Assembly on the creation of the sculpture of Education, Belgrade, February 25, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.

<sup>62</sup> *Ocena i napomena žirija za figuru Glavnog stepeništa / Prosveta / nagrađenu izvođenjem* [Evaluation and Comments of the Jury for the Figure of Education Awarded with the Execution], February 25, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from Frano Kršinić to the engineer [Vladislav Čeh], Zagreb, July 29, 1937, AJ-72-126-388. Kršinić said that the casting in the Zagreb Academy art foundry would cost 1,500 dinars.

<sup>64</sup> Letter from Frano Kršinić to the engineer [Vladislav Čeh], Zagreb, October 8, 1937, AJ-72-126-388.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Frano Kršinić to the head of the Technical Department of the National Assembly [Vladislav Čeh], Belgrade, October 15, 1937, AJ-72-126-390. He engaged the company Slavija for transport.



### Small Plenary Hall – Allegory of Life

One of the most representative spaces in the National Assembly building was the Small Plenary Hall, a semicircular amphitheater-type chamber located in the left wing of the building. In the first competition, the fresco in the Small Plenary Hall was not selected, and the second and third prizes, as already mentioned, were awarded to Croatian artists Mirko Rački and Sergije Glumac.

In the second competition, in February 1937, among 23 submitted works, the jury selected a fresco by Mate Meneghello Rodić under the code 33.<sup>66</sup> In the fresco *Velika alegorija rada* (Great Allegory of Work), the jury highlighted the original theme, colours and good drawing, and noted the mass proportions, small figures and excessively large background in the form of architecture as shortcomings. They requested that the artist expand the foreground so that the figures would not stand on the frame, and make the part with the figures larger in relation to the entire background (architecture and sky).<sup>67</sup> Rodić corrected his work, and in September 1937 the jury accepted his cardboard for the fresco in the Small Plenary Hall.<sup>68</sup> The artist from Split was known for decorating the interiors of public buildings, and in this wall painting with more than 30 figures he depicted many aspects of life in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia – various branches of the economy such as agriculture, fishing, cattle breeding, construction and industry. In the background, he presented various religions of the people of Yugoslavia, showing a mosque, a Catholic monastery and an Orthodox church (fig. 7).

Twelve pendants in the Small Plenary Hall, which show female and male bust-length portraits in folk costumes of various Yugoslavian nations, were painted by the Croatian artist Kristian Kreković.<sup>69</sup>

Fig. 7. Mate Meneghello Rodić, *Great Allegory of Work*, 1937, fresco. Photograph by Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić.

66 *Slika za Malu salu* [Painting for the Small Plenary Hall], February 18, 1937, AJ-72-125-387.

67 AJ-72-126-389, *Ocena i napomena žirija za sliku male sale nagrađenu izvodenjem* [Evaluation and Comments of the Jury for the Painting in the Small Plenary Hall Awarded with the Execution], AJ-72-126-389.

68 XIX zapisnik, AJ-72-126-388.

69 *Dom Narodne skupštine*, 133.



## Great Club and the Buffet – Everyday Life of the People

The artist from Slavonia, Vladimir Filakovac, who moved from Osijek to Belgrade in 1930, and the Slovenian painter Rajko Slapernik received awards for paintings in the hall of the Great Club. The jury chose their solutions from among 23 received works, and for Filakovac's sketch under the code title *Shore*, they concluded that "in terms of idea, composition and painting process, it fully corresponds to the place for which it is intended."<sup>70</sup> The elongated horizontal composition in the form of a frieze shows a group of fishermen with fishing nets and women walking with baskets full of fish next to them, being welcomed by mothers with children. Monumental, corpulent figures eliminate the surrounding space of the coast, which is only indicated by fragments of the sea and ships, thus emphasizing that hard work can lead to prosperity. In July 1937, Filakovac finished the fresco *Shore*,<sup>71</sup> and was, at the suggestion of the jury, soon awarded the creation of another fresco in the hall of the Great Club. It was to be placed in the spot intended for Slapernik's work and realized under the same conditions as the first painting.<sup>72</sup> In less than a month, Filakovac completed the work *U brdima* (In the Hills),<sup>73</sup> which depicted a frieze of six young men and women in national costumes on horses, with mountains visible behind them. He used the oil painting *Svadba – Konavljani na konjima* (Wedding – Konavljani on Horses) from 1936 as a sketch, which he transferred to the wall in a more synthetic version (fig. 8).<sup>74</sup>



Fig. 8. Vladimir Filakovac, *Shore*, 1937, fresco  
/ *In the Hills*, 1937, fresco. Photographs by  
Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić.

70 VII zapisnik, 4, AJ-72-125-387.

71 Letter from Vladimir Filakovac to the Presidency of the National Assembly, Belgrade, July 15, 1937, AJ-72-126-389.

72 Decision of the President of the National Assembly to entrust Vladimir Filakovac with the creation of one more fresco painting, Belgrade, July 24, 1937, AJ-72-126-389.

73 Letter from Vladimir Filakovac to the Presidency of the National Assembly, Belgrade, August 11, 1937, AJ-72-126-389.

74 It is a painting with dimensions of 78.5×96.5 cm, which is owned by the Croatian Parliament in Zagreb. Cf. Ambruš, *Vladimir Filakovac*, 258.

## OTHER WORKS BY CROATIAN ARTISTS

In addition to the competition, the National Assembly also engaged artists to create artworks outside of the competition. Painter Kristian Kreković realized the already mentioned pendentive paintings in the Small Plenary Hall. The Split-born sculptor Toma Rosandić, who was also a member of the jury, was hired for the execution of the sculpture *Igrali se konji vrani* (Black Horses at Play), which was placed on pedestals on the side of the staircase leading to the entrance portico of the National Assembly.<sup>75</sup> Rosandić was also the author of the bust of the Serbian politician Nikola Pašić (1937), the head of Government of the Kingdom of Serb, Croats and Slovenes in the 1920s, which used to be in the Great Plenary Hall,<sup>76</sup> and is today located in the vestibule.

Seven representative portraits were commissioned for the Diplomatic Salon from the professor of the Royal Academy of Arts in Zagreb, Vladimir Becić, depicting members of the Karađorđević family – the late King Aleksandar I, Queen Marija, King Petar II and the regent Prince Pavle (two portraits) – and regents Radenko Stanković and Ivo Perović who, together with Prince Pavle, formed the Viceroy's Council and assumed royal powers until Petar II came of age.<sup>77</sup>

At the same time, artworks for the National Assembly were also being purchased, and numerous artists and private collectors from different parts of the Kingdom offered paintings and sculptures – from landscapes to portraits of the members of the royal family.<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The fresco and sculpture program of the National Assembly and the awarded works correspond to the direction of the contemporary policy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and are inseparable from the complex political situation in the multinational state community founded after World War I, which after the promulgation of the 1921 Vidovdan Constitution functioned as a constitutional centralized parliamentary monarchy under the rule of the Karađorđević dynasty. The third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by constant changes of government and conflicts between government radicals and opposition parties that fought for federal organization, equality and the affirmation of national distinctiveness. With the proclamation of the January 6 dictatorship in 1929, King Aleksandar I Karađorđević dissolved the National Assembly, limited the work of political parties, changed the

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<sup>75</sup> His fee of 1,050,000 dinars was several times higher than the fees of authors awarded in the competition. Overview of expenditures for works of art from November 1936 until September 17, 1937, AJ-72-125-387.

<sup>76</sup> Oraovac, "Skulpture," 57–58.

<sup>77</sup> Decision on the payment of 175,000 dinars to Vladimir Becić for the creation of a portrait for the Diplomatic Salon, March 19, 1938, AJ-72-126-389. The portraits were ordered in November 1936.

<sup>78</sup> For example, the Croatian sculptor Marin Studin, who was staying in Belgrade at the time, offered his bust of King Petar II at a price of 15,000 dinars. Letter from Marin Studin to the President of the National Assembly, Belgrade, March 26, 1936, AJ-72-125-385.

previous division of the state and changed the name of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which nominally indicated integral Yugoslavism “as the new political-national ideology of the dictatorship.”<sup>79</sup> The Octroic constitution of 1931 again established a bicameral National Assembly, but any nation-based activities were still prohibited. More substantial changes came after the death of King Aleksandar I, with the establishment of the Viceroy’s Council, the formation of the new government and the establishment of the Yugoslav Radical Community party, as well as the softening of integral Yugoslavism and the emphasis on the “particularities of the historical development of individual provinces.”<sup>80</sup> As can be seen in the art program in the building of the National Assembly, the choice of historical figures and depicted national types emphasized the multinational, multicultural and multiconfessional character of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as well as the affirmation of general principles and values, such as justice and education, along with those activities on which a geographically rich and diverse country based its economy – agriculture, crafts, industry and maritime affairs. The competitions held in 1936 and 1937 gave artists the opportunity to try their hand at creating monumental works for a space of great symbolic significance, in which Croatian artists were particularly successful, creating the largest number of award-winning frescoes and sculptures and thus visually shaping the interior of a key political institution in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

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79 Ivana Žebec Silj, “Pregled općeg političkog stanja u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, kasnije Kraljevini Jugoslaviji” [Overview of Political Situation in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia], *Studia lexicographica*, no. 22 (2018): 36.

80 *Ibid.*, 39.



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## LOOKING AT ZAGREB: THE PUBLIC GALLERY AS A POPULARIZER OF KINETIC ART AND THE NEO-AVANT-GARDE ATTITUDE

### Abstract

**Keywords:** Kinetic Art, exhibition, public gallery, Neo-Avant-Garde, New Tendencies

*The essay sheds light on how Italian scholars' thoughts about public gallery engagement in the art world matched those of their Croatian colleagues throughout the mid-1960s, when, both in Rome and Zagreb, debate focused on the educational purposes and exhibiting practices of public galleries. Despite the different types of governments in the two countries, from 1961, in Italy, Yugoslav modernist art was shown as part of several events, while at the same time, in Croatia, international exhibitions entitled *Nove tendencije* (New Tendencies) led to the popularization of a neo-avant-gardist attitude under the umbrella-term "new tendencies". In both cases, artists and scholars united to proclaim a new mission for the public gallery and assumed the latter as a fundamental platform for endorsing freedom in art-making. However, around 1965, this kind of utopian vision was defeated for a range of reasons, above all, marketing and politics.*

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### INTRODUCTION

When the third edition of the *Nove tendencije* (New Tendencies) exhibition opened in Zagreb in 1965, the eponymous art movement had reached its zenith. This was an accomplishment on the part of critics and artists who had played a crucial role in the spread of the New Tendencies on the European scene. It was possible thanks to the intense cultural exchanges that had taken place between Italian public institutions and their counterparts in the Socialist Republic of Croatia, which was then part of the Yugoslav Federation. Artists involved in this movement had rejected the poetics of Abstract Expressionism and chose to turn back to historical Avant-Garde theories. Thus, those artists branded themselves with the adjective "new" to signify the eclipse of painting as the unique path for artistic pursuits. They therefore went on to represent themselves as the Neo-Avant-Garde. The primary issue in this historical and theoretical debate focused on establishing the role of public galleries in popularising the modernist movement in the shape of Neo-Avant-Garde art, thus providing an aesthetic education to a mass audience.

Specifically, the Roman art historian Giulio Carlo Argan and Palma Bucarelli, the director of the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, as well as Umbro Apollonio as curator of the Archives of the International Art Biennial in Venice, considered the kinetic-visual art of the New Tendencies



useful for transforming the traditional educational task of institutions, looking in particular at what was occurring in Yugoslavia and Croatia. Thus, in both these countries, we can see how many shared ideas and views converged with the emergence of the gallery establishment in Zagreb due to the personalities of Božo Bek, Radoslav Putar, Zdenka Munk and Vera Horvat Pintarić. By aligning the data on political and artistic exchanges, it is clear how, in different ways, one could no longer speak of State art, as during Fascism in Italy or in the Soviet bloc. On the contrary, in this specific context, the State was supposed to popularize and support modernist freedom and a neo-avant-gardist attitude through its galleries.

## ITALIANS DISCOVER YUGOSLAV MODERNISM

In Italy, several art critics, scholars and artists became interested in the Yugoslav cultural milieu in general, and that in Croatia in particular,<sup>1</sup> thanks to the renewed agreements between Rome and Belgrade after 1954.<sup>2</sup> A pivotal first step in this direction took place in 1961 in Rimini, when the third biennial Morgan's Painting Prize, sponsored by the Colorificio Toscano in Pisa, promoted relations in painting and sculpture between Italy and Yugoslavia. The members of the jury were Giulio Carlo Argan for Italy and Zoran Kržišnik for Yugoslavia, while the award-winning Croatian artists were the sculptor Dušan Džamonja and the painter Oton Gliha, both of whom would achieve growing acclaim in Italy partly due to the contribution of the art historian Vera Horvat Pintarić.<sup>3</sup> Džamonja and Gliha exhibited in Rimini not just for opportunistic political reasons, but also as an early signal of a renewed emphasis on the fact that the two Adriatic shores had both paid bitterly for their experience as recently "resurrected" nations after World War II, as Italian art critic Francesco Arcangeli stated in the exhibition catalogue.<sup>4</sup> This key statement underlined how after World War II, during the Cold War years, Modernism in the visual arts became a common style that also occurred at an institutional level, playing a role in cultural exchanges.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, in Zagreb, the *Nove tendencije* (New Tendencies) project, conceived initially by the Brazilian artist Almir da Silva Mavignier and Croatian art critics and art historians Matko Meštrović and Radoslav Putar, began as a way to bypass both the international art market and major

1 On this debate, see Ljiljana Kolečnik, "Geometric Abstraction in Croatian Art of the 1950s," in *Art and Ideology: The Nineteen-Fifties in a Divided Europe*, ed. Ljiljana Kolečnik (Zagreb: Croatian Society of Art Historians, 2004), 80–89.

2 On this issue, see more in Alessio Radosi, "Evoluzione interna della Jugoslavia 1955–1965" [Inner Development of Yugoslavia 1955–1965], *Quaderni*, no. 14 (2002): 7–126.

3 On this topic, see Vera Horvat-Pintarić, "Pittura jugoslava oggi" [Yugoslav Paintings Today], *La Biennale di Venezia*, no. 35 (1959): 20–29.

4 *Premio Morgan's Paint: III biennale internazionale per la pittura e la scultura, Italia-Jugoslavia: catalogo dell'esposizione* [Premio Morgan's Paint: III International Biennial for Painting and Sculpture, Italy-Yugoslavia: exhibition catalogue], ed. Eugenio Riccomini (Pisa: Colorificio Toscano, 1961).

5 See Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta. Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 61–104.

manifestations, such as the Venice Biennale, because they had become overly exploited by governments for political agendas and frequently pandered to the private gallery business.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the *Nove tendencije* exhibition aimed to be a non-aligned event compared to those efforts such as Action Painting in the United States, Art Informel in Europe and Socialist Realism in the former Soviet bloc.<sup>7</sup> Yet, this project was still in its beginnings, and attracted more and more international and Italian attention in the following years.<sup>8</sup>

In 1962, exhibitions focusing on Yugoslav art held in Venice and Rome increased in number. In Rome, a major show entitled *Contemporary Art in Yugoslavia* was held at the National Gallery in May, directed by Palma Bucarelli, albeit with the collaboration of Argan.<sup>9</sup> This exhibition occurred under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Education and the Rome Quadriennale and within the framework of the Italian-Yugoslavian cultural agreements. The Executive Committee included Božo Bek in its ranks, whereas the painter Ivan Picelj, a former member of the Neo-Constructivist group EXAT 51 and a recent participant in *Nove tendencije*, created the graphic design for the catalogue. The involvement of Picelj, who was recruited as a graphic designer, was justified because of his previous participation with the architect Vjenceslav Richter in several Yugoslav world trade fair pavilions.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, his participation established a powerful connection between Neo-Avant-Garde artists and public institutions appealing to the Italian art system, where scholars were debating the same questions at the time.<sup>11</sup>

To appreciate the role of Ivan Picelj and other artists, it is necessary to look through two articles that the director of the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt (Museum for Art and Crafts) in Zagreb, Zdenka Munk, wrote between 1962 and 1963, where she mainly outlined her vision of museum communication

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6 For more on *Nove tendencije*, see Armin Medosch, *The New Tendencies. Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution 1961–1978* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2016).

7 Ongoing changes in both the political and economic course of Yugoslavia, beginning in 1961, led to a new range of interactions with both the Western and Eastern blocs under the well-known label of Non-Alignment. This also had consequential repercussions on the art world as a possible third way-approach to dealing with public and private institutions. On this topic, see Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Andrew B. Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation. Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 134–146; and, Bojana Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism. Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945–1985* (Montreal: McGill's University Press, 2019).

8 On New Tendencies as an international network, see Ljiljana Kolešnik, "The Transition of New Tendencies from Neo-Avant-Garde Subculture to Institutional Mainstream Culture. An Example of Network Analysis," in *Modern and Contemporary Artists' Networks. An Inquiry into Digital History of Art and Architecture*, eds. Ljiljana Kolešnik and Sanja Horvatinčić (Zagreb: Institute of Art History Online Editions, 2018), 84–122. On the cultural milieu of the period, see more in Ljiljana Kolešnik, ed., *Socijalizam i modernost: umjetnost, kultura, politika 1950–1974* [Socialism and Modernity: Art, Culture, Politics 1950–1974] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2012); Zvonko Maković, ed., *Šezdesete u Hrvatskoj – Mit i stvarnost* [Sixties in Croatia – Myth and Reality] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2018).

9 *L'arte contemporanea in Jugoslavia* [Contemporary Art in Yugoslavia], ed. Majda Jerman (Roma: De Luca 1962).

10 See *EXAT 51. Synthese der Kunst im Jugoslawien der Nachkriegszeit* [EXAT 51. Synthesis of the Arts in Post-War Yugoslavia], eds. Katia Baudin and Tihomir Milovac (Dortmund: Kettler, 2017).

11 *Le funzioni del Museo. Arte, museo, pubblico nella contemporaneità* [The Functions of the Museum. Art, Museum, and Audience in the Contemporary World], ed. Stefano Chiodi (Firenze: Le Lettere, 2009), 133–134.

aimed at educating the public not only in terms of historical subjects but also in terms of visual education. In the first article, Munk argued for renewing the educational function of the museum, which would not only provide historical knowledge of the collections but also aspire to enlighten the public.<sup>12</sup> In the second essay, the author reflected on the ideal, efficient spatial arrangements of the museum through which the public could move and, according to Munk, appreciate the collections through the engagement of various artists as graphic designers and decorators. The posters, paintings and objects were supposed to be stimuli for a changed sensibility that one could experience in everyday life in socialist and industrial society.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the educational function of the museum was upgraded according to the latest standards of a specific art trend, both in Picelj's works and in those of his Italian colleagues, in which it was possible to recognise several significant traits: the revival of the constructivist tradition, socialist ideological engagement and an approach to industrial design for collective aesthetic education. In other words, as art historian Jerko Denegri stated, these ideas gathered around Yugoslav and socialist modernism.<sup>14</sup>

In conjunction with the 1962 Venice Biennale and under its auspices, the exhibition *25 Yugoslav Painters* opened in the lagoon at the Bevilacqua La Masa Opera Gallery. On the basis of this exhibition, the Slovenian painter Janez Bernik, the Serbian sculptor Olga Jevrić and the Croatian painter Oton Gliha achieved great acclaim.<sup>15</sup> If the Rome-based show had established ties between Božo Bek and Palma Bucarelli, the lagoon event reinforced Bek's relations with Umbro Apollonio, art historian and curator of the Venice Biennale Archive (today the Historical Archive for Contemporary Arts – hereafter cited as ASAC).<sup>16</sup> Like Argan, Apollonio was closely bound to milieux close to the Italian Socialist and Communist Parties and fostered knowledge of neo-avant-gardist art-making as a motor of collective education through public and private institutions.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he was constantly in the foreground of the Yugoslav artistic scene. Apollonio moved from Ljubljana (as an Italian consultant for several editions of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Art and the Forma Viva symposium) to Zagreb, where, since the end of the 1950s,

12 Zdenka Munk, "Materijal – Tehnika – Funkcija" [Materials – Technique – Function], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 112 (1962): 1–2.

13 Zdenka Munk, "Arhitektura muzejskih prostora" [On the Architecture of Museum Space], *Arhitektura*, no. 5-6, (1962–1963): 7–14.

14 Jerko Denegri, "Inside or Outside 'Socialist Modernism'? Radical Views on the Yugoslav Scene, 1950–1970," in *Impossible Histories. Historical Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, eds. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković (Cambridge: The MIT Press 2003), 170–208.

15 *25 pittori jugoslavi* [25 Yugoslav Painters], ed. Pietro Zampetti (Venezia: Stamperie di Venezia, 1962).

16 On Apollonio and the Venice Biennale, see Vittorio Pajusco, "Umbro Apollonio e l'Archivio della Biennale di Venezia (1948–1972)" [Umbro Apollonio and the Archive of the Venice Biennale (1948–1972)], in *Storie della Biennale di Venezia*, eds. Stefania Portinari and Nico Stringa (Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari 2019), 149–168.

17 On this topic, see Umbro Apollonio, "Principi Stato Industria Arte" [Principles State Industry Art], *Esso Rivista*, no. 5 (1955): 6.

Horvat Pintarić became his personal and professional correspondent for the *La Biennale di Venezia* magazine.<sup>18</sup>

## **NOVE TENDENCIJE AS A NEO AVANT-GARDE EXHIBITION IN A TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

According to Argan's criticisms, another open issue related to public institutions such as the Venice Biennale or the Rome National Gallery was whether they should play a didactic role and act as promoters of the New Tendencies because, in technologically advanced society, the general audience's capacity to enjoy contemporary artworks is not yet strong enough.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Argan and Apollonio were both looking at abstract-kinetic art trends not only in reaction to, for example, US Pop Art, which had flooded the art scene, but as a medium for an aesthetic didactics focused on the theory of visual perception.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, with the near lack of an independent art market in Croatia (unlike in Italy), they assumed that the model embodied by New Tendencies combined public patronage and the Neo-Avant-Garde.

In addition to the Venice-Rome axis, the Republic of San Marino also emerged alongside Rimini as an important site. In 1963, for the 4<sup>th</sup> San Marino Biennale entitled *Beyond the Art Informel*, the organising committee included Apollonio, Argan, Bucarelli and Kržišnik, as well as Italian artists such as Group N, Getulio Alviani, Enzo Mari and Group T. The Croatian participants, beyond the aforementioned Dušan Džamonja, Oton Gliha and Ivan Picelj, were Julije Knifer and Vojin Bakić. Džamonja and Gliha were among the awarded artists, while first place was assigned *ex aequo* to Groups N and Zero – though their success was controversial.<sup>21</sup> Bucarelli's statement in the catalogue stressed that a new aspect of the fourth edition of the Award was the fact that its jury members were museum directors and that the selection would take place via "public discussion". Furthermore, Bucarelli pointed out how in the contemporary context, burdened by the "growing pressures of the market", the museum should carry out an "educational function" and the mission of "selecting authentic values and introducing them to the knowledge of the general public." Lastly, as Bucarelli argued, this exhibition achieved a whole cycle of education, selection and judgement, thus finally closing the gap

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18 See an extensive reconstruction of this relationship in Giovanni Rubino, "Jedan kritički i umjetnički projekt između Italije i Hrvatske: Nove tendencije kroz korespondenciju Vere Horvat Pintarić i Umbra Apollonija" [A Critical and Artistic Project between Italy and Croatia: New Tendencies by Way of the Correspondence between Vera Horvat Pintarić and Umbro Apollonio], in *Imago, imaginatio, imaginabile. Zbornik u čast Zvonka Makovića*. [Imago, Imaginatio, Imaginabile. Festschrift in honor of Zvonko Maković], eds. Dragan Damjanović and Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2018), 341–361.

19 See Giulio Carlo Argan, "Musei d'arte moderna" [Museums of Modern Art], in *Museo perché Museo come*, ed. Pietro Romanelli (Roma: De Luca Editore, 1980), 39–45.

20 On this topic, see Frances Follin, *Embodied Visions. Bridget Riley, Op Art and The Sixties* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 47–61.

21 See a chronicle of the San Marino Biennial in Matko Meštrović, "Presedan-za sad bez presedana" [An Unprecedented Precedent for Now], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 128 (1963): 4.

between exhibition practice and the museum's educational role.<sup>22</sup> Even though the event took place thanks to the collaboration of private galleries, the public institutions involved included the Venice Biennale Archive, the National Gallery in Rome and Zagreb's Gallery of Contemporary Art.

At the same time, the San Marino Biennial coincided with *Nove tendencije 2*, the exhibition in 1963 that definitively launched Zagreb on the international Neo-Avant-Garde scene.<sup>23</sup> Aside from the divisions that arose among the artists that caused an inner split, the exhibition curators, whose approach to the didactic function of the gallery was similar to Bucarelli's, aimed to encourage their visitors to engage in an open discussion about New Tendencies.<sup>24</sup> The event thus signalled a strong liaison between Italian and Croatian milieus and set the stage for the 1964 Venice Biennale, when Pop Art became a counterpart to the international breakthrough of the New Tendencies. The latter were turned into a sort of "abstract" pop and categorized rapidly by the North American art scene under the label of Optical Art.<sup>25</sup> Against this mainstream understanding of the New Tendencies, both Italian and Croatian scholars rose to assert the leftist European origins of the Neo-Avant-Garde movement.<sup>26</sup> At the Venice Biennale, Argan suggested an exhibition that, for the first time, was devoted to museums in the world that are separate from the art market. Among the museums involved was Zagreb's Gallery of Contemporary Art, which was hailed as an outstanding institution for the achievements – outlined above – of the *Nove tendencije* exhibitions.<sup>27</sup>

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Argan's speech at the 1964 Convention of Rimini also clarified the political sense of the involvement of the Zagreb-based Gallery, which was also his focus in Verucchio and San Marino in September. The theme was *Technique and Ideology*, and the artists of the New Tendencies exemplified these two principles of the debate. Technique or technology, historically the flagship of Marxist, socialist and Soviet principles, featured in the abstract-kinetic artworks, whereas the ideology balanced out the anti-humanist mindset of technologically advanced capitalist culture.<sup>28</sup>

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22 See *IV Biennale Internazionale d'arte della Repubblica di S. Marino* [Fourth International Art Biennial of the Republic of S. Marino], ed. Gerardo F. Dasi (Rimini: Grafiche Mattei, 1963), 15.

23 See more in Ivana Bago, "Case Study 1: Nove Tendencije 2 (New Tendencies 2)," in *Contemporary Art and Capitalist Modernisation. A Transregional Perspective*, ed. Octavian Esanu (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 121–138; and George W. Rickey, "The New Tendency (Nouvelle Tendance – Recherche Continue)," *Art Journal*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1964): 272–273; *Nuove Tendenze 2 [New Tendencies 2]*, *Marcatré*, no. 4–5 (1964): 81–90.

24 "Izložba 'nove tendencije 2' u Galeriji suvremene umjetnosti i rasprava o tome u Muzeju za umjetnost i obrt [New Tendencies 2 at the Gallery of Contemporary Art and a Discussion about It at the Art and Crafts Museum]," *Večernji list*, August 1, 1963: 3.

25 Jon Borgzinner, "Art: Op Art: Pictures that Attack the Eye," *Time*, October 23 (1964): 42–44.

26 On this topic, see Radoslav Putar, "Pop Art, Op Art," *15 Dana*, no. 9–10 (1965): 12–13; Giuseppe Gatt, "Pop e op verso l'integrazione" [*Pop and Op Towards Integration*], *Marcatré*, no. 23–25 (1966): 102–103.

27 *XXXII Biennale 1964. Mostra "Arte d'oggi nei musei,"* File 133, Visual Arts Series, Historic Fund, ASAC, Venice; *XXXII Biennale 1964, Folder Galerija suvremene umjetnosti Zagreb*, File 124, Visual Arts Series, Historic Fund, ASAC, Venice.

28 On this topic, see more in Jerko Denegri, *Exat-51 and New Tendencies. Constructive Approach to Art*, trans. Vesna Mahečić (Zagreb: Horetsky, 2000): 276–282.



Argan thus argued that the development of technique was effectively carried out by an ideologically enhanced nation, Yugoslavia. According to him, in that country ideological dilemmas were felt less strongly because they had mostly been resolved, therefore allowing attention to the subject of technique.<sup>29</sup> The participants at the conference included the already mentioned Apollonio and Bucarelli, as well as Meštrović, Horvat Pintarić and Richter for Croatia, Aleksa Čelebonović from Belgrade and Kržišnik from Ljubljana. A conspicuous number of participants from both parties was another essential factor in setting up the third edition of *Nove tendencije*.

## THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE GALLERY'S ROLE IN MODERN ART

Throughout the Summer of 1965, the third exhibition *Nove tendencije*, mainly planned by the artist Enzo Mari, saw more significant participation on the part of Italian scholars and artists.<sup>30</sup> This edition was named *Nova tendencija* in the singular (New Tendency) to emphasise the new tendency of art-making as a possible strategy in contrast to Pop Art and, after the New York-based exhibit *The Responsive Eye*, to the commodification that occurred with Optical Art. Bucarelli played a decisive role in this as the director of National Gallery, which proposed itself as a promoter of New Tendency artists. Bucarelli's main point was to demonstrate the counter-market value of her gallery, mainly due to its role as a centre not only of information but also of aesthetic education. She stressed the need for up-to-date artistic information that would coincide with the need for security and stability of social values.<sup>31</sup> Bucarelli claimed that New Tendencies, according to the logic of their discourse, intentionally avoided the art market, which in turn allowed the possibility of becoming a primary agent of communication between the institution and the audience. Concerning the general practice of educating, Bucarelli first pointed out a methodological line shared between the engaged Italian and Yugoslav institutions. Secondly, she suggested increasing the production of multiple artworks by artists such as the GRAV or N groups. Lastly, she supported the introduction of innovative display techniques. Thus, didactics, Neo-Avant-Garde and public galleries would have reshaped the education of the public toward a more critical perspective. Specifically, considering the advancement of studies in Croatia, Bucarelli also concluded her agenda with the explicit call for a meeting of museum directors that would be held in 1965, if possible, in Yugoslavia. The speech was met with a considerable degree of enthusiasm in the Yugoslav milieu, prompting Božo Bek to endorse the Italian scholar's proposal to involve the museum directors

29 Giulio Carlo Argan, "Tecnica e ideologia in un convegno a Rimini" [Techniques and Ideology at the Rimini Conference], *Le Arti*, no. 10 (1964): 32–33.

30 "Bando di concorso per Nova tendencija 3" [Competition Notice for Nova tendencija 3], *Domus*, no. 423 (1965): 2, 56.

31 Radoslav Putar, ed., *Nova tendencija 3* (Zagreb: Interpublic, 1965).

of Belgrade and Ljubljana, respectively, in a future conference on the same theme.<sup>32</sup>

This scenario can be evaluated in light of two chief directions of research corresponding, on one hand, with a general focus on the technical and scholarly status of the museum as an offshoot of the State's educational aims in the 1960s and, on the other hand, with the much stronger specific connection between the Croatian or Yugoslav cultural establishment and Bucarelli. The latter topic is specifically related to the influence of Zdenka Munk, whose writings reflected the sort of an updating of museological studies that Bucarelli had previously identified in Yugoslavia.<sup>33</sup> In 1965, Munk, as president of the Yugoslav section of International Council of Museums (ICOM), attended an official congress held between Skopje and Ohrid in Macedonia, where guidelines for the management and educational activities of Yugoslav museums were discussed. In her conference proceedings, she highlighted a positive attitude toward interchanges between museums, industrial design production and the applied arts.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, as scholars have widely recognised,<sup>35</sup> the missionary enthusiasm with which Bucarelli backed Neo-Avant-Garde art-making tried to turn the traditional gallery into a living organism, thus encouraging a transition toward an avant-gardist attitude popularised by a public institution. Unfortunately, because the market and politics were stronger than the ideological and theoretical assumptions that had allowed the organization of *Nova tendencija 3*, New Tendencies failed to develop according to the aspirations of Bucarelli and Argan, either in the West or the East.

Concerning the Western art world, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Convention of Rimini, Verucchio and San Marino in the September 1965, Argan pointed out art should serve a collective educational mission. Its tools were the museums of modern art, i.e. the legitimate source of aesthetic education, but there was a crisis in the art system because public institutions had shrunk to the market level.<sup>36</sup> After 1965, in fact, and because of the popularity of the kinetic art and the counter-cultural struggles of 1968, the ideological and institutional solidity

32 Božo Bek, *Letter to Miodrag B. Protić, Belgrade Moderna Galerija, and to Zoran Kržišnik, Ljubljana Moderna Galerija*, Folder NT3, no. 89 from 251 to 699, Fund NT, Muzej suvremene umjetnosti (hereafter as MSU), Zagreb.

33 Bucarelli replied to inform her colleague about an impediment to attending the conference in Brezovica, arranged for *Nova tendencija 3*, in Palma Bucarelli, *Letter to Zdenka Munk*, Folder Suradnici\_a-d, Folder Bucarelli, Fund NT, MSU Zagreb.

34 "O radu saveza muzejskih društava Jugoslavije od aprila 1962. godine do maja 1965. godine" [On the Work of the Union of Museum Societies of Yugoslavia from April 1962 to May 1965], ed. Zdenka Munk, *Muzeji: časopis za muzeološka pitanja*, no.18 (1965): 39–48.

35 Sandra Pinto, "Quale modernità: un secolo di ordinamenti sullo statuto contemporaneo e sulla sede" [What Modernity: A Century of Regulations on the Contemporary Statute and on the Office], in *Galleria Nazionale d'arte moderna. Le collezioni. Il XX secolo [The National Gallery of Modern Art. Collections. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century]*, ed. Sandra Pinto (Milano: Electa, 2005), 13–37.

36 Giulio Carlo Argan, "14 Convegno internazionale artisti, critici e studiosi d'arte" [The Fourteenth International Conference of Artists, Critics and Art Scholars], *D'Ars Agency*, no. 3 (1965): 1–5.

of the New Tendencies initially faltered and then declined. A new direction also arose in 1969 through the transformation of the public gallery's mission away from total State involvement. For example, the exhibition *Living in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* at the Bern Kunsthalle demonstrated this due to its sponsorship by the Philip Morris corporation.<sup>37</sup> On the Eastern side, it was not only the general art system that went into crisis but also the specific Zagreb framework, in which the New Tendencies had developed since 1961. Art critics began to criticise this framework by showing how the political officialdom of the Communist Party employed the art-science connection of kinetic art as propaganda in *Nove tendencije*.<sup>38</sup>

## CONCLUSION

All of the above-mentioned exhibitions from 1961 to 1965, held in both Italy and Croatia, could be considered pivotal events in the light of two conceptual frames. The first, most prevalent frame is associated with the educational and scientific role of the public gallery as an agent of State. The second, more specific frame is related to the ties that Giulio Carlo Argan, Umbro Apollonio and Palma Bucarelli had with the Croatian cultural milieu. Bucarelli played a leading role in breaking the ground for a specifically Italian way to institute a new museum as a State Body involving academia, in the figure of scholars such as Argan or Apollonio. Furthermore, Bucarelli believed that a public gallery should be a hub for collecting, disseminating and developing the latest art-making research, as was the case in Zagreb. In addition to its preservation aim, a new public gallery should focus its activities on teaching art history and the theory of visual perception in order to become a vehicle for a specific cultural, aesthetic and political message not intended for an elite.

In Zagreb, Croatian scholars built a system of international collaborations to emancipate artists from the market's influence and private galleries' monopoly. The State, via museums, would be a promulgator of popular aesthetic commodities, while the museums themselves would be not mere containers but places to promote the dissemination of more advanced artistic trends. However, this utopian vision became unviable due to the socio-cultural transformations that occurred from 1968 onwards, as was obvious when a relatively new community of artists and scholars met in Zagreb for the exhibition entitled *Tendencije 4* (Tendencies) – without the word “new” – in 1969. Effectively, the change in the name corresponded to the demise of the Neo-Avant-Garde idea as such. In other words, the artistic Avant-Garde would not change everyday life unless it turned into politically engaged aesthetic research, as would happen in the 1970s.

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37 On this topic, see *Harald Szeemann. Individual Methodology*, ed. Florence Derieux (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2007).

38 Donald D. Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 715.



# Art

and

**the State**

in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# Art(s) of Resistance



## **Līna Birzaka-Priekule**

TRENDS IN THE LATVIAN CONTEMPORARY  
ART SCENE, 1980–2020: EXAMPLES OF  
SOCIO-POLITICAL CRITICISM AND ACTIVISM

## **Sniedze Kāle**

TORN BETWEEN TWO STATES: LEFTIST  
LATVIAN ARTISTS IN LATVIA IN THE 1920S  
AND 1930S

## **Dragan Čihorić**

ART AS AN ANTI-SYSTEMIC ATTITUDE:  
MILAN SELAKOVIĆ IN *PREGLED*

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CENSORSHIP AND SELF-CENSORSHIP IN  
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EXAMPLES OF EXPERIMENTAL ART  
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1970S IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER  
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BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

## **Agita Gritāne**

THE SILENT PROTEST OF PROPAGANDA ART.  
CASE STUDY OF LATVIAN ARTIST JĒKABS  
BĪNE FROM 1945–1951

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**Keywords:** Socio-political criticism, Socio-political activism, Latvian contemporary art scene, trends in Latvian contemporary art, artist as a socio-political critic

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## TRENDS IN THE LATVIAN CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE, 1980 – 2020: EXAMPLES OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CRITICISM AND ACTIVISM

### Abstract

*The objective of this article is to examine the artistic trends used by artists in their socio-political critical artistic practice and to question whether, and how, in the context of Latvian contemporary art, these differ compared to the discourse of Western art. The case studies of this article will be works by Latvian contemporary artists representing two generations of artists: Kristaps Ģelzis, who started working under the conditions of late socialism, and the artists Miķelis Mūrnieks and Mētra Saberova, who were born in the first half of the 1990s, and thus work in a post-socialist context. The practice of socio-politically critical art in Latvia is characterised by locally specific traits that has been influenced by the country's geopolitical, historical and educational context. Despite these local peculiarities, Latvian contemporary artists, using different visual art strategies, engage with the possibility of real social change and have found it continually necessary to work in ways that question how to participate meaningfully in the social and political life of Latvia.*

### INTRODUCTION

The objective of this article is to examine the artistic trends used by artists in their socio-political critical artistic practice and to question whether, and how, in the context of Latvian contemporary art, these differ compared to the hegemonic discourse of Western art. The case studies of this article will be works by Latvian contemporary artists representing two generations of artists: Kristaps Ģelzis (b. 1962), who started working under late socialism conditions, and the artists Miķelis Mūrnieks (b. 1995) and Mētra Saberova (b. 1991), who were born in the first half of the 1990s, and thus work in a post-socialist context. Therefore, the article marks the transition period from the socialist system to the transnationally oriented capitalist society of the late 1980s and the early 1990s, and examines how these changes resonate throughout the artistic explorations of socio-political criticism and activism in contemporary art.

In order to identify how socio-politically critical art practice appears in the context of Latvian contemporary art, it is important to distinguish several concepts, which have not yet been endorsed in the terminology of Latvian

contemporary art.<sup>1</sup> It is possible to delineate two main artistic strategies that are relevant to Latvian contemporary art situation: (1) socio-politically critical art practice and (2) socio-political activism.<sup>2</sup> Since art historians have not turned their attention to this subject within Latvian historiography, the grounds for this analysis of terminology can be sought in the discourse of Western art.

## **SOCIO-POLITICALLY CRITICAL ARTISTIC PRACTICE OR SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTIVISM?**

It is essential to focus on defining the differences between the two aforementioned artistic practices. In regard to socio-political activism, the American art critic, writer and activist Lucy Rowland Lippard, in her 1984 essay *Trojan-Horses: Activist Art and Power*,<sup>3</sup> highlights artists whose artistic practice could be called “political” or “based on activism”. She links the practice of political art to the reflections of the represented theme or sometimes in relation to a social problem, often expressing an ironically critical opinion. In contrast, activism is mostly oriented toward the potential of a work of art to be engaged in socio-political processes, as opposed to solely functioning as a vehicle for representation. Moreover, activism demands that the artist as the author of the work demonstrates an active ability to take action. In the context of socio-political activism, one must also consider concepts such as “socially engaged practice”. Artists who work in this vein create works of art that are geared towards cooperation with the viewer. This artistic practice is related to socio-political issues and their resolution within a certain social group. Oftentimes artists aim to help a certain group within society and to improve their physical or psycho-emotional welfare. Western art historians also highlight the term “protest art”, which is art created by activists or social movements, and is often used in protest campaigns. Accordingly, one must conclude that, in contrast to socio-politically critical artistic practice, not only the formal and thematic parameters of a work of art are vital to socio-political activism, so are reaching the audience, the context, and the opportunity to influence the course of socially significant events, including political ones.

In reflecting on socio-political traits in art, the Argentinian art historian Andrea Giunta uses the concept of “cultural activism”, asserting that since the mid-19th century “cultural activism” has been manifested in two directions. First, “cultural activism” is understood evidence of the united front of artists, in other words the joint efforts of artists or representatives of a

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1 In the context of Latvian art theory, no research has been conducted on socio-politically critical and activist art, although it is worthwhile mentioning series of lectures and seminars called “Art and Activism in Baltics,” which were organized by the ISSP photography school and gallery in 2021.

2 This distinction is discussed, for example, by Andrea Giunta, “Activism,” in *Contemporary Art 1989 to the Present*, eds. Alexander Dumbadze and Suzanne Hudson (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

3 Lucy Rowland Lippard, “Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power,” in *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (NY: New Museum of Contemporary Art; Boston: D. R. Godine, 1984), 341–343.

cultural environment, which are implemented with the goal of expressing dissatisfaction with a specific situation. In applying this strategy, works of art are gathered together in exhibitions or in a public space, unifying in a joint manifesto, and the accompanying text is published in print media or shared on social media, in addition to which demonstrations can be organised as one form of strategy. Secondly, “cultural activism” can be understood in relation to works of art whose meaning is related to a specific social or political event. Giunta calls this direction “image activism”, because the image can also be used and interpreted in a broader context, not only in connection with the specific event represented.<sup>4</sup> Thus, one can conclude that socio-politically critical art practice can be described as executed in order to respond to and critically evaluate some specific social or political issue, with art playing an instrumental role. However, in the context of socio-political activism, process is vital, as is proactive activity that directly addresses power structures or the general public, rather than merely representing or describing some problem. Therefore, socio-politically critical art practice does not incorporate activism as one of the forms in which it is manifested; it studies socio-political themes or comments upon them, not including specific socio-political activities. In contrast, socio-political activism examines socio-political themes, bearing socio-political responsibility, manifests an active civic stance, and organises a complex process, sometimes in the form of protest. Nevertheless, both the aforementioned artistic practices are mutually related, because they apply to a type of artistic activity that integrates some form of socio-political protest or resistance, or responds to such.

In turn, the art historian Grant Kester stresses that such artistic practices incorporate a certain connection to some social or political movement, community or group endeavouring to criticise an authoritarian regime or to combat hegemonic forms of domination, which are often related to differences in class, race, ethnic affinity or sexuality.<sup>5</sup> In the context of Western art, a salient example of socio-political activism is the anonymous artists’ group *Guerilla Girls* (f. 1985), which, since the mid-1980s, has utilised the urban environment (posters and large billboards) and mass media to highlight sexism and racism in the art world, including by drawing attention to the meagre representation of women artists at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. By contrast, an example of socio-politically critical art is Portuguese-born British artist Paula Rego’s (b. 1935) series of pastel paintings dedicated to illegally performed abortions and their consequences, which was the artist’s response to the Portuguese Government’s failure to adopt a law legalising abortion in 1988.

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4 Giunta, “Activism,” 235.

5 Grant Kester, “Activist and Socially Engaged Art,” *Oxford Bibliographies*, accessed March 21, 2021, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199920105/obo-9780199920105-0160.xml>

The history of manifestations of socio-politically critical art in Western art and culture is not only connected to contemporary art trajectories.<sup>6</sup> As the American art historian Claudia Mesch asserts: “Political art is certainly not unique to the moderns; it can also be found among the ancients. One needs only to see a single triumphal arch to be reminded of the power relations of ancient politics.”<sup>7</sup> She emphasises that in the world of today the political content of visual art is becoming increasingly specific, and more widespread in the age of globalization.<sup>8</sup> 19<sup>th</sup>-century cultural, political and economic conditions in Europe offered artists a new form of activity and freedom of expression. As well as putting distance between itself and the everyday realm of manufacturing, art’s emancipation from state and religious institutions offered it the opportunity to assume a new role – *l’art pour l’art*. Painters and sculptors were no longer the servants of a certain religion or aristocracy. They had greater scope to develop their creative practice as they pleased.<sup>9</sup> Mesch stresses that, in the context of contemporary art, the roots of new socio-politically critical and socio-politically activist art forms are to be found within the discourse of post-colonialism and in the atmosphere of student protests during the 1960s, which were based on issues of individual and collective identity.<sup>10</sup> A host of post-war protest movements – the civil rights movement, student riots, feminism and gay rights – encouraged members of the general public to engage and show solidarity with them. These groups took shape by drawing on common aspects

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of personal identity and creating the famous phrase, “the personal is political”, which was used as the slogan for the second wave of feminism.

Of course, it is debatable whether the discourse of Western art is the yardstick by which comparisons with the domestic art and cultural scene should be drawn. A host of notable art historians have objected to such a comparison, including Piotr Piotrowski, who acknowledges that art historians who engage in Eastern European research encounter the problem of “the

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6 One of the most clearly defined periodizations of contemporary art is attributable to the philosopher Peter Osborne, who contends that the dividing line between modern and contemporary art stabilized after 1945, as contemporary art gradually secured its foothold. For the most part the 1960s are referred to as the starting point of contemporary art, as the end of modernism and the start of contemporaneity. In *the Oxford Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Art*, the term “contemporary art” is defined. For most of the 20th century, the term was flexible. Instead of defining a specific period in art history, the term tended to move forward with the times in order to reflect that which defined it. Nowadays there are two separate terms, modernism and contemporary art, which presuppose that the era of modernism has ended, despite the fact there is no uniform theoretical understanding of when this occurred. The geopolitical context is also important here. Although the development of Latvian contemporary art started fragmentarily during the late 1950s, it was the exhibition *Nature. Environment. Man* that took place in St. Peter’s Church in Riga in 1984 that first extensively heralded a conceptual exhibition involving new interactive types of art, thus becoming a turning point in the development of Latvian contemporary art.

7 Claudia Mesch, *Art and Politics. A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 2.

8 Ibid.

9 Will Bradley, “Introduction,” in *Art and Social Change. A Critical Reader*, ed. Will Bradley and Charles Esche (London: Tate Publishing, 2007), 9.

10 From the 1960s forward, post-structuralists argue that a uniform, fixed and stable system of identity no longer exists – instead identities are decentralized and unstable, accommodating various models of representation. Post-structuralists believe that “the self” as a separate and linked unit is an imagined structure, because most probably individuals harbour mutually contradictory orientations and skills (e.g. gender, family, profession and age, etc.).



absence of our cultural production within the canon of the artistic culture of the continent (with a few exceptions) and by its peripheral location.” However, he stresses that the solution to this problem is not reproducing “the imperial and hierarchical interpretative models, but to revise the paradigms, to change the analytical tools so that they would allow us to discover the meanings of cultures of ‘other’ geographical regions.”<sup>11</sup> However, the question remains – what methodology should be used to break these Western biases? In his 2018 article, *Towards a Horizontal History of Modern Art*, Piotrowski suggests applying the following interpretative methodology: (1) deconstruction of the Western inspirations, i.e., comprehending their analysis not on the basis of hierarchical (center-periphery) influence, but in functional terms aiming to determine what a given influence meant in a specific local context (hence, the long history of the socio-political criticism and activism manifestations in contemporary art in the West and their locally specific expression in Latvian contemporary art context); (2) rejection of the idea of stylistic homogeneity in favour of heterogeneity – combining styles into local, unique stylistic mutations (in the case of Latvia these mutations were determined by the socio-political circumstances in socialism and post-socialism); (3) recognition of the local canons and value systems, often contradicting those of Western art centers (for example, the difference between activist art and its relations to social movements in the West and in Soviet Latvia).<sup>12</sup>

Also, several Baltic researchers have pointed to the necessity of evaluating regional art processes, breaking stereotypes and assumptions in historiography, particularly in relation to the superiority of Western art and the inferiority of art from the former Eastern bloc – a paradigm often dictated by Western art history. For example, Latvian art historian Laine Kristberga advocates using the method of horizontal and revisionist art history analysis, which focuses on the polyphony of the region’s local art historians, thus accenting the differing development of artistic processes and practices on this side of the Iron Curtain.<sup>13</sup> Latvian art historian and theoretician Ieva Astahovska, in her description of the situation of Eastern European art,<sup>14</sup> contends that, already from 1990s on, work on exhibitions, publications, conferences, and contemplations of the versions of Eastern European art history illustrate that this field is of no less importance than Western art history.<sup>15</sup> This also applies to researches

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11 Piotr Piotrowski, “The Geography of Central/East European Art,” in *Borders in Art – Revisiting Kunstgeographie*, ed. Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius (Warsaw: Institute of Art, 2000), 45–46.

12 Piotr Piotrowski, “Towards a Horizontal History of Modern Art,” in *Writing Central European Art History* (Vienna: ERSTE Stiftung, 2008), 4.

13 Laine Kristberga, “The Strategies of Escapism in the *Homo Sovieticus* Reality: Art in Cultural and Geographical Periphery of Soviet Latvia,” *Reliģiski-Filzofiski raksti*, no. 31 (2021): 322–344.

14 Ieva Astahovska. “Foreword,” in *Recuperating the invisible past*, ed. Ieva Astahovska (Riga: The Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2012), 13.

15 In this context, we can mention research mapping Baltic art specifically: *Art of the Baltics. The Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression under the Soviets, 1945–1991*, eds. Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge (New Brunswick, NJ: Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University Press, 2002) (Dedicated specially to artistic modernisation in the Baltic Soviet Period) and *Peeling Potatoes. Painting Pictures: Women Artists in*

regarding socio-political criticism and activism in Baltic contemporary art.<sup>16</sup> One of the most recent researches in the field is *Contemporary Ukrainian and Baltic art: political and social perspectives, 1991–2021* (2021), edited by Svitlana Biedarieva, which discusses questions of identity, memory, trauma, and social change as reflected in the art of the last three decades. As a result, this book offers a thorough examination of the aesthetic transformations that occurred following independence. It investigates how artists responded to socio-political transformations and shifts of perspective following the fusion of the two worlds separated by the Iron Curtain. Comparing Baltic and Ukrainian artists' socio-political criticism and activism, Biedarieva admits that artistic practices are too complex to be encompassed by a single formula.<sup>17</sup> Rather, she concludes that Baltic art and Ukrainian art need more detailed research that would trace their specific histories before and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and establish an interdisciplinary framework of notions and definitions.<sup>18</sup>

Baltic contemporary art took shape in the second half of the 1980s. Hence two periods of socio-political conditions should be considered while describing the manifestations of socio-political criticism and activism in Baltic art: the state of late socialism and post-socialism starting from 1990s onwards. These two periods can be judged as being specific to the region and, especially, Latvia; this conditionality of both periods has been influenced by socio-political and historical factors. Although it is not the aim of this article, the role of curators and art institutions in stimulating socio-politically critical and activist art would also be worth investigating, both in late socialism and in the post-socialist context.<sup>19</sup>

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*Post-Soviet Russia, Estonia, and Latvia. The First Decade*, eds. Renee Baigell and Matthew Baigell. The Dodge Soviet Nonconformist Art Publication Series (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press and The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 2001). Recently, more focus on the Baltic art situation is present in: *Globalizing East European Art Histories. Past and Present*, eds. Beáta Hock and Anu Allas (Routledge, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Although the Baltic region has been often evaluated as a historically and politically homogeneous unit, art researchers emphasize that it is impossible to generalize about a single art scene of the “Baltic States”. For example, during the Soviet period resistance to the regime took various artistic forms and expressions depending on the geographical location and connections with the West, the available Western periodicals and literature, and the influence and contacts of specific cultural figures, as well as the art traditions of each country, creating local art models in each of the Baltic States. This has also influenced contemporary art development trends in each of the countries.

<sup>17</sup> Svitlana Biedarieva, “Introduction,” in *Contemporary Ukrainian and Baltic art: political and social perspectives, 1991–2021*, ed. Svitlana Biedarieva (Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag, 2021), 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.

<sup>19</sup> For example, in her extensive overview of curating Baltic feminism (“Working with Feminism: Curating and Exhibitions in Eastern Europe”), Estonian art historian Katrin Kivimaa suggests that socio-political activism in curatorial practice addresses the specific socio-political issues in various exhibition formats and includes in its methodology strategic decisions that have lasting impact both on the functioning of the institutions themselves, as well as socio-political change in general. Although the article concludes that strategically inclusive activities (in this case regarding feminist curating) in the context of Baltic art institutions are mostly not part of the exhibition policy, the number of recent feminist and queer projects initiated by the new generation of curators and artists-cum-curators is, without doubt, an indication of the changing understanding of the role of an art professional.

## THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND MANIFESTATIONS IN LATVIAN CONTEMPORARY ART

As discussed in the previous section, the practice of socio-politically critical art in Latvian contemporary art should be considered as a hybrid form and means of artistic expression, characterised by locally specific traits. It should be noted that this article will not explain the broad spectrum across which art interacts with politics;<sup>20</sup> rather it is an attempt to identify the strategies and practices in Latvian contemporary art that are used by artists in response to socio-political changes, and to ascertain how this resonates or differs from global contemporary art processes.

In order to describe the traits of socio-politically critical artistic practice in Latvian contemporary art, one has to take into account that it is not possible to subsume the course of its development within the dominant scenarios of Western contemporary art development. To describe the trend of socio-politically critically-oriented art, one has to take the geopolitical, historical and educational context into account. During the 1960s, when socio-politically critical artistic practices and the discourse of socio-political activism were developing globally, Latvia was occupied and part of the Soviet Union. Under the conditions of a totalitarian regime, expressions of artistic freedom were restricted and controlled. Art was politicised and subject to a strict mechanism of censorship, while the only “correct” style was socialist realism. However, as art historian Kristberga notes:

... intriguingly enough, alternative manifestations and explorations developed in parallel to this official discourse. The 1970s and 1980s evidenced performance art, installation art, kinetic art and overall, an experimentation with a myriad of techniques, styles and disciplines. Surely, due to the socio-political circumstances, the artistic discourse lacked the critically and philosophically orientated mindset in order to reflect on society, culture and politics similarly to postmodern artists in the West.<sup>21</sup>

Under the totalitarian regime, it was prohibited to express a socio-politically critical stance in art that openly and defiantly challenged the existing political system and powers-that-be, because this step would have resulted in repression and punishment.<sup>22</sup> Despite this, as Kristberga emphasises, political micro-gestures can be observed in the strategies adopted by artists, such as forming small groups or communities, creating works of art distanced from

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20 In Latvian art history, there have been several comprehensive studies that describe the relationship between art and politics, e.g. Ilze Konstante, *Stalīna garā ēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā. 1940–1956* [Stalin's Long Shadow in Latvian Fine Art. 1940–1956] (Riga: Neputns, 2017).

21 Laine Kristberga, “The Transformative Power of Ritual: Between the Artifice and Catharsis,” in *Hermann Nitsch exhibition catalogue*, ed. Līna Birzaka-Priekule (Riga: Latvian National Museum of Art, 2021), 5.

22 This topic is extensively covered by Konstante, *Stalīna garā ēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā*.

the official discourse, in the awareness that they would never be exhibited in exhibitions subject to censorship, and contenting themselves with a marginal, but nevertheless autonomous existence on the periphery of the art and cultural scene.<sup>23</sup> Although various efforts to introduce “survival strategies” in artistic practice existed within the artistic community during the Soviet period, one has to conclude that the lack of access to a theoretical discourse during the Soviet era and its absence from the system of art education after the restoration of independence,<sup>24</sup> along with the “Aesopian language” or masked form of expressive ideas adopted in Soviet times, have resulted in manifestations of socio-political activism in Latvian art being the exception rather than the rule. Art historian Ieva Astahovska stresses that the parallel dialogue between the discursivity of Latvian and Western art became relevant during the 1990s, if one compares it to the post-1960s West, when the ideas of post-structuralism and feminism were relevant.<sup>25</sup> In relation to feminist theory, Czech art theoretician Martina *Pachmanová* states that during the Soviet period, difficult access to information and intellectual isolation from the Western world caused a lack of knowledge about feminism, while after 1989 this isolation contributed to the perception of feminism as a foreign phenomena “imported from the West.”<sup>26</sup> This absence of theoretical thought<sup>27</sup> can also be attributed to other key thematic manifestations of social-political criticism and activism in Latvian contemporary art, including ecological awareness, queer issues and others. One must admit that there is also still a prevailing opinion that art should distance itself from politics. For example, in an interview with art critic Ieva Lejasmeijere, Kristaps Ģelzis emphasises the connection with the socio-political background of his works: “I have to admit I have never fought against Soviet rule. I’ve never been socially and politically active. Perhaps you could read into some of my stuff in some conformist way, but that’s a matter of interpretation.”<sup>28</sup> This tendency to distance oneself from a socio-political stance in art even after gaining independence corresponds to the conclusions that Estonian-Finnish sociologist Iivi Masso has drawn about the period of change in Estonia, where the market economy, neoliberalism and consumer culture were accepted and socially implemented without scrutiny, stifling

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23 Kristberga, “Performance Art in Latvia as Intermedial Appropriation,” 138–151.

24 Art historian Ieva Astahovska only started giving lectures on contemporary art and its developmental trends at the Art Academy of Latvia in about 2007.

25 Ieva Astahovska, “‘Globālie lielceļi’ jaunās lokalitātēs” [Global Highways in New Localities], in *Devīndesmitie. Laikmetīgā māksla Latvijā*, ed. Ieva Astahovska (Rīga: Laikmetīgās mākslas centrs, 2010), 35–36.

26 Martina Pachmanová, “In? Out? In Between? Some Notes on the Invisibility of a Nascent Eastern European Feminist and Gender Discourse in Contemporary Art Theory,” in *Gender Check: A Reader. Art and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Bojana Pejić (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2010), 37–49.

27 It should be noted that information about contemporary art developments in the West was mostly obtained via secretly acquired Polish magazines such as “Projekt”, “Tvar”, the Czech “Výtvarné umění”, as well as the German “Bildene Kunst”.

28 Ieva Lejasmeijere, “Instalācijas. Saruna ar Oļegu Tilbergu, Sarmīti Māliņu un Kristapu Ģelzi” [Installations. Conversation with Oļegs Tilbergs, Sarmīte Māliņa and Kristaps Ģelzis], in *Devīndesmitie. Laikmetīgā māksla Latvijā*, ed. Ieva Astahovska (Rīga: Laikmetīgās mākslas centrs, 2010), 244.

other achievements of Western democracy such as feminism, social democracy, the rights of ethnic and sexual minorities, environmental protection, etc. This selective uptake of Western values brought about a situation in which nationally conservative American rather than tolerant and inclusive European democratic values were introduced.<sup>29</sup>

Research into Latvian contemporary art also evinces the prevailing view that socio-politically and critically-oriented artistic practice is a rarely encountered phenomenon after 1990s, but this trend and its forms of manifestation have been minimally studied. In describing the contemporary artistic trends of the 1990s, art historian and curator Ieva Astahovska stresses that "... after the 1980s' collective enthusiasm – social and political messages conveyed in picturesque and symbol-filled language – Latvian artists in the 1990s mostly produced works that were expressions of 'socially tinted' associative metaphors, whose meaning seemingly lent itself to interpretations of currently relevant subjects, but at the same time included poetics, energy, orientation toward sensations and experiences, ambiguity, mystery value."<sup>30</sup> As art curator Helēna Demakova also stresses, "... fear of over politicisation or direct acceptance of social problems persevered throughout the 90s. In my opinion, the most interesting Latvian contemporary artists are not asocial. On the contrary, their fortune or misfortune (let history be the judge), is the aestheticization and 'tasteful' arrangement of the work of art, or however paradoxical it may sound, the art project with the most radical expressions of content."<sup>31</sup> Art historian Santa Hirša argues that:

... although loudly confrontational art and works manifesting specific ideological positions are not characteristic of Latvian contemporary art after gaining independence, the mechanisms of both Soviet communism and neoliberal capitalism are deconstructed in symbolic objects and situations on different levels of generality, with observation, play, paradoxical upheavals of meaning, and ambiguous irony being the predominant means to do so... The experience of Soviet socialism made the public suspicious and less interested in ideas of social justice and new leftist politics.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, it can be concluded that the development of contemporary art under socialist conditions also affects socio-politically critical and activist art expressions in today's contemporary art scene.

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29 Iivi Masso. "Freedom Euphoria or Post-Communist Hangover?," in *Noisy Nineties. Problems, Themes and Meanings in Estonian Art in the 90s*, eds. Sirje Helme and Johannes Saar (Kaasaegse Kunsti Eesti Keskus, 2001), 30.

30 Astahovska, "'Globālie lielceļi' jaunās lokalitātēs," 37.

31 Helēna Demakova, "Mākslas jēdziena paplašināšanās Latvijā 90. gados sociālo un politisko pārmaiņu kontekstā" [The expansion of the concept of art in Latvia in the 1990s in the context of social and political changes], in *Citas sarunas*, ed. Helēna Demakova (Rīga: Vizuālās komunikācijas nodaļa, 2002), 398.

32 Santa Hirša, "Waiting for Wild Capitalism: Latvian Art and the Post-Socialist Condition in the 1990s," in *Kur manas kārtis kritušas?*, eds. Līna Birzaka-Priekule and Zane Onckule (Rīga: Contemporary Art Center, 2022), 116.



Although there are few activist artists in Latvian contemporary art who are members of a political movement or organisation, or who would initiate or defend the interests of a community or advocate socio-political changes,<sup>33</sup> one cannot say that Latvian contemporary artists do not reflect on socio-political issues. Geopolitical, historical and educational aspects have also influenced manifestations of socio-politically critical artistic practice, which are more characterised by conceptually poetic, metaphorical and multi-layered hints and generalisations of various socio-political events, which are deconstructed to the level of symbols, a type of artistic intervention that is more humorous and ironic than a direct and tendentious form of expression. Even the work materials or media used become vehicles for these ideas. One must conclude that for various socio-political and historical reasons, the traits of socio-politically critical artistic practices are far more common in the Latvian contemporary art scene than “activism” as such. However, in describing the manifestations of Baltic art during the Soviet era, art historian Sirje Helme’s comments about Estonian artists could also be applied to the Latvian art scene: “The fact that a small national group such as Estonia is characterized by a collective, subconscious survival instinct that does not encourage extremes in its culture does not imply that its culture lacks radical artists.”<sup>34</sup>

## **SOCIO-POLITICAL CRITICISM AND ACTIVISM IN THE CREATES OEUVRES OF KIRSTAPS ĢELZIS, MIĶELIS MŪRNIĒKS AND MĒTRA SABEROVA**

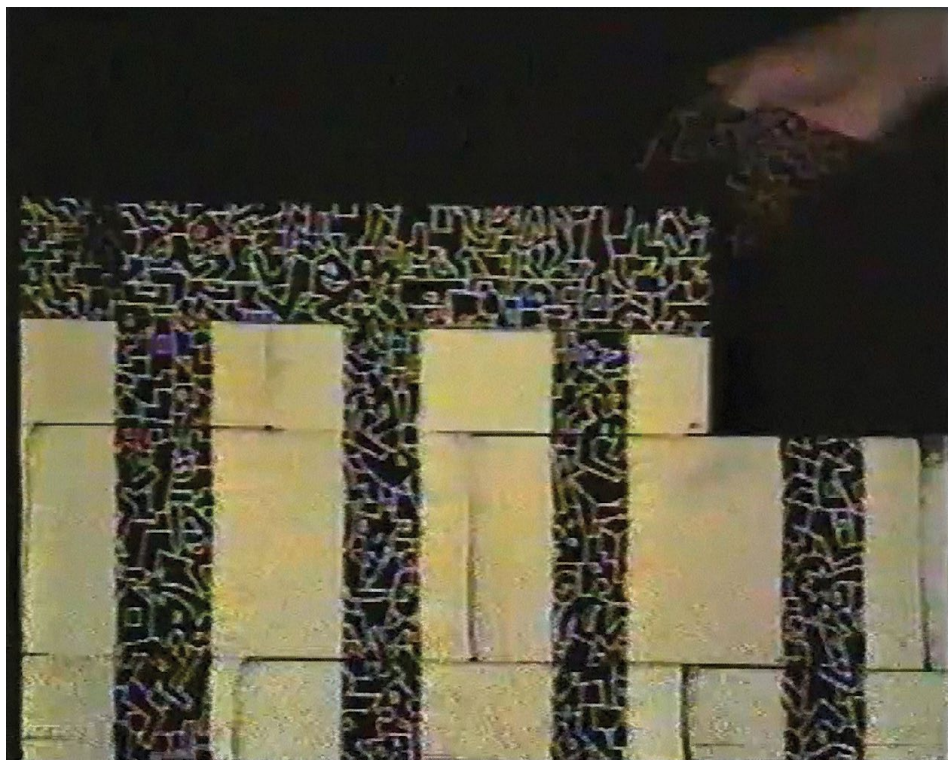
Within Latvian contemporary art there is no shortage of artists who deem it important to critically reflect upon and evaluate various socio-political processes. In elaborating on this subject, I will focus on three works by artists of two different generations, which will serve as the case studies. Socio-politically critical art practice, which does not include any specific socio-political activism, but offers reflection through visual art and representation, is much more common in Latvian contemporary art. The practice of Ģelzis and Mūrnieks matches this definition. Saberova’s artistic practice is a rarity in Latvian contemporary art in that it should be viewed in the context of socio-political activism. It is also important to note that Ģelzis’ art can be seen in the context of late socialism, while the artistic practices of Mūrnieks and Saberova developed after Latvia regained independence.

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33 Activist artistic expressions often go hand in hand with social movements. Researches show that with the authoritarian regime of Kārlis Ulmanis in 1934, the voices of legal protests were silenced for more than half a century. On the other hand, at the end of the Third Awakening (the second half of the 80s), an unprecedented wave of political protests accompanied the process of revival of the Latvian state and democracy. It is noticeable that since 1990, the physical involvement of citizens in protests has decreased considerably. During the revival, 80% of the population of Latvia had participated in a demonstration or picket, but by the beginning of the 2000s this number had dropped to 13%.

34 Sirje Helme, “Nationalism and dissent. Art and Politics in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania under Soviets,” in *Art of the Baltics*, eds. Rosenfeld and Dodge, 8.

**Fig. 1.** Kristaps Ģelzis, *Dismantling the Wall*, 1988, video still. Courtesy of Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga.



Kristaps Ģelzis is considered to be a master of Latvian contemporary art and has been active since the 1980s, participating in both domestic and international exhibitions. He is one of the key artists belonging to the so-called generation of “Trespassers”. The driving force behind Ģelzis’s art are ideas, which the artist executes in an eclectic range of media including graphic art, painting, installation, video, digital print and object art. Ģelzis expresses himself in any material or technique available to him; what matters is that the medium in question dovetails with, and fulfils, the artist’s acutely observed and typically witty idea. He draws on individual history and experience (e.g. environment, state, political events, consequences of changing systems) to present his observations and openly ironize socio-political changes and their impact on society. He possesses a sensitive command of the symbolic elements of the local environment, which he masterfully integrates into his works, reflecting on topical issues within society.

For the 1988 group exhibition *Riga – Lettische Avantgarde* (Riga – Latvian Avant-garde) in West Germany, Ģelzis created a work entitled *Dismantling the Wall* (**fig. 1**), which is considered to be the first video installation in Latvian contemporary art. In this work we observe the artist’s hand dismantling a wall brick by brick. This wall depicts a labyrinth of drawings with human forms collapsing on top of one another, layer upon layer. Three video screens monotonously repeat the building and collapse of the wall, which never ends. The video format makes it possible to emphasise the endlessness of this activity. The artist himself presents the image of the wall in a broadly individual human context, explaining that:

We are each bricked up behind our own walls, and it is very difficult to reach us. At the same time as cutting ourselves off from others, we also cut off ourselves and our world. We brick up our field of vision. Everyone will have noticed that in a field we can see far into the distance, the line of the horizon seems infinite. In the city we usually do not see beyond the wall opposite. How can we demolish these walls that separate people?<sup>35</sup>

Nonetheless, in the context of time, the image of the wall can be viewed as an ideological and effective symbol for the Iron Curtain between Western European and Eastern bloc countries. This was noted in the art criticism of the day, for example, by Pēteris Bankovskis, who stressed that Ģelzis was offering an insight into the artist's attitude towards the tragic Berlin Wall, as well as in relation to ideological schemes threatening humanity in general.<sup>36</sup> Ģelzis embodies his personal opinion about the manifestations of ideology within the Soviet apparatus *via* the powerful laconic symbol of a wall, and although the work is not an overtly socio-political manifestation, it becomes one of the "agents for change", which chimes with the socio-political mood of the day, and becomes a powerful sign of a time of transformation. The power of the impact of Ģelzis's socio-politically critical art also lies in its enduring relevance. Accordingly, in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century socio-political events, "The Wall" becomes an effective metaphor, for example, for the "Trump Wall".

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On the whole, the oeuvre of emerging artist Miķelis Mūrnieks (b. 1995) is characterised by the presence of socio-politically critical symbols, whose essential nature is ironic and socially analytical. One such work is *The Art of Winning* (2019; **fig. 2**), which was exhibited in *Fresh Meat for Critics*, an



**Fig. 2.** Miķelis Mūrnieks, *The Art of Winning*, 2019, installation, Zuzeum art collection, Riga. Photograph by Miķelis Mūrnieks.

35 Inese Riņķe, "Aktīvā māksla" [Active Art], *Avots*, no. 1 (1987): 3, my translation.

36 Pēteris Bankovskis, "Sleja" [Column], *Liesma*, no. 10 (1988): 1.



exhibition of diploma works by graduates of the Art Academy of Latvia. In this work, the name of the Zuzeum Art Centre was created from the orange font of the Fenikss chain of gambling halls, which have become ubiquitous in Riga. In a global context, this reference to the business of art philanthropist Jānis Zuzāns, which is connected to gambling, points to the globally relevant issue of sources of funding for arts institutions that are contrary to the interests of public health.<sup>37</sup> Although this work of art generated quite a lot of publicity within Latvian art and cultural circles, it did not stimulate a debate in the form of socio-political activism. In his work *Piece of Shit* (2020), which depicts Joseph Stalin, and the works in his solo exhibition *Contemporary Vandalism* (2019), Mūrnieks implements a socio-politically critical art strategy, which conveys the artist's critical position, but is inert in terms of a proactive capacity to take action.

Examples of socio-political activism are comparatively few in the Latvian contemporary art scene; this can be explained by the regime of occupation which lasted for half a century during which socio-political activism could only be manifested in apologetic form, i.e. by fitting into the existing totalitarian political system. A radically different opinion was considered to constitute political dissidence and the individual in question was invariably punished. After the restoration of Latvian independence in 1991, a transitional period was required to switch from one political-economic system to another. Accordingly, only after a generational change can one report the existence of socio-political activist art in Latvia, vividly exemplified by the works of the multidisciplinary

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Fig. 3. Mētra Saberova, *Pimpin' yo mama crib*, 2015, video still. Courtesy to Mētra Saberova.

37 Parallels can be drawn with the protest organised outside the Louvre Museum (*Musée du Louvre*) by the Western art representative, photographer and activist Nan Goldin (b. 1953). The protest was directed at a pharmaceutical company run by the Sackle dynasty, which produces the addictive pain killer *OxyContin*.

artist Mētra Saberova (b. 1991). Saberova is one of the most prominent feminist artists in Latvian contemporary art. She works with performative instruments and uses her body as a medium to examine various issues related to female identity. Similar to the French artist Orlan (b. 1947), in the creation of her art, Saberova concentrates on her body not only as an anatomical structure, but also as a vehicle for socio-political meanings. One of Saberova's performative actions was an operation to tie her fallopian tubes followed by the restoration of her hymen, thus challenging the widespread stereotypes prevailing within society regarding female reproductive rights and duties. Saberova's works highlight aspects of the interaction between a woman's social and personal life, drawing attention to gender inequality and criticising the "status quo" in relation to the restriction of the roles played by women (as in the works *Pimpin' yo mama crib*, 2015 /**fig. 3**/ and *Hymenoplasty: A Quick Guide*, 2017). Socio-political activism is also an important component of Saberova's creative practice; she is an active member of the Baltic LGBTQ+ community, takes part in public discussions<sup>38</sup> and protest campaigns, organised educational events, and exhibitions devoted to feminism, as well as organising the Baltic Drag King festival. Thus, Saberova's proactive socio-political position is integrated into the artist's individual artistic practice, in which public defence of the specific community she represents is equally important.

## 200 CONCLUSION

When analysing the socio-political criticism and activist manifestations of Latvian contemporary art, we encounter the problem of the hegemonic model of interpretation characteristic of Western art history. Piotr Piotrowski, for example, proposes amending the established canon and modifying the discipline's analytical tools to discover the meanings of cultures of 'other' geographical regions. Furthermore, the practice of socio-politically critical art in Latvia is characterised by locally specific traits that has been influenced by geopolitical, historical and educational context.

During the 1960s, when socio-politically critical artistic practices and the discourse of socio-political activism were developing globally, Latvia was occupied and part of the Soviet Union. Art was politicised and subject to strict censorship. Despite this, as the dogma of socialist realism slowly receded during late socialism period, several artist groups and communities created socio-politically critical works of art that responded to the manifestations of Soviet ideology and the conjunctures of the Soviet period. From the 1990s onward, artists have continued to engage with socio-political problems and express them in contemporary art.

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38 For example, during a recent episode of the LTV discussion show *Būris*, "Who will give me a glass of water or life without children". Available at: "Latvijas Sabiedriskie Mediji" [Latvian Public Media], accessed Month day, year, <https://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/27.11.2021-projekts-buris-kas-pasniegs-udens-glazi-jeb-dzive-bez-berniem.id245335>.



In the context of Latvian contemporary art, due to geopolitical, historical and educational circumstances, the practice of socio-political activist art has not been a widespread. This was true in late socialism and remains so in the era of post-socialism. However, manifestations of socio-politically critical art in a local hybrid form are a more common contemporary art trend. It is unusual for socio-politically critical art practice to use direct socio-political arguments or tendentious, protesting forms of expression. Instead, such socio-political art is characterised by poetic and metaphorical means of expression, indirect allusions and vehicles of multi-layered meaning. In future studies, in-depth research should be conducted into the assimilation of the relevant terminology, and the comparative manifestation of specific trends in the Baltic region should be ascertained and studied. Analysing the works of art of Ģelzis, Mūrnieks and Saberova, one is prompted to conclude that Latvia's contemporary artists are interpreters and intermediaries of social problems, civil rights, social identity and problems stemming from globalisation.



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## TORN BETWEEN TWO STATES: LEFTIST LATVIAN ARTISTS IN LATVIA IN THE 1920S AND 1930S\*

### Abstract

*In my paper I bring to light the leftist artists in independent Latvia in the interwar period and their struggle to express their beliefs. As representatives of the working class, they were fertile soil for banned Bolshevik ideology during the Great Depression. Being involved in the illegal Bolshevik party, they took risks and used their skills to illustrate and design forbidden newspapers and magazines, or to create decorations and slogans, which led to multiple arrests and imprisonments. Radical artists such as Ernests Kālis and Samuils Haskins were forced to emigrate to Soviet Russia, where they had to comply with themes based on the art commissioning policies of the USSR. Their freedom didn't last, as both were arrested by the secret police and accused of high treason during the Great Purge of 1937, which led to Kālis' death in a prison hospital and to Haskins' sentence to five years in a corrective labour camp.*

**Keywords:** leftist art,  
censorship, Bolshevik  
ideology, illegal periodicals,  
imprisonment, interwar  
Latvian art

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### INTRODUCTION

The most significant consequences of World War I for the Latvian region were the new-born states of Latvia and Soviet Russia, which also specifically impacted the fate of Latvian artists. As offspring of the generation of the 1905 Revolution, they had additional reasons to feel a strong attraction to socialistic ideals, which became more intense after military experience in WWI and the Russian Revolution. This led to a difficult choice – they had to redefine their relationship to socialism and nationalism, dividing society into two principal camps. In this paper, I bring to light the leftist artists in independent Latvia and their struggle to express their beliefs. The most important sources about this subject were created in Soviet Latvia, in particular the summary of historical testimony in *Cīņas balsis: Apcerējumu un atmiņu krājums par revolucionāro presi latviešu nacionālistiskās buržuāzijas kundzības laikā 1920.–1940.* [Voices of Fight: A Collection of Reflections and Memories About the Revolutionary Press During the Rule of the Latvian Nationalist Bourgeoisie, 1959],<sup>1</sup> while the wider context in the field of arts being provided in two graduation papers from the Latvian Academy of Art: *Rīgas Tautas augstskolas tēlotājas mākslas studija* [The Fine Arts

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<sup>1</sup> *Cīņas Balsis: Apcerējumu un atmiņu krājums par revolucionāro presi latviešu nacionālistiskās buržuāzijas kundzības laikā 1920.–1940.* [Voices of Fight: A Collection of Reflections and Memories About the Revolutionary Press During the Rule of the Latvian Nationalist Bourgeoisie 1920–1940], comp. Jūlijs Ķipers (Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1959).

Studio of Riga Peoples' University 1920–1940, 1966]<sup>2</sup> and *Proletāriskās cīņas tēlojums latviešu grafikā 20. un 30. Gados* [Portrayal of the Proletarian Struggle in Latvian Graphics in the 1920s and 1930s, 1975].<sup>3</sup> Archives and periodicals from the time were used to supplement missing information and to fill in any gaps. To avoid the theme's unpleasant connotations with the Soviet period and examine its new dimensions, I use a combined methodology: sociological, historical and iconographical.

The founders of leftist art in Latvia are considered to be Ernests Kālis (1904–1939) and Samuils Haskins (1909–1974). In a family of five people, Kālis was the second child of Jānis, a worker at the Riga metallurgy locomotive, railway wagon and machine factory, Feniks.<sup>4</sup> For his part, Haskins had to work for a living. During his fragile teenage years, at the age of 15, he witnessed a horrific scene in which logs rolled on top of a woodworker, crippling him and leaving him without the means to provide for his family.<sup>5</sup> As representatives of the working class, Kālis and Haskins were fertile soil for banned Bolshevik ideology during the Great Depression. They were instructed by the Communist Party, which subsequently involved many students, to take an advisory role in the drawing and painting workshop of the Rīgas Tautas Augstskola (Riga Peoples' University).<sup>6</sup>

The platforms used by Latvian leftist artists were both legal and illegal publications of the leftist labour movement – newspapers and magazines, information stands on Labour Day events, wall newspapers in workers' clubs and trade unions, flyers for rallies and election posters, as well as productions in workers' theatres. These were commissioned by leftist trade unions and workers' culture associations as well as underground organs of the Communist Party, although the artists did not always receive pay for their work.<sup>7</sup>

For several years after independence, Latvia functioned according to the norms established in the legislation of Tsarist Russia, according to which participants in the 1905 Russian Revolution had been harshly punished.<sup>8</sup> In the reality of interwar Latvia, leftist artists were among the radicals who believed in communist ideology and sacrificed their health, private life and even authorship

2 Ilga Straume, "Rīgas Tautas augstskolas tēlotājas mākslas studija" [The Fine Arts Studio of the Riga Peoples' University] (Master's thesis, The Art Academy of Latvia, 1966).

3 Inta Rudzīte, "Proletāriskās cīņas tēlojums latviešu grafikā 20. un 30. Gados" [Portrayal of the Proletarian Struggle in Latvian Graphics in the 1920s and 1930s] (Master's thesis, The Art Academy of Latvia, 1975).

4 K. Sakne [Kārlis Ozoliņš], "Sirdsapziņa krāsās" [Conscience in Colours], *Zvaigzne*, June 1, 1956, 16.

5 Zamuels Haskins, "Revolucionārā grafika Buržuāziskajā Latvijā" [Revolutionary Graphic Art in Bourgeois Latvia], in *Cīņas Balsis*, comp. Ķipers, 408. In Soviet times his name was 'Latvianised' to Zamuels, but in contemporary history he is referred to as Samuils.

6 Straume, "Rīgas Tautas augstskolas tēlotājas mākslas studija," 115.

7 Andrejs Balodis, "Ar dedzīgu sirdi" [With a Burning Heart], in *Cīņas Balsis*, comp. Ķipers, 324.

8 "Social discontent in cities was expressed in regular workers' strikes and ethnic antagonism persisted in society. The culmination of social and national antagonisms was the Revolution of 1905 during which general strikes, meetings and demonstrations were followed by the mass burning of manors in the countryside, armed battles, repressive punitive expeditions and the actions of the so-called Forest Brothers." Eduards Kļaviņš, "Introduction," in *Art History of Latvia IV: Period of Neo-romanticist, Modernism 1890–1915*, eds. Edaurs Kļaviņš and Kristiāna Ābele, trans. Stella Peļše and Valdis Bērziņš (Rīga: Institute of Art History of the Latvian Academy of Art, Art History Research Support Foundation, 2014), 27.

because they functioned outside the law. Following Kārlis Ulmanis' *coup d'état* and in the context of growing regime repression, the Political Directorate arrested and handed over to the court artists such as Kārlis Bušs (1912–1987) and Augusts Pupa (1907–1945), who were sentenced to three years in a correctional institution, including forced labour at the Kalnciems stone quarry of the Riga Central Prison.<sup>9</sup> As became clearer later, their fate was luckier than that of Haskins and Kālis. After the Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940 they were released from jail and suddenly they could work legally and even hold an official position in the new born Soviet art institutions such as the Artists Union, etc.<sup>10</sup>

Censorship in interwar Latvia was similar to that which existed elsewhere in Europe,<sup>11</sup> except for one important difference – here it reflected the grim experience of the Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic of 1919, whose short existence included mobilisation, terror, famine, the division of residents into categories and agrarian reform.<sup>12</sup> The stabilisation of state power after the Latvian War of Independence was followed by the outlawing of the Communist Party. It was directed not only towards the preservation of the nation state, but also against this recent past.

## CENSORED PUBLISHING

Under these harsh circumstances, leftist artists developed a number of tricks to deal with censorship and the authorities. One illegal daily newspaper, *Darbs un Maize* (Work and Bread), regularly published contentious articles and political caricatures. They were mostly drawn by Haskins, Kālis' follower and pupil, whom he met at *Rīgas Centrālais Arodbiedrību Birojs* (Riga Central Labour Union Office; hereafter RCL). From time to time, copies of the newspaper were confiscated because of the critical language of its cartoons or for insulting the state.<sup>13</sup> As Haskins remembered, he was once arrested and accused of being the author of the critical cartoons. Haskins denied any guilt but was kept under arrest to see what would happen with the cartoons in the newspaper.<sup>14</sup> The next issue surprised not only one of the inspectors, but also the artist himself:

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9 Tiesas sprieduma izraksts Augusta Teodora Pupas cietuma lietā [Extract of the Court Verdict in the Prison Case of Augusts Teodors Pupa], August 5, 1936, Description 1, Case 9045, Collection 3273, Latvian State Historical Archive (hereafter cited as LSHA), Riga.

10 In 1940 and 1941, Kārlis Bušs became the Deputy Chairman of the Artists Union's Organizing Committee and the Director of the Museum of Western European Art. Latvijas PSR mākslinieku savienība "Kārlis Bušs", *Literatūra un Māksla*, October 2, 1987, 14.

11 Aldis Purs, "Latvia," in *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, Volume 3, ed. Derek Jones (London & Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001), 1380–1382.

12 Šiliņš Jānis, *Padomju Latvija 1918–1919* [Soviet Latvia 1918–1919] (Rīga: Vēstures izpētes un popularizēšanas biedrība, 2013), 224.

13 The Christmas issue number 43 depicted three pastors of different denominations with malicious joy celebrating their success over foolish believers, resulting in the issue being confiscated. Arnolds Deglavs, "Darbs un Maize" [Work and Bread], in *Cīņas Balsis*, comp. Ķipers, 377.

As we can read in the published notification, the official reason for the confiscation of No. 43 was insulting the state. See "Vai slēgs arodnieku laikrakstu 'Darbs un Maize'?" [Is the Tradesmen's Newspaper Work and Bread going to Be Shut Down?], *Jaunais Rīts*, December 31, 1928, 1.

14 Haskins, *Revolucionārā grafika*, 416.





Fig. 1. Samuils Haskins, *It's Not the End, It's Only Beginning / We Will Start the New Fight Against You!* [L. Paegle], 1929, in: *Darbs un Maize*, no. 59 (1929), National Library of Latvia, Riga (hereafter cited as NLA).

No. 56 featured another cartoon, signed with his pseudonym “Ha-ha”.<sup>15</sup> After his arrest, the editorial staff wanted to protect Haskins, so they asked Kālis to draw new cartoons and sign them with the former’s pseudonym. The plan worked, because they were close colleagues and knew each other’s style,<sup>16</sup> but it couldn’t change the newspaper’s fate – it was shut down in mid-January 1929, after a court decision and the public prosecutor’s recommendation.<sup>17</sup>

The political opposition was used to such an approach and, after one newspaper had been shut down, they decided to open another – *Strādnieku Darbs un Maize* (Labourers’ Work and Bread) – which ran from February to April 1929 and kept the reference to the previous newspaper in its title. They also included cartoons by Haskins to underline this connection. In its pages, the newspaper criticized the Bolsheviks’ rival, the Social Democrat Party, and the unfair treatment of the working class and political prisoners. Haskins depicted prisoners as exhausted creatures (fig. 1), while workers were powerful giants confronted by ugly-looking Social Democrats or representatives of the Latvian government. On the first page of one of the confiscated issues, No. 42, *Labourers’ Work and Bread* published an article about the torture of political prisoner Irbe, who was crippled during questioning. The next day the managing

<sup>15</sup> Deglavs, “Darbs un Maize,” 378.

<sup>16</sup> Haskins, *Revolucionārā grafika*, 416.

<sup>17</sup> “‘Darbs un Maize’ apturēta” [“Work and Bread” suspended], *Lauku Darbs*, January 17, 1929, 3.

editor Ernests Mieziš was summoned by the court to be tried for sedition and spreading rumours.<sup>18</sup> Controversial exaggeration was a method that could influence workers and other poorly paid or undereducated people. In addition to easily understandable pictures deriding political opponents, there were examples of cultural references, such as quotes from song lyrics or historical personalities. By placing the figure of Marie Antoinette on the skyline of Old Riga and quoting her infamous phrase, ‘Let them eat cake!’, Haskins found a way of linking oppressed workers in Latvia with the French Revolution. This approach stressed the significance and wider context of their fight.

## ALTERNATIVE PLATFORMS OF POLITICAL ART

Another place where leftist artists could express themselves was the walls of the workers’ club. The most popular type of wall newspaper in Latvia was the placard newspaper, where artists’ illustrations and layouts played a significant role.<sup>19</sup> Wall newspapers in Latvia were associated with the propaganda of illegal leftist movements and were frequently confiscated. In order to limit the spread of wall newspapers, even the 1933 guide book *Plakāts un sienas avīze* (Wall Newspaper and Poster) was forbidden despite only including practical advice for the making of wall newspapers.<sup>20</sup> In the selected example, Haskins uses his caricaturist’s talent to transform clergymen into creatures from Hell (fig. 2). Accomplished cartoons are combined with documentary pictures and



**Fig. 2.** Leftist Legal Workers “Organisations” wall newspaper with the slogan *Against religion – for Marxism!*, caricatures drawn by Samuils Haskins, 1929, photograph by the Political Directorate, Latvian State Archive of Audiovisual Documents, Riga (hereafter cited as LSAAD).

18 Tiesā. Rīgā konfiscēts “Darbs un maize” [Court. Work and Bread confiscated in Riga], *Latvijas Kareivis*, March 27, 1929, 3.

19 Arnolds Serdants, *Plakāts un sienas avīze* [Poster and Wall Newspaper] (Rīga: Latvijas ārpuskolas izglītības padome, 1933), 40.

20 *Aizliegto grāmatu, brošūru un citu Latvijā iespiesto poligrāfisko ražojumu saraksts* [List of Prohibited Books, Brochures and Other Polygraphic Products Printed in Latvia], comp. Roberts Lapsiņš (Rīga: Jāņa Rozes apgāds, 1939), 169.

articles – everything on the subject against religion. Cartoons are likewise used as an emotional tool in the described periodicals. The aforementioned workers organisation was lucky; instead of reproduced artworks, it had the originals of the wall newspaper. A good cartoonist was a real trophy in the ideological war – in his memoirs, Haskin recalls one episode when he was tempted by social democrats to illustrate their issues, but refused.<sup>21</sup> It is clear that there was not a united attitude towards collaboration between the social democratic leftist organization and Communist Party members at that time, contrary to the Latvian Communist Party's official effort.<sup>22</sup> This might explain why Haskins drew pictures for the legal workers organization. Earlier historians stated that Kālis also contributed to RCL wall newspapers with well-thought-out photo collages and montages. During this research I was unable to find any photographic evidence to confirm this, but we must take into account the fact that very often wall newspapers were destroyed on the spot.<sup>23</sup>

Facing official restrictions, artists had to work with very limited resources – for graphic prints they used a Boston printing press, an idea initiated by the Bolshevik Party.<sup>24</sup> One such press belonged to Bušs, allowing artists to reproduce posters, slogans and drawings in linocut.<sup>25</sup> Linocut prints were affordable even for workers and became the main technique for leftist artists during this period. Another etching press, smaller in size, belonged to the artist Bernhards Dannerhiršs, who developed palm-sized art illustrations.<sup>26</sup> The images were limited not only by the printing technique, but, as Bušs remembers, the need to appropriate different styles of drawing to avoid being accused of making illustrations for illegal posters.<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, unsigned posters and illustrations were a Communist Party tactic – ideology and safety were more important than artistic recognition. As a result of this strategy, there are artworks whose creators still remain unknown.

Temporary arrests by the Political Directorate also affected artists without party affiliation whose personal or professional lives were connected to the leftist movement. The fact that they had taken commissions for election posters from specific parties was sufficient. For example, election posters of the Leftist Workers List in Riga in 1931 featured a screaming worker couple who are demanding bread, work and a sufficient salary – it was drawn by modernist painter Jānis Liepiņš (1894–1964) (**fig. 3**). He was arrested in 1931 on suspicion of belonging to an illegal communist organisation for which he

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21 Haskins, *Revolucionārā grafika*, 416–417.

22 Niedre Ojārs, Daugmalis Viktors, *Slepenais karš pret Latviju: Komunistiskās partijas darbība 1920.–1940. gadā: arhīvi apspūdz* [The Secret War Against Latvia: The Activity of the Communist Party in 1920–1940: Archives Accuse] (Rīga: Totalitārisma seku dokumentēšanas centrs, 1999), 66.

23 Haskins, *Revolucionārā grafika*, 411.

24 J. Bērziņš, “Pirmo pamatu likšana” [Laying the First Foundations], *Rīgas Balss*, April 20, 1981, 5.

25 Kārlis Bušs, “Atmiņas par revolucionāro mākslinieku darbību” [Memories of the Work of Revolutionary Artists], comp. Skaidrīte Cielava, in *Latviešu Padomju māksla* (Rīga: Liesma, 1977), 104.

26 Ibid., 106.

27 Ibid., 109.



**Fig. 3.** Jānis Liepiņš, Leftist Workers List No. 26 posters for Riga City Council elections, 1931, photograph by the Political Directorate, LSAAD.



had made this election poster and other drawings.<sup>28</sup> Presumably Liepiņš took the commission because his first wife Ernestīne Niedre was a member of the Communist Party. Judging from the fact that, after his divorce from Niedre, he no longer undertook works commissioned by the Communist Party, Liepiņš' involvement was more financially motivated.<sup>29</sup>

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## THE MOST GLARING CASE OF CENSORSHIP IN THE VISUAL ARTS

The seriousness of censorship during the interwar period is revealed by the case concerning the album *Laikmeta seja* (The Face of the Epoch), which was purely visual, without any tendentious articles. It was released at the beginning of 1933 and contained a short preface and 43 critical prints made by an artist group including Alfrēds Žurgins, Voldemārs Siliņš, Verners Piesis, Haskins, Pupa, Bušs, and J. Tenders (a pseudonym of Haskins). The gloomy life of toiling people (**fig. 4**) and exaggerated bourgeois vices were the main themes of these prints. As their creators came from the working class, they knew this struggle first-hand, and invoked their right to advocate for the oppressed. Even today we could agree that the dock worker has a hard and unhealthy job, but in those days expressing solidarity with workers was used as a political instrument. As artists illustrated the role of the victim in their images of workers – their heads are bowed and bodies hunched, giving the appearance of creatures without

<sup>28</sup> Politiskās pārvaldes Rīgas rajona pārzinis, Dienesta atzīme [Official Report], March 26, 1931, Description 2, Case 4634, Collection 3235, LSHA, Riga.

<sup>29</sup> This interpretation is also advocated by the author of a monograph on Jānis Liepiņš, Sigita Daugule: "Evidently, Liepiņš created political posters under the influence of his wife, carrying out work commissioned by the party." Sigita Daugule, *Jānis Liepiņš* (Rīga: Neputns, 2015), 51.



Fig. 4. Samuils Haskins, *The Street*, from album of prints *The Face of Epoch* (Riga, 1933), 57, NLA.

any rights – they brought out the important message of the Bolshevik Party which stood for them. This is key to why the album was confiscated at the printing house on February 13, 1933, even if the reason given by the public prosecutor – the depiction of a pastor permitting himself to touch a woman’s breasts – was “blasphemy of religion.”<sup>30</sup>

Only 100 copies of the album were printed and few have survived, because, following the courts’ decision, all of the confiscated copies were burned, giving political opponents the opportunity to compare the action of the Latvian government to Hitler’s regime in Germany.<sup>31</sup> Both censored artworks and burned books. A representative of the Workers and Peasants’ Faction, Frīcis Bergs, pointed out that it was the second official case of censorship in the whole of Europe after George Grosz published his drawing *Christ with a Gas Mask*, resulting in a lengthy trial.<sup>32</sup> Bergs tried to refute the accusations and spent a great deal of time in a working session of the Latvian parliament, the Saeima, to explain almost every picture in this album. Judging from the comments of the other members of the Saeima, no one disputed the unjustness of the workers’ position in comparison to the factory owner, depicted as a fat, self-satisfied man who does not care about anyone’s problems.

As the artist Bušs remembered, *The Face of the Epoch* was funded by an advance payment (and official announcements in the 1932 newspaper *Informators* [The Informant] prove this), but the Latvian government

accused the publishers of accepting money from the Communist Party. In spite of that, pictures were made voluntarily for no financial return.<sup>33</sup> To help the artists, the Workers and Peasants Faction deputy Arnolds Deglavs suggested that his party buy the originals and make an exhibition, thereby saving those prints for the future.<sup>34</sup>

30 “Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas V sesijas 7. sēde 1933. gada 21. februārī” [*Republic of Latvia 4th Saeima, 5th session 7th meeting on February 21, 1933*], in *Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas Stenogrammas Nr1.*, comp. Hugo Kārklīšs (Rīga: Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 1933), 251<sup>st</sup> column.

31 “Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas V sesijas 9. sēde 1933. gada 7. martā” [*Republic of Latvia 4th Saeima, 5th session 9 meeting on March 7, 1933*], 352<sup>nd</sup> column.

32 “Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas VII sesijas 2. sēde 1933. gada 20. oktobrī” [*Republic of Latvia 4th Saeima, 7th session 2nd meeting on October 20, 1933*], in *Latvijas Republikas IV Saeimas Stenogrammas Nr3.*, comp. Hugo Kārklīšs (Rīga: Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 1933), 179<sup>th</sup> column.

33 Bušs, *Atmiņas par revolucionāro*, 106.

34 Frīcis Bergs, “Saeimas deputāts” [Member of the Saeima], *Dzimtenes Balss*, November 29, 1979, 5.



## POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Artists' works were measured by their political purpose, while they remained unknown, their work unwelcome in Latvian society, because of their communist ideology. From the opposite perspective, we can examine the artists' political careers and trajectories. Kālis' political career (he joined the Communist Party in 1927) started almost at the same time as his artistic path – from 1925 until 1929 he studied art at Riga People's University. In 1929, he became a member of a party cell and began to write articles for the banned press, providing information about revolutionary movements abroad. As a political activist he had the chance to travel to Berlin in March 1929, taking part in the First International Anti-Fascist Congress and spending four days of his life in this cultural capital.<sup>35</sup> He also made slogans for political events and politically related organizations (fig. 5). From 1930 until 1931, he was a Communist Party organizer in Riga's 4th District, and in 1931 he took a position in the Committee of Inquiry. In addition to the aforementioned works, in 1931 he became the head of the propaganda department of the Riga organization. In his

party file, another member describes Kālis' political duties as undermined by his interest in painting; he clearly divided his energy between the two fields.<sup>36</sup> Because of his involvement in the outlawed Communist Party, he was twice sentenced to imprisonment – from February 1932 until June 1933 and from November 1933 until February 1935. In addition to approximately ten arrests, he spent two years and three months in prison and fell ill with tuberculosis, requiring surgery on his reproductive organs at the age of 29.

During Kālis' time in prison, he expressed his attitude towards the ruling system by going on a hunger strike (on the International Workers' Day<sup>37</sup> or



Fig. 5. Ernests Kālis, *About Working Life Report and Read in Your Press*, late 1920s, postcard, NLA.

35 Ernests Kālis, Partijas biedra anketa [Party Membership Form], September 13, 1935, Description 1, Case 4176, Collection PA-54, Latvian State Archive (hereafter cited as LSA), Riga.

36 Bergmans, Nenosaucīta atsauksme par partijas biedru Ernestu Kāli [Untitled. Reference regarding Party Member Ernests Kālis], September 13, 1935, Description 1, Case 4176, Collection PA-54, LSA, Riga.

37 Ernesta Kāļa Rīgas Centrālcietauma disciplinārsoda lapa [Ernests Kālis disciplinary penalty sheet of Riga Central Prison], May 22, 1934, Description 2, Case 6686, Collection 3273, LSHA, Riga.



**Fig. 6.** Wedding photograph of Milda and Ernests Kālis, 1928, private collection.

212 against the war<sup>38</sup>), by refusing to offer the usual response to the prison guards' greeting at the regular evening count<sup>39</sup> or by refusing to take a bath.<sup>40</sup> Prisoners' contacts with the outside world were organised by Sarkanās palīdzības biedrība (the Red Assistance Society), which followed the initiative of the Communist Party in taking care of political prisoners, distributing illegal literature, and, in the years 1927–1933, being engaged in the organization of the political prisoners' hunger strikes.<sup>41</sup> This organization was responsible for disseminating materials about Latvian prisoners abroad and rescuing some political activists by sending them to other countries, for example France or Sweden.<sup>42</sup>

Normal family life for Kālis was impossible, and the upbringing of his two young children lay on the shoulders of the artist's wife, doctor Milda Kāle (1902–1944). She was the offspring of the 1905 revolutionary Jānis Pogiņš and supported her husband with unimaginable dedication (**fig. 6**). Nonetheless Milda's letter to her husband reveals her doubts: "... Why should a person suffer so immensely? Where is the limit of this patience? Sometimes it is even difficult to understand how it will all end. None of your old friends have visited..."<sup>43</sup>

38 Rīgas centrālcietuma priekšnieka paziņojuma noraksts Rīgas apgabaltiesas prokuroram par E.Kāļa piedalīšanos bada streikā [Transcript of a statement from the Governor of Riga Central Prison to the Riga Regional Court Prosecutor regarding Ernests Kālis' participation in a hunger strike], August 3, 1934, Description 2, Case 6686, Collection 3273, LSHA, Riga.

39 Bez datējuma. Arestēto pieņemšanas lapa [Undated. Arrested persons' admission sheet], case initiated on February 20, 1932, Description 2, Case 6686, Collection 3273, LSHA, Riga.

40 Bez datējuma. Arestēto pieņemšanas lapa [Undated. Arrested persons' admission sheet], case initiated on November 16, 1933, Description 1, Case 6685, Collection 3273, LSHA, Riga.

41 Boriss Hiršfelds, "Cietumi nelīdzēja. Atceroties Sarkanās palīdzības nodibināšanas 50. gadadienu", [Prisons Didn't Help. Remembering the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of Red Aid], *Cīņa*, March 18, 1975, 4.

42 Zāra Gureviča, "Latvijas Sarkanā palīdzība" [Latvian Red Assistance], in *Revolucionārā Rīga pagrīdes cīņā*, eds. E. Ankupe, P. Bondarevs, A. Hofrāte, I. Kapeniece, E. Ūpis & E. Žagars (Rīga: Avots, 1983), 111.

43 Milda Kāle, Nedatēta un nenosaukta vēstule vīram Ernestam Kālim uz sava fotoportreta otrās puses [Undated and Untitled Letter to Her Husband Ernests Kālis on the Back of Her Photo Portrait], 1933, private archive, Rīga. Translated by Valts Miķelsons.



## ADVANTAGES OF POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT

Despite a troubled private life and serious health problems, Kālis managed to make use of his time in the prison. Besides learning and reading books,

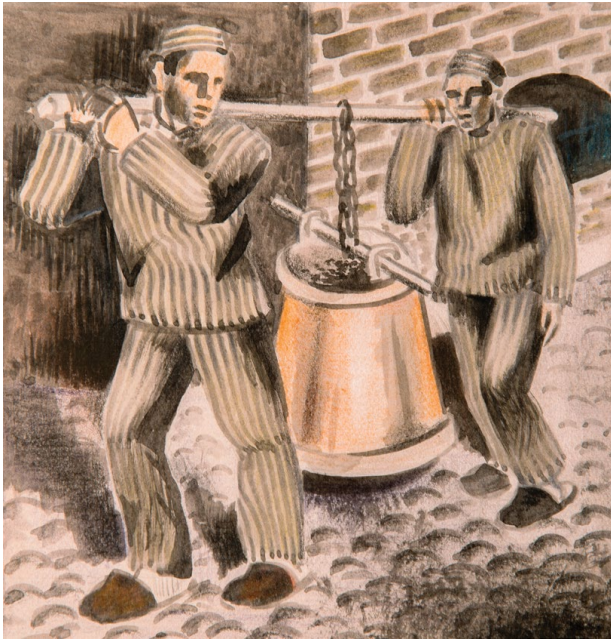


Fig. 7. Ernests Kālis, *Carrying Coffee*, 1932, drybrush and watercolour on paper, Latvian War Museum, Riga. Photograph by Valters Lācis.

he produced drawings using very primitive means, such as ink and naturally available pigments for colouring. Some of his works were given to his wife Milda and brought into the open and publicized. For a while this system worked on a very sophisticated level, and he even took a commission from a Latvian publishing house in Moscow, Prometejs (Prometheus). For example, on 26 January 1933 he drew a sketch for the cover of poet Andrejs Grants' book *Plakātains vējš* (Postery Wind), and already on 19 April it was published and advertised as the latest release in Latvian literature.<sup>44</sup> In this collaboration, a large role was probably played by Kālis' fellow writer, Linards Laicens, who at that time had moved to Moscow and headed the Starptautisko revolucionārās rakstnieku apvienības Latvijas komisiju (the Latvian Commission of the International Revolutionary Writers Union). One of the missions of this institution was to help

revolutionary authors in Latvia.<sup>45</sup> Leftist writers, poets and actors were also arrested and imprisoned, to such an extent that it became quite a widespread feature and familiar theme in works of art. For example, Leons Paegle's banned collection of poems published in 1923 *Prisons Don't Help* romanticised the revolutionary-prisoner, relating to the experience of the 1905–1907 uprisings.

Notwithstanding the considerable restrictions and censorship, the experience of politically imprisoned artists and authors travelled across borders. For example, in 1933 an international exhibition of works by political prisoners was organised at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, gathering materials from Latvia, Poland, Germany and Belarus, which emphasised the need for "... secrecy and illegal means of preparation and consignment..."<sup>46</sup> Belonging to the Communist Party and living under another regime meant overcoming extreme conditions. Prisoners in this situation tried to soften the experience of imprisonment through heroism and everyday illustrations of the kind that can also

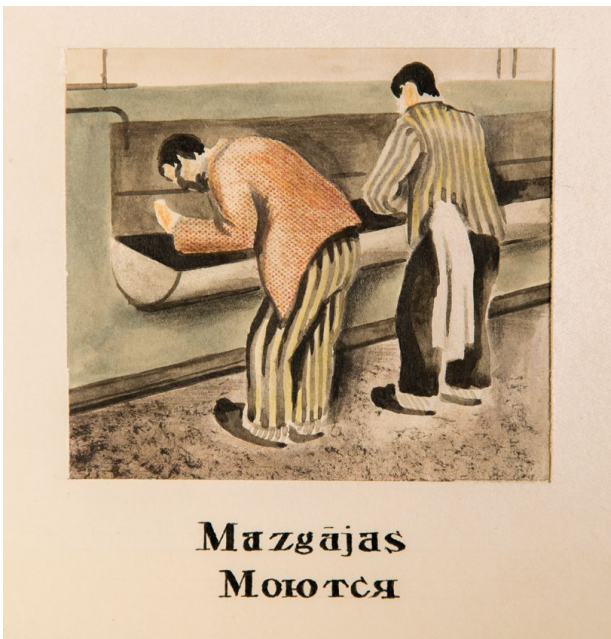


Fig. 8. Ernests Kālis, *Washing*, 1932, drybrush and watercolour on paper, Latvian War Museum, Riga. Photograph by Valters Lācis.

44 Sludinājumi un paziņojumi [Advertisements and Announcements], *Komunāru Cīņa*, April 29, 1933, 4.

45 Latinform [Latvian Information Agency], "Paliek, kas turpina mani" [Remains That Keep Me Going], *Padomju Jaunatne*, November 16, 1983, 1.

46 Demens [Augustus Mende], "Politieslodzīto darbu izstāde Tretyakova galerijā – lielnieciskā māksla" [An Exhibition of Works by Political Prisoners at the Tretyakov Gallery – Bolshevik Art], *Celtne*, no. 2 (1933): 184.

be found in the archive of works left by Kālis. He sketched ordinary scenes from prison (**fig. 7, fig. 8**), documenting this specific way of life and its typical routine: a walk in the courtyard, receiving a meal or washing. The artist's imprisonment gave him the opportunity to again make art and immortalize his every day struggle in these particular circumstances.

## LATVIANS IN SOVIET RUSSIA

Following its establishment in 1917, many thousand Latvians remained living in Soviet Russia, including Latvian refugees, participants of the Bolshevik Coup and the Russian Civil War, who, despite the internationalist mindset, took active part in maintaining national cultural life. Alongside determined communists, more neutrally-minded members were also active in the Latvian diaspora, having stayed for family reasons or better career or academic opportunities.<sup>47</sup> By developing the production of cultural goods, the Prometheus Association earned money that allowed it to publish Latvian books and periodicals, as well as to promote the establishment of various sections, including the visual arts.<sup>48</sup> But in the early 1930s it also oversaw the Latvian section of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Artists whose aim was to improve international cooperation and promote contacts with Latvia. Thus graphic works by leftist Latvian artists were sent to the International Bureau and exhibited at the International Revolutionary Artists' Exhibition in the Museum of Modern Western Art in Moscow in a separate display case, which also contained Haskins linocuts.<sup>49</sup>

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Haskins fell seriously ill in June 1934 and requested the party's permission to make an official visit to the Soviet Union for his recovery. However, the arrangement of exit permits took many months, and party urged him to accept Soviet nationality, a proposition, that as a Nansenist, he refused to take.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, due to the threat of being imprisoned once again, Haskins was forced to flee and to cross the border illegally in April 1935.<sup>51</sup> He also faced challenges during his stay in Moscow, as he complained to the Latvian Bolshevik Party representative, Salna: "Since August 1, 1935, International Red Aid (hereafter cited as IRA) has not been covering my accommodation

47 For more on this topic, see Vitālijs Šalda, *Latvieši Maskavā 1923–1938* [Latvians in Moscow 1923–1938] (Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitātes akadēmiskais apgāds "Saule", 2010).

48 Dzintra Vīksna, "Latviešu kultūras un izglītības biedrība 'Prometejs' Padomju Savienībā" [The Latvian cultural and educational society in Soviet Russia *Prometejs*], *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu akadēmijas vēstis*, no. 9 (1966): 3–11.

49 For more on this topic, see Sniedze Kāle, "Latviešu kreisās mākslas uzliesmojumi Latvijā un padomju Krievijā 20. gs. 20.–30. gados" [Flashes of Latvian Leftist Art in Latvia and soviet Russia during the 1920s and 30s], in *Mākslas vēsture un teorija*, ed. Elita Grosmane (Rīga: Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijas Mākslas vēstures institūts; Mākslas vēstures pētījumu atbalsta fonds, 2021), 39–53.

50 Salna, *Haskina lietā* [In the Haskins Case], December 25, 1934, Description 1, Case 9656, Collection PA–54, LSA, Rīga.

51 Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas Centrālās komitejas sēžu protokols par Haskina S. atjaunošanu Partijas biedru sastāvā [Latvian Communist Party Central Committee meeting minutes regarding Samuels Haskins' restoration to the ranks of Party members], case dated May 4–21, 1957, Description 20, Case 25, Collection PA–101, LSA, Rīga.

expenses, and I am residing in an unpaid room. [...] As a foreigner, I cannot get a room. [...] I feel like a complete invalid. I was asking for support with treatment, but IRA sent me away, saying, 'Go to your department and ask them to send you to us, and we will help.' [...] I'm at a dead end."<sup>52</sup>

Prison conditions affected Kālis' health and, like Haskins, he emigrated to Soviet Russia in September 1935 to undergo treatment and escape another imprisonment. As one can read in my publication about the most radical leftist Latvian artists' activities, in Soviet Russia's Latvian circles Haskins and Kālis were considered to be misfits, that is, artists from Latvia.<sup>53</sup> As far as the party was concerned, their work in a territory yet to be conquered was advantageous, because it helped to prepare the soil for future occupation. Paradoxically, they were not wanted in the Soviet Union either. In documents from Kālis' party file from early 1937, it is written that his and his wife's return to Latvia was to be encouraged.<sup>54</sup> Instead of Soviet benefits, both artists encountered the directives of Socialist Realism and were arrested as Latvian spies and anti-Soviet agitators. They were accused of high treason during the Great Purge, which led to Kālis' death in a prison hospital at Таганская тюрьма (Taganka Prison) on June 1, 1939. Haskins was more fortunate: he survived and, after two years of imprisonment, he wrote a submission to Executive Committee of the Communist International, trying to persuade them that he was innocent: "In the last two years, I perceive what has happened to me as an undeserved and unjust punishment for a crime I have never committed. I see it as a childhood punishment from my beloved parents – for misdeeds I had not committed."<sup>55</sup> After spending five years in a corrective labour camp and returning home, Haskins witnessed not only his rehabilitation, but also his reinstatement as a member of the Communist Party of Socialist Latvia in 1956. More generally, leftist authors and artists were rehabilitated following the Khrushchev Thaw, but thorough research on this subject has been hindered by the destructive campaigns of the Great Terror and the dogmatic perspective of Socialist Realism, which concentrated on a representational formal language. It can be said that up until the 2014 monograph by American book collector and researcher James Howard Fraser,<sup>56</sup> the legacy of leftist authors could not be properly evaluated due to historical prejudice and the traumatic experience of the Soviet occupation.

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52 Хаскин С., Недатированное письмо из Москвы. [Undated Letter from Moscow], case dated December 25, 1934 – March 25, 1940, Description 1, Case 9656, Collection PA–54, LSA, Riga.

53 Sniedze Kāle, "Latviešu kreisās," 50–51.

54 Rūdolfs Salna, Latvijas Komunistiskās Partijas Centrālkomitejas slēdziens [Conclusion of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia], July 25, 1936, Description 1, Case 4176, Collection PA–54, LSA, Riga.

55 Хаскин С., Копия Заявления Исполкому Коминтерна [Copy of the Submission to the Executive Committee of the Comintern], January 2, 1940, Description 1, Case 9656, Collection PA–54, LSA, Riga.



## CONCLUSION

During the inter-war period, Latvia's leftist artists worked in unenviable conditions. Regular imprisonment and prison sentences disrupted their normal family lives, while professional work was difficult – they were forced to hide or deny their authorship and to work with limited resources, as well as to witness the destruction of their works. At the same time, as a result of their illegal activity, the security services collected materials that are now available for research and make it possible to piece together the kind of information that is not available about other artists, such as Kālis' reading habits in prison. It could be argued that certain compensations were available in the form of the party's ability to provide benefits such as a trip to Berlin, a feeling of belonging to the global proletariat, arranging commissions while in prison, or sending artists on tours of the Soviet Union to help them regain their health. However, these privileges were only available as long as the artists in question were part of the plan to undermine the power of the Latvian State.

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## ART AS AN ANTI-SYSTEMIC ATTITUDE: MILAN SELAKOVIĆ IN *PREGLED*

### Abstract

*After the Munich Agreement, Jovan Kršić, the editor-in-chief of the magazine Pregled, exerted all of his capacity to find adequate support for his anti-fascist stance. Above all, he was involved in the case of Milan Selaković. From 1938 to 1941, Selaković's texts charted a path of potential transformation for Croatian society. Seen as a democratic and anti-clerical republic, the state that Selaković envisioned became the South Slavic axis for proposed changes. Selaković, who was highly esteemed by the editorial board, dialectically analysed artistic examples ranging from Krsto Hegedušić and Vilim Svečnjak to Franjo Mraz. By refusing a static cultural model, Selaković maintained a critical distance from academism and any kind of stylistic pretension. Instead, he consciously developed a specific attitude against intellectuals and dogmatic narratives, and found in the peasant painter Franjo Mraz the necessary substance for a new state option in depictions of the close contact between a worker and his native land. This conclusion did not rely on stereotypes or the ideological colonization of peasant life and its class contradictions. For Kršić it was an optimal solution and an adequate replacement for his old and now ineffective commitment to Masaryk's understanding of the state and its ideological premises.*

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### A BOSNIAN MAN AND HIS LANGUAGE

The horrible provisions of the Munich Agreement – signed in September 1938 – directly impacted the everyday routine of Bosnian political magazines.<sup>1</sup> *Pregled* was particularly affected due to its leftist ideological commitment and editorial worldview.<sup>2</sup> In October 1938, Jovan Kršić – the editor-in-chief at the time – published a critical survey of the inevitable consequences of the Agreement.<sup>3</sup> In his view, the politics of appeasement represented a catastrophic choice by the Western states but – and this was the crux of Kršić's opinion – its grave repercussions would primarily affect eastern European states created after 1918.<sup>4</sup> The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was not an exception. Why was this of utmost importance for Kršić and the critics close to him?

1 For more on the political consequences of the Munich Agreement, see: Zara Steiner, *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History 1933–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 610–668.

2 As a magazine devoted to cultural questions by virtue of its editorial politics and policies – published in Sarajevo from January 1927 to March 1941 – *Pregled* aspired to rise to the rank of journals such as *Nova Evropa*, and to offer a solid platform for a different image of South Slavic unity.

3 Jovan Kršić, “Posle Minhena” [After Munich], *Pregled*, no. 178 (1938): 617–620.

4 Jovan Kršić (1898–1941) was a Bosnian writer, critic and avid defender of South Slavic unity and its anti-clerical, antifascist and republican substance. He graduated in philosophy from Charles University in Prague in 1923, and remained devoted to Tomáš Masaryk's worldview until the end of his life. He was murdered in early days of the fascist occupation of Bosnia by members of Ustaša movement.

With a presentiment of desperation, Kršić predicted the fall of France as an independent state based on the model of Versailles, and foresaw the destruction of Czechoslovakian democracy. In effect, for him the Munich Agreement signified the complete collapse of the European bourgeoisie and its ideological capacities. For Bosnian intellectuals, this was not an accident. As strong supporters of the main principles of Tomáš Masaryk's presidency, Kršić and his followers encouraged Yugoslavia in the late 1920s to mirror Czechoslovakia.<sup>5</sup> From its very first issue, the *Pregled* editorial board advocated Czechoslovakian republicanism as an adequate model to follow in the reconstruction of South Slavic unity, with a procedure based on a common and historically-verified aim: freedom. Kršić's platform insisted on Bosnian experience and Bosnian ethical substance as evidence of its ability to become a decisive, integrative element within a new, radically improved state – a republican and democratic one. Moved by nationalist enthusiasm, Kršić and his colleagues were not able to recognize the authoritarian features of Masaryk's policy and his subtle ambition to embed the Czechoslovakian state within the cultural experience of Western Europe.<sup>6</sup> Understandably, the main conception of Masaryk's policy, forced Westernization, was totally unacceptable for the *Pregled* contributors as a new motif for the predominantly passive masses of the Balkans.

In Kršić's programmatic text, *Pripovedačka Bosna* (Narrative Bosnia) – published in 1928 – freedom was described as an act of linguistic liberation.<sup>7</sup> To be a Bosnian implied having sound knowledge of the words that local people know, rather than those of foreigners or invaders of various origins. Situated in the middle of a mountainous region, Bosnia existed as an example of historical strength and the will to persist despite plans and actions launched by Vienna, Rome or Istanbul. With its conservatism, exclusivity and series of xenophobic evocations, this carefully prepared paradigm conveniently followed the main expectations of the dominant cultural view at the time. Known as a return to order, this position insisted on citations and repetitive cultural forms as the criteria for the aestheticized predispositions of contemporary cultural language.<sup>8</sup> Native language connected everything. As such, the morally as well as aesthetically perfect language of South Slavs needed a high profile representative. In Walter Benjamin's words, it required a translator or a figure with the ability to understand and implement the basic procedures of mimetic

5 Jovan Kršić, "Masarik – vod" [Masaryk – the Leader], *Pregled*, no. 75 (1930): 131–135.

6 In effect, after the changes of the Constitution in 1921, Masaryk sheltered his presidency within a group of carefully selected intellectuals and journalists, governing the Republic despite the will of the parliamentary majority. The main concept was based on the idea of Czechoslovakia as a typical Western state. Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe 1914–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 57–94.

7 Jovan Kršić, "Pripovedačka Bosna" [Narrative Bosnia], in *Sa strana zamagljenih*, ed. Kovan Kršić (Sarajevo: Grupa sarajevskih književnika, 1928), 7–12.

8 On stylistic regression in the 1920s, see: Kenneth Silver, "A More Durable Self," in *Chaos and Classicism: Art in France, Italy, and Germany 1918–1936*, ed. Kenneth Silver (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2010), 14–23.

praxis, as described in Erich Auerbach's famous interpretation of the Old Testament.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Kršić's platform engaged nationally-competent writers – Petar Kočić, Svetozar Ćorović, and Ivo Andrić – as representatives of the widespread need for freedom and its metagrammatical rules.

The fatal consequences of the Munich Agreement became explicit within a couple of months. In December 1938, Emmanuel Mouniere – editor-in-chief of the French magazine *Esprit* – witnessed the elements of political as well as intellectual paralysis as a result of the new, essentially extremist movements of the ideologically energized masses.<sup>10</sup> Mouniere adduced many reasons for an intellectual to be an escapist, captured by grave melancholy. But not Kršić and *Pregled*. Refusing the Western compromise, he accepted writers from the radical Marxist left. In fact, he opted for introducing dialectics into the magazine, but at the same time he accommodated a dangerous Stalinist worldview.<sup>11</sup> Paradoxically, Kršić changed his static and anti-bourgeois stance by opting for the key economic quality of the bourgeois system, utilitarianism. Usefulness represented the highest priority in a time of total ideological deconstruction.<sup>12</sup> Nor was Stalinism the only ideology that *Pregled* entertained. To survive and to be politically effective, Kršić decided to reconstruct the editorial profile of *Pregled* to accommodate a mosaic of useful interpretations. The new editorial logic was exclusively dedicated to producing a radically different state organization – predominantly a dialectical one – so it was no surprise when Kršić chose Milan Selaković as a new, politically-engaged contributor.<sup>13</sup>

### SELAKOVIĆ'S ENGAGEMENT IN *PREGLED*

The young and agile Selaković, with his Marxist views and closeness to Krleža's nonconformist dialectic, brought a necessary ideological equilibrium to the magazine. His position offered an opportunity for constructing a differently coded social episteme. In contrast to the ideological force of Ždanov's theses, Selaković put the accent on the personal side of main historical movements.

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9 On Benjamin's analysis of translation as a key cultural mechanism, see: Wolfram Eilenberger, *Time of the Magicians: The Invention of Modern Thought 1919–1929* (London: Allen Lane, 2020), 96–102. Erich Auerbach at the end of 1930s was deeply concerned about humankind's autonomy and their obligations before the gods and existing ideological structures of the Ancient and Old Testament worlds. See Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3–23.

10 Michael Foessel, *Recidive 1938* [The Recidivism of 1938] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2019), 140–141.

11 Dušan Nedeljković, "Stvaralački stav novog realizma" [The Creative Capacity of New Realism], *Pregled*, no. 177 (1938): 572–583; Đorđe Jovanović, "Realizam kao umetnička istina" [Realism as Artistic Truth], *Pregled*, no. 179–180 (1938): 689–701.

12 Examining the very beginnings of the capitalist episteme, Franco Moretti, in reference to the example of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, recognizes usefulness as a basic structural word. Franco Moretti, *The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature* (London: Verso, 2014), 35–39.

13 Milan Selaković (1914–1995), the Croatian writer and critic, was in the 1930s characterized as a man close to Krleža's ideological view and a representative of the nonconformist left-wing Marxist worldview. He was active in *Pregled* from 1937 to 1941. Stanko Lasić, *Krležologija: Kriitička literatura o Miroslavu Krleži od 1914. do 1941.* [Krležology: Critical Literature about Miroslav Krleža from 1914 to 1941] (Zagreb: Globus, 1989), 274.

However, Selaković's notion of produced individuality was not necessarily compatible with the type required by bourgeois society.

Relentlessly searching for a synthesis between the locally existing human communities and indisputable belonging to Marxist consciousness, in June 1938 Selaković became preoccupied by the biography of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Franciscan monk Baldo Lupetina.<sup>14</sup> For Selaković, he was an emblematic example of the Croatian past repressed by the selfish and repressive interests of powerful foreigners. Lupetina, as a convert to Lutheranism and a nonconformist believer, was, in Selaković's imagination, a morally incorruptible person ready to suffer for the highest possible ideals without any hesitation. In those circumstances, everything was summed up by Lupetina's dominant virtues which, in Selaković's opinion, were anti-clericalism and a dialectic view of decisive moments of life and ideology. These characteristic inevitably encapsulated Lupetina's experience, making his life a model for the desired new type of local biography. It is important to notice that Selaković's apology for Lupetina, despite his strong and immoderate words, wasn't just a reflection on the polished doctrinal surface of the Stalinist praxis of the sublime (as was the case, for instance, with Soviet propaganda about Papanin's expedition into the North Pole Basin, completed in February 1938).<sup>15</sup> It was obvious that the time was ripe to devote oneself to heroic, sacrificial figures. In Selaković's opinion, Lupetina's example was fit to be a countermodel for the pervasively dominant *petit bourgeoisie* standard in Croatia.

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In September 1938, Selaković published a review of Krleža's novel *Na rubu pameti* (On the Edge of Reason), insisting that the focal point of the whole narrative had been caused by the fall of the stereotypical figure of the Doctor.<sup>16</sup> Constructed as a paradoxical engine of Krleža's novel, the Doctor was an inauthentic instigator of social rebellion. In his grotesque fate, Selaković recognized a decisive moment of local historical circumstances, rife with frustrations and improbable ambitions. By carefully choosing his words, he created a dramatic metaphor of mechanically-produced inevitability: "As a steam engine set on the fixed rails, man doesn't turn on his own will, but gets moved only by the messages coming from the timetable which represents all of his dynamism and which exactly and determinedly notes his every breath and every step, every move and the final aim."<sup>17</sup> Uprooted and deprived of class consciousness, the Doctor, in Selaković's view, represented a clumsy puppet who originated from the pages of Benjamin's critical writing. And just

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14 Baldo Lupetina (1502–1556) was a defiant Lutheran and social reformer who persisted in his ideological stances during and despite Venetian incarceration from 1542 to 1566. Milan Selaković, "Zla kob hrvatskih reformatora" [The Bad Fate of the Croatian Reformers], *Pregled*, no. 174 (1938): 339–346.

15 Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture 1931–1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 276–306.

16 Milan Selaković, "Uz najnoviju Krležinu knjigu Na rubu pameti" [On Krleža's Latest Book, *On the Edge of Reason*], *Pregled*, no. 177 (1938): 589–595.

17 *Ibid.*, 591. If it is not stated otherwise, all translations are by the author.



like Erich Kästner's figures were merely jovial puppets for the German *petit bourgeoisie* at the beginning of the 1930s, the main character of Krleža's novel was an unconscious mannequin of the morally disturbed Croatian pseudo-elite.<sup>18</sup> Selaković made a clear statement: A revolutionary act is both a part and a vital consequence of the wider social background, defined by its ideology, class tensions and strict procedures for organizing repressed masses. Authenticity, courage and seriously-matured consciousness represented the key facts of possible social change, characterizing Selaković's ideological contribution to *Pregled* in 1938.

Concerned and fearful of particularistic tendencies, Kršić recognized in Selaković a chance to foster serious critique of ongoing political practice. This was especially so after the endorsement of Cvetković-Maček Agreement, which, in August 1939, led to the creation of the Banovina of Croatia.<sup>19</sup> From the *Pregled* perspective, this act represented the first step in the ongoing process of reformulating the conservative and ideologically-sclerotic Yugoslav state. For Kršić, a strong supporter of South Slavic unity, the Croatian question indisputably unveiled itself as the most dangerous problem. Selaković's participation was of immense value because of his Marxist background, which brought by itself efficient tools for decomposing the pervasive system of official culture (whether produced by the Kingdom or the Banovina) and its falsely proposed imperative of ideologically induced aestheticization.

The unrelenting tide of ethnically-coded nationalism reflected the common sentiment in Europe under fascist pressure. This led Selaković to criticize the fact that the most important figures of the Banovina of Croatia didn't recognize the distinction between reasonable ethnic desires and right-wing extremism. In April 1940, he reviewed the exhibition, *One Hundred Years of German Painting*, in an article for *Pregled*.<sup>20</sup> As an ambitious representation of German culture in Zagreb, a carefully prepared selection of artists and their works embodied the main principles of the contemporary state aesthetic. As an immediate response to the Nazi social stereotype, the exhibition was marked by thematic and stylistic right-wing escapism. Therefore, the exhibition embodied a reason of higher importance and was not subject to a simple rebuttal by any kind of modernism. Everything had been carefully prepared, put under the sign of the German peasantry and encapsulated inside the firm strictures of sclerotic style – in this case, Biedermeier. Accordingly, the peasantry that inhabited the exposition halls represented the ultimate phantasm and ideological ballast, and expressed the fascist will in its most dangerous aspect. At that moment, it was

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18 Walter Benjamin, "Left-Wing Melancholy," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Michael Jennings (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 423–427.

19 For more on the Agreement, see: Dejan Đokić, *Nedostižni kompromis. Srpsko-hrvatsko pitanje u međuratnoj Jugoslaviji* [The Unattainable Compromise: The Serbo-Croatian Question in Interwar Yugoslavia] (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2010), 243–264.

20 Milan Selaković, "Jedno stoljeće njemačkog slikarstva" [One Hundred Years of German Painting], *Pregled*, no. 195 (1940): 175–180.

not only a question of aesthetics or an anomaly of taste. On the contrary, it was an epitome of state politics, a pure dogma.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, Selaković opened the way for a thoroughly different kind of aesthetic. In its logical continuation, the exhibition represented state reason constructed from the bottom of the class hierarchy, in immediate contact with the native land and its working conditions. In February 1940, Selaković surveyed the 16<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Croatian Artists, with a focus on two key figures.<sup>22</sup> In his view, Ljubo Babić represented all of the conservative aberrations of Banovina politics. Babić's conception was absolutely dependent on ideologically selected types, creating a pseudo-Biedermeier image of peasants and their lives in a series of sterile placards. "(His) peasant studies stand in an obvious contrast to the deep social, psychological and figurative understanding of Krsto Hegedušić and look like the placard which repeats itself stereotypically on the basis of the same blandly-conceptualized scheme, without a concrete affirmation of Babić's theory of colour and harmony."<sup>23</sup>

222 Instead of promoting Babić's paintings of Croatian land and peasants, Selaković promoted Krsto Hegedušić as an exemplar. As a former member of the group *Zemlja*, Hegedušić generated a new anthropological profile for an artist, based on his readiness to be involved in political and ethical battles fought inside the local, almost exclusively peasant society. Seen as an ideological translation of Lupetina's paradigm, Hegedušić was tortured by systematically-applied state injustice, and became in his own right a paradigm of the process of class and national emancipation. Selaković was careful as a critic to highlight the substantial difference between right-wing and organically-conceived nationalism, so common in the late 1930s and especially in the policy of the Popular Front. Croatian people represented the main subject of Hegedušić's huge historical canvases, but always in strict accordance with their class origin. Situated at the very bottom of the social structure, the people depicted in Hegedušić's scenes moved dialectically from the first signs of consciousness to become ideologically mature peasants ready to rebel against social injustice for the sake of the end goal of national freedom. Hegedušić's huge compositional drawing *Stubica 1573* (The Battle of Stubica 1573) epitomized his previous intentions, and its monumentality was key to its success: "The Exhibition in its entirety is dominated by the powerfully constructed individuality of Krsto Hegedušić as a competent painter, whose huge canvases, grandiloquent compositions and impeccably and solidly made drawings put the ambition of his own colleagues completely in the shade."<sup>24</sup>

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21 Berthold Hinz, "'Degenerate' and 'Authentic': Aspects of Art and Power in the Third Reich," in *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930–1945*, eds. Dawn Ades, Tim Benton, David Elliott and Ian Boyd Whyte (London: Hayward Gallery, 1995), 330–333.

22 Milan Selaković, "16. Izložba hrvatskih umjetnika" [The 16<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of Croatian Artists], *Pregled*, no. 193 (1940): 59–61.

23 Ibid., 61.

24 Ibid., 60.

For Selaković, Hegedušić's vehemence stood as proof of the Marxist potential that was embedded in the very core of the Croatian people. Thus, Stubica, as an historical example, was just one of the selected moments in a series of historical, ideologically-representative events. All of this was governed by the idea that class oppression and ethnic injustice have the future potential to transform the Croatian people into the ideal subject of a new political perception. Confronted by fervent nationalism, Kršić, with his Bosnian optics, had to be desperate to save his political ideal – South Slavic state unity. After the catastrophe of the Munich Agreement, the ideal of a gifted cadre of selected intellectuals was completely ruined, and Kršić was deeply suspicious of any intentions to evoke or renovate it. Selaković's nonconformism and his seriousness convinced the editor-in-chief of *Pregled* that the new state conception had to evolve from objectively perceived conditions of the land and its forms of labour.

In February 1940, Selaković published a long, meticulously-written text about Vilim Svečnjak's exhibition of graphic works.<sup>25</sup> Selaković held Svečnjak's expressive drawings in high esteem, especially his ability to depict class subjects. It was obvious that the main figures of Svečnjak's graphics had their social origins in Croatian land, set between brutal occupants and the fatal consequences of prolonged economic disasters. Hence, in the cycle of *Balade Petrice Kerempuha* (The Ballads of Petrica Kerempuh), Selaković recognized an existential synthesis of an entire world akin to Don Quixote's ascetism. Svečnjak was frustrated and moved by the injustice and horrific circumstances of peasant lives. Expressive lines and summarily placed fields of intensive colours were the characteristic motifs of Svečnjak's style: "In effect, Svečnjak is nervous and ready, in every moment, to concentrate over his own canvas, repeating the thousands of lines in just one of his drawings right up until he makes the acceptable one; and that is the reason why we can see such an intensive search for a specific answer, and almost experimentation in style, but, in general, the entire thing exactly attained."<sup>26</sup> However, despite the expressiveness of Svečnjak's images, they were just an intellectual imagination. He was not a real witness but someone who was capable of an effective, but merely aesthetic, translation. Svečnjak flourished according to Krleža's ideological paradigm without a predisposition for proximity like that of deeply existential personalities such as Lupetina or Hegedušić.

At the beginning of 1940, Selaković knew that the lack of original impulses in art inevitably led to parasitic consequences. He was afraid that an expansive ideology, in this case Stalinist, could replace authentic meaning with dogma. Fear of Stalinism dominated, and there was real evidence of confusion on the left over the last months of 1940. For example, Selaković negatively reviewed

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25 Milan Selaković, "Slikarstvo Vilima Svečnjaka" [The Painting of Vilim Svečnjak], *Pregled*, no. 193 (1940): 45–51.

26 *Ibid.*, 50–51.

August Cesarec's drama about the 19<sup>th</sup> century Croatian revolutionary Eugen Kvaternik.<sup>27</sup> Cesarec's thematic selection was completely wrong on ideological grounds. Cesarec was too close to the contemporary, nationalistic understanding of Kvaternik when he insisted on the power of documents and pure facts. Selaković had a different opinion: "Art is not in a conflict with science or reality, but it doesn't interpret the same reality just by real, factual, concrete arguments; instead, its interpretation is constructed of psychic, social and political elements and uses the whole complex of related time (...) which leads us towards the conclusion that will be in agreement with scientific examinations and real facts."<sup>28</sup>

## NATURALISM INSTEAD OF REALISM

Krleža was silent and in evident confusion, and this convinced Selaković that the problem of freedom had to be resolved within, and despite, the context of diminished political tools. His refusal was similar in terms of consequences to Kršić's refusal in the aftermath of the Munich Agreement, but this time it had the imprint of ideological distance from Stalinist pseudo-documentarist pretensions.<sup>29</sup> The right-wing critics were delighted by its narrative implications, which alarmed Selaković. Any potential convergence between the Stalinist option and everyday nationalist inclinations represented an abhorrent side effect that was absolutely unacceptable. Selaković was determined to envision an optimal condition for the projected Croatian republic, and this field had to be cleared and inhabited by the real productive class alone. This class's ability to develop an adequate aesthetic response and to become culturally mature would constitute an indispensable basis for the future republic.

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Selaković was deeply aware of the unfavourable situation. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – signed in August 1939 – and the overtly evident right-wing tendencies in the local culture bore witness to the fact that the process of constructing a genuine leftist state had to be postponed. The right time for action to take place would not be like it was in the case of Kvaternik's choleric impulses, nor even as it was in the case of Lupetina's persecution. In his text, Selaković carefully distilled Ante Starčević's political example as a key point for the end of 1940. He profiled Starčević as a politician devoted to the Croatian people and to the empirical standards of contemporaneity. In a desired parallel with Starčević, Selaković himself refused the immediacy of revolutionary practice and the pressure applied by ideologically-oriented intellectuals. This important dilemma also suggested the ultimate reason for Krleža's silence at the time.

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27 Milan Selaković, "Cesarčeva drama o Kvaterniku" [Cesarec's Drama about Kvaternik], *Pregled*, no. 200-201 (1940): 452–457.

28 *Ibid.*, 456.

29 Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 312–324.

In stylistic terms, the situation required a new type of aesthetic response. Instead of realism, aesthetics had been transformed into a procedure for the meticulous examination of everyday experience. In January 1941, Selaković published an essay about the peasant painter Franjo Mraz.<sup>30</sup> His connection with the land and hard labour made him an ideal channel for the naturalistic expression that Selaković advocated. As a student of Hegedušić's school, Mraz was vital enough to save his work from any kind of academicism, and continued to paint as a worker and peasant without any intellectual pretensions. For Selaković, this kind of freshness (and freedom) represented the first necessary step in the formation of the new republic.

In this delicate political atmosphere, Mraz's example represented an optimal path for an effective reappraisal and reinterpretation of the Yugoslav state idea for both *Pregled* in general and especially for Kršić. Abandoned to its own ethnically-instigated conflicts, Bosnia lost its priority in the moral-political defence of South Slavic identity. Kršić was deeply aware of the decisive change in the state paradigm at the beginning of 1941, and found in Selaković – and in his closeness to Croatian land – a connective figure. Selaković was someone capable of establishing a new position for naturalism as a necessary replacement for the iconoclastic, conservative and xenophobic domination of the intellectuals and the native language of the Bosnian and Yugoslav 1920s.

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30 Milan Selaković, "Seljački slikar Franjo Mraz" [The Peasant Painter Franjo Mraz], *Pregled*, no. 205 (1941): 45–50.





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## CENSORSHIP AND SELF-CENSORSHIP IN POLITICAL CARTOONS AND CARICATURES FROM 1945 TO 2020 IN CROATIA \*

**Keywords:** Censorship,  
self-censorship, political  
cartoons, caricature, print  
media, freedom of speech

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### Abstract

*Research on censorship and self-censorship in Croatia is focused on political cartoons and caricatures in the period of communist system (1945–1990) until the breakup of Yugoslavia, and on the recent period of independent Republic of Croatia. The research provides documented examples of censorship and self-censorship that have been found in archives and literature and obtained from authors directly. During the period of Yugoslavia some authors bypassed censorship barriers in various creative ways, risking arrests and prosecutions, while in Republic of Croatia they risk their jobs and livelihood. This paper documents the stages and forms of the censorship and self-censorship through specific examples of political cartoons and caricatures in Croatia over the seventy-year period, with reference to recent global circumstances that indicate that the political cartoon is endangered.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Among many relevant definitions of censorship, *Encyclopedia Britannica's* is apt: "Censorship, the changing or the suppression or prohibition of speech or writing that is deemed subversive of the common good. It occurs in all manifestations of authority to some degree, but in modern times it has been of special importance in its relation to government and the rule of law."<sup>1</sup> Despite many variations and different extensions of content, this definition implies that censorship is "systematic control of the content of each medium of communication."<sup>2</sup> The complexity of various forms of censorship shows that by solely exploring different forms of control and prohibition, one would not get a complete picture of society in a certain time and space. In the foreword to her book *Monopoly on the Truth*, Radina Vučetić points out that in recent literature: "... censorship is viewed as a complex interaction of restrictive and productive practices. Today, therefore, more and more authors do not consider

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1 George Anastaplo, "Censorship," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/censorship>.

2 See the definition of Michael Scammell, who launched the *Index of Censorship* magazine in London dedicated to documenting censorship in the world. In: Michael Skamel, "Cenzura i njena historija" [Censorship and Its History], *Književna kritika*, no. 3-4 (1990): 55.

228 censorship as a purely repressive phenomenon, but through it they follow certain dynamics and changes in society. (...) The view on censorship in which only what is forbidden is observed, and not what is allowed, can never give the true image of censorship, nor of the society itself that is being questioned.”<sup>3</sup>

Censoring of caricatures refers in principle to political cartoons and the prosecution of their authors, cartoonists. One could say that in any country where cartoons have been published in the media, there were cartoonists who ended up in prison or lost their jobs. This has happened (and still is happening) in many countries since the nineteenth century, up until today.

Self-censorship is “the act or action of refraining from expressing something.”<sup>4</sup> Self-censorship can indicate the author’s awareness of the limit to which the government can be provoked, without this authority directly banning him or her from working. During the creative process, each author, consciously or unconsciously, makes a whole series of compromises that must be accepted by the audience. One of the most evocative statements about self-censorship during socialist Yugoslavia comes from cartoonist and animated cartoon author, Borivoj Dovniković: “We had no problems with censorship in Zagreb film or with the government. However, you need to know that we had, as we described it, a ‘police in your own brain’, so we knew what topics to avoid: this included anything against politicians, the Communist Party and the federal state of Yugoslavia.”<sup>5</sup> Midhat Ajanović confirms this, as well: “In Yugoslavia, the ideology of socialist realism in art was crossed very early, so that the censorship scissors were much less sharp than in other countries of the so-called socialist system. Instead of censorship, a kind of self-censorship actually developed in Yugoslavia, which in practice meant that the limits within which one could manoeuvre were more or less known. And more importantly, that these borders were largely accepted.”<sup>6</sup> Fear of prison sentences, psychological torture and the loss of livelihood led to self-censorship during Yugoslavia. More recently, in the Republic of Croatia, self-censorship is most often a consequence of fear of losing media sponsors or corporations that pay for advertisements, i.e. because of disrespect to powerful political parties.

One of the fundamental documents that opposes various forms of censorship and seeks to protect the right to expression is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948. In the Declaration, freedom of speech, media and religion are guaranteed to all as part of international law. In practice, this right is constantly violated in numerous

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3 Radina Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu* [Monopoly on the Truth] (Beograd: Clio, 2016), 14–15. All translations are by the author.

4 “Self-censorship,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, accessed April 20, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-censorship>.

5 Maureen Furniss, *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics* (London: Chapman University, John Libbey and Company Pty Ltd, 1988), 170.

6 Midhat Ajanović, *Animacija i realizam* [Animation and Realism] (Zagreb: Hrvatski filmski savez, 2004), 144.

ways, ranging from mild and sophisticated measures to extremely cruel regime restrictions. In Yugoslavia, the 1946 Constitution guaranteed freedom of the press, speech, association and public assembly, as well as freedom of scientific and artistic work (Articles 25 and 27), but Article 47 stipulates that it is illegal and punishable to use civil rights to change or violate the constitutional order. In democratic Croatia, since its proclamation in 1991 we have witnessed various forms of non-institutional censorship, as well as the indignation against it – as has been the case throughout the world over the past three decades.

## THE HISTORY OF CENSORING CARTOONS IN CROATIA

In Croatia, one of the earliest texts that shaped public opinion through the press and in relation to the problem of censorship dates from 1840. It was published in the entertainment and educational journal *Croatia*.<sup>7</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the popularity of cartoons and caricatures grew through Europe, but restrictions on their content also increased. In the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, cartoonists were not allowed to ridicule the emperor and his family, or late members of the imperial family. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cartoons and caricatures were popular for several reasons: their straightforward message (or mockery), the fact that cartoons could be understood by many illiterate or semi-literate customers (who were at the time in a huge percentage), and the fact that censors often did not understand the strength of cartoons, and therefore frequently censored texts while leaving cartoons untouched.<sup>8</sup>

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After the 1848 revolution led to demands for civil liberties in a large part of Europe, the result was the abolition of censorship in the Habsburg Monarchy. At the same time in France and Germany, there was a huge increase in the number of periodicals (around 200 newspapers were launched in Paris in a few months, and 90 in Berlin). During the same year 12 new newspapers appeared in Croatia.<sup>9</sup> However, this freedom did not last long. In January 1849 Austria began declaring repressive measures, and in April control of foreign press and soon censorship began to play a significant role again. In the 1880s, humourist magazines began to appear in Croatia, all with a short lifespan, among them, *Bič* (1883–1885) and *Satir* (1901–1902). Such publications were often affected by censorship.

Censorship continued in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from 1921 to 1929. Opposition party papers were the primary targets of this censorship, but a variety of other forms of press was also affected, ranging

7 Editorial text, *Croatia*, no. 1-2 (1840), 1. For more about the magazine *Croatia*, see: Marina Fruk, "Hrvatski listovi na njemačkom jeziku u službi ilirske ideje" [Croatian Newspapers in the German Language in the Service of the Illyrian Idea], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 3 (2000): 433–446.

8 Catherine Horel, "Austria-Hungary 1867–1914," in *Political Censorship of the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Robert Justin Goldstein and Andrew M. Need (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 108–109.

9 Vlasta Švoger, "Novinstvo kao javni medij sredinom 19. stoljeća u Hrvatskoj" [Journalism as a Public Medium in the Middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Croatia], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 3 (2000): 453.

from professional journals to humoristic magazines, such as *Koprive*, *Peckalo* and *Rovaš*.<sup>10</sup> In 1929, when King Alexander changed the name of the state to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, censorship started to serve the ends of unitarist politics, and censorship of cartoons continued. For example, some issues of *Koprive* were banned in 1933, 1936 and 1939.<sup>11</sup>

Radina Vučetić has argued that understanding censorship in socialist Yugoslavia is “inseparable from understanding the censorship and its mechanisms in the countries behind the Iron Curtain.”<sup>12</sup> The unpredictability of censorship during this period was due to the fact that the rules of censorship were not explicitly prescribed, and the ruling party constantly censored in various institutional and non-institutional ways. “The absence of clearly defined rules has, in fact, made the artist’s fear even greater, for what would be allowed one year would be forbidden next; what is tolerated in literature is not in painting; what was allowed to one artist, would cause another to go to prison, and it was precisely all these ‘fluidities’ of the censorship system that were present in Yugoslavia.”<sup>13</sup> The basic mechanism for press control was Agitprop (State Propaganda Information Institution). Katarina Spehnjak emphasized that:

Agitprop has a special place to control the media and publishing – from the ‘Agitprop’ the directives go to editors and publishing companies, sometimes in writing, and more often orally through ‘indebted’ persons. All media are state-owned, some of them explicitly in hands of Communist Party, while most of them operate under the cover of the People’s Front. The newspaper, the most important media at the time, was given the role of ‘teacher and organiser, not critic’, and suggested thematic coverage of certain problems and, in particular, the way of presentation.<sup>14</sup>

The problem for researchers persists today, because the vast majority of censored cartoons from the period of Yugoslavia was not preserved, rejected cartoons regularly sank into the archives of editors, and, in the end (most often due to the closure of the paper or magazine), all such material would be thrown away and destroyed.

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10 Ivana Šubić Kovačević, “Kontrola i zabrana oporbenog zagrebačkog tiska 1921.–1929.” [Control and Ban of the Opposition Zagreb Press, 1921–1929], *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, no. 48 (2016): 336.

11 Data according to analytical inventory of Hrvatski državni arhiv in Zagreb [Croatian State Archive, hereafter cited as HDA]. *Cenzura i zabrana tiska 1913.–1941*. [Censorship and Press Ban 1913–1941], Number of collection: HR HDA 1361, inv. no. 1-3524, HDA.

12 Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu*, 32.

13 Ibid., 34.

14 Katarina Spehnjak, “Vlast i javnost u Hrvatskoj 1945.–1952.” [Government and the Public in Croatia 1945–1952], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 3 (2000): 508.



## EXAMPLES OF CENSORED CARTOONS FROM THE PERIOD OF SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA

During the entire period of socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1990) censorship officially did not exist, yet it was constantly present, with variations in the level of pressure.<sup>15</sup> A small number of sources tell us about censoring cartoons. Apart from the fact that the editors did not keep their archives, censored texts as well as cartoons were destroyed due to the fear of compromising those who kept them. Rarely, a cartoonist kept an orderly archive of his works. Due to cartoonists' high productivity, they often did not include a date or place of publication, nor did they note whether a specific cartoon was rejected or not. Therefore, we are left to rely on data published in individual journals and publications, as well as data obtained from personal contacts with cartoonists.

After the end of World War II, September 16, 1945, the first issue of the humoristic satirical weekly *Kerempuh* was published. *Kerempuh* was issued weekly until 1955, when it continued to be published as a monthly magazine until 1958.<sup>16</sup> There are several testimonies about the *Kerempuh's* work; all of them agree that there were topics that were forbidden for humor and satire (e.g. Tito, communist leaders, communist ideology, Partisan movement, etc.), as well as desirable themes for ridicule (e.g. Catholic Church and Cardinal Stepinac, Capitalism, King Petar Karadorđević, politicians from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Alfred Pal's memories are a major contribution to understanding of the functioning of print media in the first years of post-war Yugoslavia, especially in reference to *Kerempuh*: "When cartoons and texts were ready for printing, Fadil [Hadžić] would put them in a bag and take them to the Agitprop CK in Dežmanova street. There, Marin Franičević and others would review them and say: this can go, this can't."<sup>17</sup>

Although each republic within Yugoslavia had its own media control centres, fundamental requirements came from Belgrade, from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia – Administration for Agitation and Propaganda. Today, it is interesting to read the conclusions this administration drew, especially when it comes to cartoons. A meeting devoted to the "Questions of Our Cartoons and Caricature" was held on May 18, 1949. The following passage from the meeting notes reflects the concept of cartoon function at the time:

In full measure, Lenin's famous thought also refers to the cartoon, which reads: 'Art belongs to the people. It needs to enter its deep

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15 Ivana Hebrang Grgić, "Zakoni o tisku u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do danas" [Press Laws in Croatia from 1945 until Today], *Vjesnik bibliotekara Hrvatske*, no. 43 (2000): 117–134.

16 More about the significance of the magazine *Kerempuh* in: Frano Dulibić, "*Kerempuh* – karikatura i strip u prvim godinama socijalističke Jugoslavije" [*Kerempuh* – Caricature and Comics in the First Years of Socialist Yugoslavia], *Bosona*, no. 11 (2022): 125–135.

17 Alfred Pal also remembers the banning of certain issues of *Kerempuh*, but this has not been confirmed by archival research so far. Collectors own all numbers. Bogdan Žižić (comp.), *Gorući grm: Alfred Pal – život i djelo* [The Burning Bush] (Zagreb: Durieux, 2011), 99–100.

roots into the centre of broad masses of the people. It needs to be understandable and dear to the masses. It should unite the feelings, thoughts and will of those masses and lift them up...’ Moreover, due to their symbiosis with journalism, cartoons and caricature have far greater possibilities than any other artform to fulfil the requirements Marxist-Leninist aesthetic puts before art as a whole. Properly understood, it has all the conditions of an immediate and powerful agitation propaganda tool in the fight for the new and against the old. It has all the elements of a strong lever to raise the socio-political awareness of the broadest layers of people.<sup>18</sup>

One of the most well-known cases of banning an issue of a periodical involved the popular weekly *VUS*, published on December 10, 1958, due to the caricature printed on the second page. This was a caricature depicting Khrushchev at a barber with a painting of Stalin hanging on the wall (**fig. 1**). The barber asks Khrushchev: “Are we still shaving the moustache, comrade Nikita?” Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev became prime minister of the USSR in March of that year. He was in favour of de-Stalinization, but failed to implement reforms, and the caricature alluded to the dilemma over whether or not to move Soviet Union away from Stalin’s politics. After the cartoon



**Fig 1.** Oto Reisinger, *Brkove još uvijek brijemo, tovariš Nikita?* [We're Still Shaving the Moustache, Comrade Nikita?], in: *VUS*, December 10, 1958, 2.

18 Branka Doknić, Milić F. Petrović and Ivan Hofman, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1945.–1952. Zbornik dokumenata, Knjiga 2* [Cultural Policy of Yugoslavia 1945–1952. Collection of documents, 2<sup>nd</sup> book] (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 2009), 125.

was published, the Russians protested through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy in Belgrade, and this resulted in decision to withdraw the *VUS* from the market.<sup>19</sup> Since the issue was available from Tuesday evening to Friday when the decision was made, the circulation was almost sold out. Editor-in-chief Frane Barbieri and the author of the cartoon, Oto Reisinger, were summoned to a hearing at the District Court, but without consequences.<sup>20</sup>

In 1998, Josip Grbelja published his book *Censorship in the Croatian Newspaper, 1945–1990*. Grbelja's research cited numerous examples and variants of state censorship or direct supervision of newspapers by state services.<sup>21</sup> He cites several examples of press control and bans between 1952 and 1972, and in the context of cartoons and satire, Grbelja mentions the humoristic-satirical magazine *Paradoks*, which was published from 1966–1968. The problem was with double issue 4-5 from 1966. Grbelja writes that “the District Public Prosecutor's Office Zagreb, referring to Article 53 of the Press Law, by its decision, No KTR604/66 of 6 July 1966, temporarily prohibited the distribution of the *Paradoks* humoristic-satirical newspaper (double issue 4-5 of July 10, 1966).”<sup>22</sup> According to the Public Prosecutor's Office, *Paradoks* had published: “a series of writings and drawings that seriously offend morality, describing in a humiliating way the measures of economic reform, and in a tone that disturbed citizens, creating distrust in the taken measures.”<sup>23</sup> Editor-in-chief Pajo Kanižaj was detained for three months, and co-founder Lazo Goluža travelled to France abruptly to avoid prosecution. *Paradoks* then changed its editor-in-chief, but after 19 issues, it was abolished in 1968.

Today, it is difficult to understand why the cartoons published in the 1966 double issue of *Paradoks* (4-5) irritated the censors so much. Cartoonist Ivan Pahernik published a cartoon that plays with nationalism by depicting two characters capturing a “dangerous” woman is wearing a dress with a checkerboard pattern, alluding to the Croatian coat of arms; in the end they play chess on her dress. Zlatko Grgić drew a cartoon titled *Monkey Business* in which he ridiculed the employment of incompetent people through party ties. Finally, the caricature by Ante Zaninović *Cross section of an average Yugoslav* illustrates hybridity, i.e. the identity of the average Yugoslav as a combination of incompatible elements, a domestic Frankenstein, which ridicules the efforts of the Communist Party to create a perfect Yugoslav citizen (**fig. 2**). Together,

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19 Frano Dulibić, *Oto Reisinger: retrospektiva*, 2. – 28. rujna 2008 [Oto Reisinger: A Retrospective, September 2–28, 2008] (Zagreb: Galerija Klovičevi dvori, 2008), 47–49.

20 In court, Barbieri and Reisinger were asked if they had any objection to the issue of the magazine being withdrawn from sale, to which they said they had no objection and were released. Dean Sinovčić, “Oto Reisinger – šest desetljeća rada doajena karikature” [Oto Reisinger – Six Decades of Work by the Doyen of Cartoons], *Nacional*, no. 544, April 17, 2006.

21 Josip Grbelja, *Cenzura u hrvatskom novinstvu 1945.–1990*. [Censorship in Croatian Journalism 1945–1990] (Zagreb: Naklada Jurčić, 1998), 214.

22 *Ibid.*, 137.

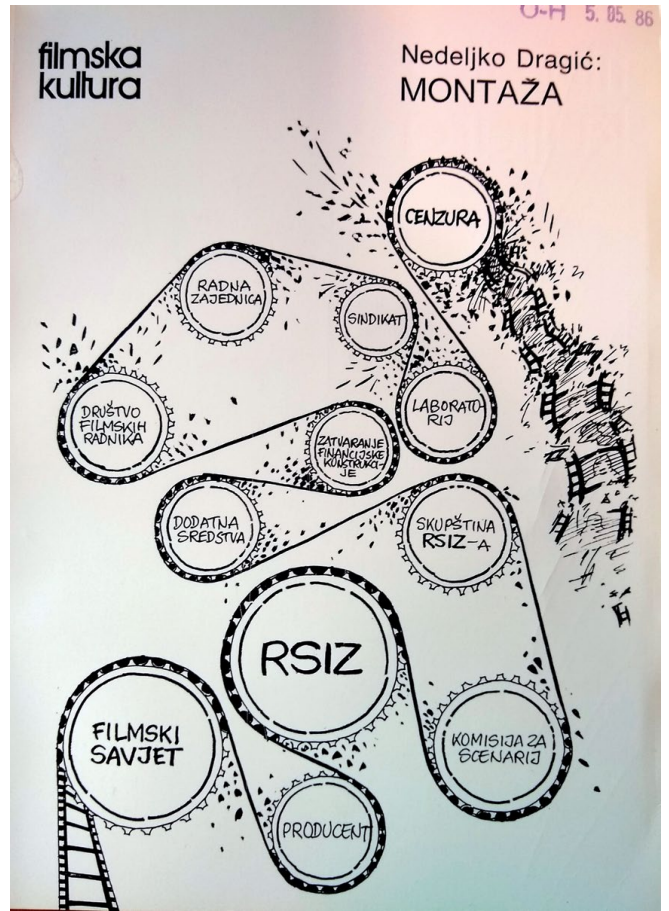
23 “Štampa” [Press], o. c. OJT. KTR 604/66, July 6, 1966, Fonds Iljko Karaman, HDA; according to: Grbelja, *Cenzura u hrvatskom novinstvu*, 137.





Fig. 2. Ante Zaninović, *Presjek kroz prosječnog Jugoslavena* (A Cross Section of the Average Yugoslav), in: *Paradoks*, no. 4-5 (1966), 31.

Fig. 3. Nedeljko Dragić, *Cenzura* (Censorship), in: *Filmska kultura*, no. 157-159 (1986), 137.



along with the sexual explicit of the cover, these provocations led to the decision to ban the issue of *Paradoks* and withdraw it from the sale.

Despite the liberalisation of society and the permission of various content in the media during the 1980s in Yugoslavia, censorship was still present in different ways. One example of mocking the persistence of censorship is the excellent cartoon by Nedeljko Dragić for the magazine *Filmska kultura*, published in 1986. Cartoons as a medium perfectly served Dragić in his efforts to expose a large number of problems that challenge film production, with censorship as the biggest, most critical problem. The cartoon was used as the metaphor for the projector through whose gear wheels the film tape runs through. Dragić depicted a series of gears with names on them (in an imaginary projector) through which the film tape must pass (screenplay commission, producer, financial construction, trade union, laboratory, etc.), sometimes getting stuck just a little, elsewhere sticking a bit more. Finally, the last gear, which represents censorship, mercilessly grinds the tape and destroys the film. This is a rare example of a cartoon that simultaneously reflects liberalisation, because we see that criticism is permitted in the form of the cartoon itself, but also reflects the political context in which films passed through the scissors of censorship, up until the breakup of Yugoslavia (fig. 3).

The Split-based humoristic-satirical magazine *Berekin* was launched by the cartoonist Tonči Kerum in 1979. *Berekin's* satirical content relied on what

Fig. 4. Ico Voljevica, *Najbolji su Albanci iz peći*  
(The Best Albanians are from the Furnace),  
in: *Berekin*, no. 18 (1987), 28.



was considered characteristic of Split, i.e. a Mediterranean type of humour. However, its content often attracted the attention of the censors, and *Berekin* was included in the list of public prosecutor's notices in Croatia in 1983: "The section for information and publishing activities of OK SSRNH Split was proposed to 'make a discussion of the socially unacceptable content of the humoristic-satirical magazine *Berekin*' (new issue), because it contains 'offensive and vulgar texts and cartoons'."<sup>24</sup> In 1987, *Berekin* shook the censors even harder. On November 6, 1987, the District Court in Titovo Užice banned the 18<sup>th</sup> issue, but the ban took effect after the entire circulation of the issue was sold out. The reason for the ban was a caricature depicting two Serbs, stereotypically depicted in national clothing, standing near a bakery furnace. One of them is saying "the best Albanians are from the furnace" (all written in capital letters, **fig. 4**). The word *peć* [furnace] is ambiguous in Croatian and Serbian: On one hand, it can refer to the town of Peć (in Kosovo), and, on the other, to a furnace; understood in this second meaning, it provocatively suggests that "Serbian people are anti-Albanian," as Miroslav Ćopić wrote in the Belgrade newspaper *Politika*.<sup>25</sup> On November 7, 1987, the Split-based newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* published a short text entitled *Prohibited Berekin and subtitled Prohibited Distribution of the 18<sup>th</sup> Issue of Berekin for Writings and Illustrations that Insult the Reputation of the SFRY, the Assembly of the SFRY, the Presidency of the SFRY and its Representatives*.<sup>26</sup> Ico Voljevica's cartoon published in *Berekin* was the result of the political tensions of the time. It is a provocative political cartoon, politically incorrect, but it still points out the tensions

24 Grbelja, *Cenzura u hrvatskom novinstvu*, 189.

25 More about that case: *Ibid.*, 207.

26 "Zabranjen Berekin" [Forbidden Berekin], *Slobodna Dalmacija*, November 7, 1987.



between Serbs and Albanians, and indicates that this problem had not been solved yet. As so often is the case, it was easier to ban the cartoon than to deal with the problem.

## A COMPARISON OF CENSORSHIP OF SINGLE-PANEL CARTOONS IN SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA AND CAPITALIST CROATIA

Borivoj Dovniković's replies to the question, "What was it like in socialism, and how it is in capitalism?" in the following way:

Today in capitalism (in Croatia) there are several permanent satirical cartoonists, while other cartoonists create their works as amateurs. On the other hand, in their essence cartoons have experienced their true nature – freedom of expression. There are no restrictions on the choice of the target and the limit of satire, although this is also dependent on the owner of the magazine. We were aware of the limitations in socialism: we should not have attacked or ridiculed political leaders and the social system. No editor ever returned any of my cartoons to me. And Ico Voljevica confided to me in the 1990s and told me that out of the ten proposed *Grga* cartoons, the editor returned four of them.<sup>27</sup> This, of course, is not a journalistic manner, but it is a fact that such things happened. Stipe Šuvar never refused my finished cartoon for his monthly.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, Oto Reisinger confirms that the democratic multi-party system of Croatia did not change the situation for cartoonists much, and that his caricatures were sometimes rejected in the new Republic of Croatia because the editor would say: "It wouldn't be nice to offend minister."<sup>29</sup>

"Perhaps today there is nominally greater freedom, and the author can be much more independent in the choice of topics and freer in terms of expression, but even today it is not easy. In the old system, there was political censorship, while today there is hidden political and much more economic censorship, censorship happens because of certain topics, if you step in the sphere of the economy, due to the people who sponsor and finance the media", explains Nikola Plečko, who publishes cartoons daily, and sometimes has his cartoons rejected.<sup>30</sup> In other words, if you have a critical and satirical approach towards

27 *Grga* cartoons, made by Ico Voljevica (as well as Pero by Reisinger), were very popular cartoons (political and everyday social satires) that appeared in several daily newspapers seven days a week, and were produced for over more than four decades (from the 1950s until the end of century).

28 Kristina Olujić, "U svojoj devedesetoj godini najstariji sam aktivni karikaturist na svijetu" [At the Age of Ninety, I Am the Oldest Active Cartoonist in the World], interview with Borivoj Dovniković, *Nacional*, February 1, 2020, online edition: <https://www.nacional.hr/u-svojoj-devedesetoj-godini-najstariji-sam-aktivni-karikaturist-na-svijetu/>, accessed July 17, 2021.

29 From a conversation with Oto Reisinger in June 2008 for the purposes of the retrospective exhibition in Gallery Klovićevi Dvori, held in 2008; *Oto Reisinger, Retrospektiva* [Oto Reisinger: A Retrospective], Galerija Klovićevi Dvori, Zagreb 2008, 49.

30 Mladen Obrenović, "Ko je protjerao karikaturu" [Who Banished Caricature], *Al Jazeera*, accessed March 18, 2022, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net teme/2014/8/22/ko-je-protjerao-karikaturu>.

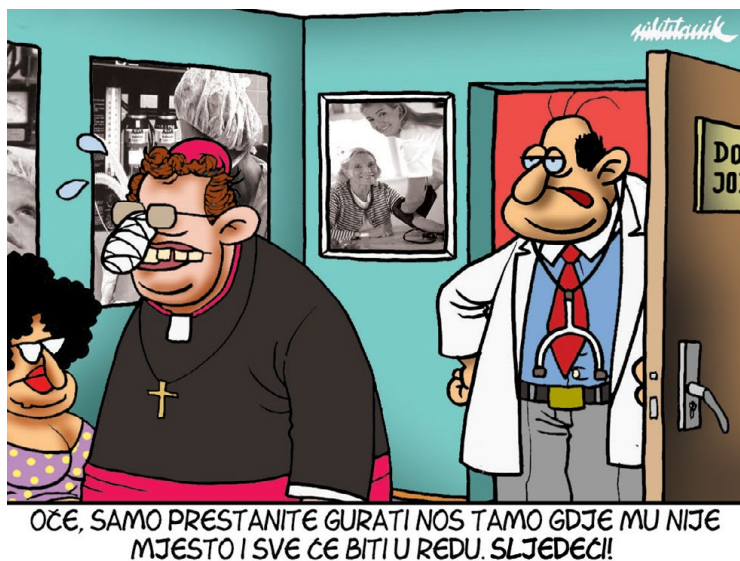


Fig. 5. Nik Titanik, *Guranje nosa* (Sticking the Nose In), rejected 2007.

the corporations (or their owners) who pay for advertisements in the media, they will terminate their contracts and the media will be left without a source of finance. The fact that the problem of censorship, and even more self-censorship, is constantly present, and that it is not only a matter for historical research, is shown by the gatherings on this topic that are occasionally organized in Croatia. For instance, a roundtable titled *Self-Censorship in Socialism and Today*, which primarily dealt with the field of literature, was held in Pula in 2013 as part of a book festival. The questions raised on that occasion speak for themselves: “How rigorous was the infamous communist censorship in the era of Yugoslavia, and how much is it

really just a problem of the past? Are the societies and cultures that replaced communism perhaps affected by a more dangerous (self) censorship than the one that existed in the last phase of the communist regimes?”<sup>31</sup> These issues permeate all areas of culture, from cartoons and journalism to literature and film (fig. 5).

The caricatures of President Tito and President Tuđman by excellent portrait and political cartoonist Petar Pismestrović, are a superb example of censorship and self-censorship (fig. 6, fig. 7). In correspondence we had in 2021, Pismestrović described how he drew Tito’s cartoon for the weekly *Kviz* in 1973, and many years later, in 1990, Tuđman’s for the newspaper *Vjesnik*:

Fig. 6. Petar Pismestrović, *Tito*, 1973, rejected by the editor in chief of the magazine *Kviz*, first published in Austria 2013.



Fig. 7. Petar Pismestrović, *Tuđman*, 1990, rejected by the editor in chief of the daily paper *Vjesnik*.



31 Marko Stričević, “Je li gora YU-cenzura ili hrvatska autocenzura?” [What is Worse: YU-Censorship or Croatian Self-Censorship?], *T-portal*, December 6, 2013, accessed March 22, 2022, <https://www.tportal.hr/kultura/clanak/je-li-gora-yu-cenzura-ili-hrvatska-autocenzura-20131206>.

My Tito cartoon was rejected on the grounds that Tito can only be drawn by selected artists. To caricature Tito was even less desirable (than an ordinary portrait). In a period of change, I drew President Tuđman as a cowboy returning from America. That caricature was rejected because it insulted the character of the president. I didn't know that the law protecting the character and actions (of a leader) also applied to Tuđman. Now, whether it was censorship or the fear and arbitrariness of the editor-in-chief, it is difficult to say... It was the same mentality as during Tito's rule.<sup>32</sup>

## THE CENSORSHIP, ABOLITION AND DISAPPEARANCE OF POLITICAL CARTOONS IN THE LAST THREE DECADES

Are there differences between censoring political cartoons, their disappearance, and abolishing them entirely? What connects them? It is clear to everyone what censorship and self-censorship are, and that they occur at different levels even today, and will continue to occur tomorrow as well. The cancellation of political cartoons happens because editors-in-chief around the world believe that cartoons are no longer desirable content, especially in print media. The reason for the disappearance of cartoons is not the lower popularity of cartoons or the cost of their publication, but above all the discomfort of editors-in-chief and publishers who are afraid of offending the centres of power. The disappearance of political caricature occurs through the synergy of self-censorship and the abolition of the regular publication of cartoons in certain media; this process of disappearance is also often accompanied by the view that cartoons as a form of expression are a thing of the past, and that they have been replaced by memes and other artistic forms. It is obvious that all three mentioned components have contributed to caricature losing its basic support (printed media), and that it has not yet sufficiently adapted to the internet. The disappearance of cartoons and caricatures from the media is evidenced by the numerous statements by cartoonists in the media or in texts they occasionally publish.

One example of censorship in the last three decades is related to the work of Srećko Puntarić, one of the most experienced cartoonists in Croatian print media. He drew a medieval tower with a king and a court jester, who remarks that there are still a few medals left and asks if anyone else who doesn't get it? Nothing seemed controversial to Puntarić until he heard that the editor-in-chief had been fired because of this cartoon. The controversy stemmed from

32 From correspondence with Peter Pismestrovčić, held in June 2021, whom I thank for all of the information and cartoons he provided. About the problems caused by his caricatures, see more in: Ivor Fuka, "Zaboravljene karikature olovnih vremena: 'Franjo Tuđman se bunio što mu crtam kriva usta'" [Forgotten Caricatures of Leaden Times: "Franjo Tuđman Protested that I Was Drawing His Mouth Crooked"], *Lupiga*, May 4, 2021, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://lupiga.com/vijesti/zaboravljene-karikature-olovnih-vremena-franjo-tudjman-se-bunio-sto-mu-crtam-kriva-usta>.



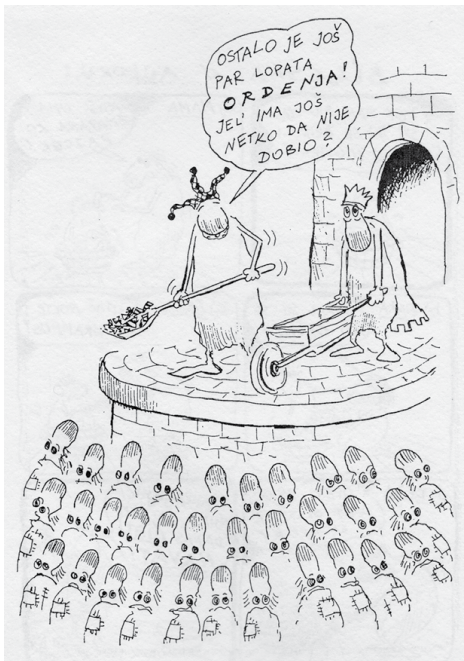


Fig. 8. Srećko Puntarić, untitled, in: *Hrvatski obzor*, 1998.

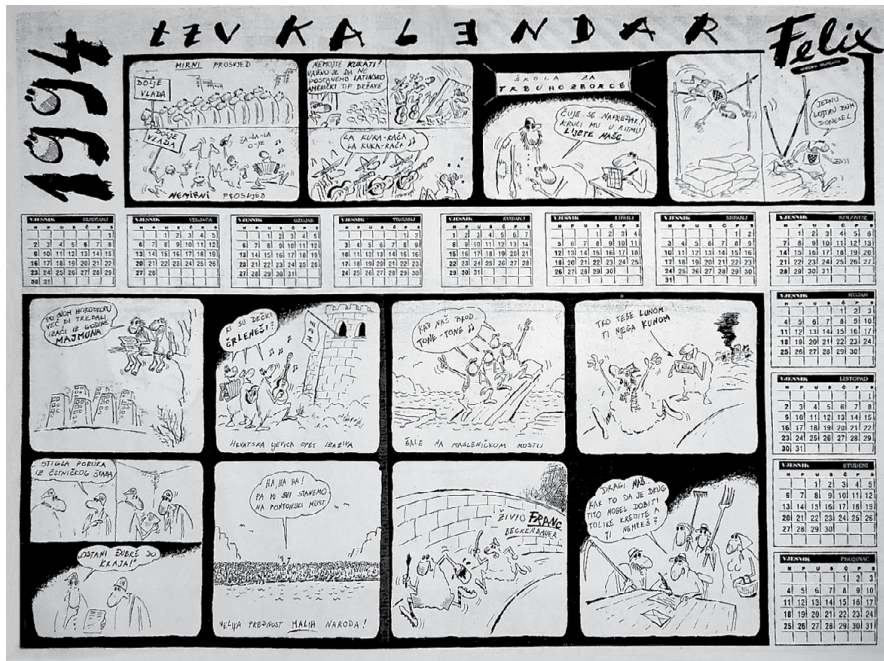


Fig. 9. Srećko Puntarić, *Kalendar za 1994* (Calendar for 1994), in: *Vjesnik*, January 1, 1994.

the fact that the cartoon was accidentally published at the exact time when foreign delegations were receiving medals from President Tuđman in the Presidential palace (fig. 8).

Another unique example is a calendar for 1994 featuring twelve of Puntarić's cartoons. In 1993, Puntarić's cartoons were rejected twelve times by the daily newspaper *Vjesnik*. On the last day of 1993, the editor Krešimir Fijačko announced that the calendar for 1994 would include these cartoons, and explained why they were not originally published: "Frankly, we thought it was too harsh, or that it was not the right moment (which is a nicer expression for lack of courage). And then we mustered up the courage and decided to use these cartoons in a manly way. Admittedly, we still are not publishing them, but will only show them to the readers of our New Year's issue of *Vjesnik*, so that they can see why we did not publish them last year."<sup>33</sup> This is a witty example of editorial self-criticism, which explicitly states that the timing of publication is one of the most important components of the power of political commentary by cartoons. Sometimes it's enough to move away from a certain topic for only a month, when it doesn't even have half of the effect compared to the *right moment* for the topic that the cartoon satirizes (fig. 9).

In 2019, Petar Pismestrović shared on social network his concern about the position of cartoons in the media, prompted by Patrick Chappate's article about the decision to no longer publish political cartoons in *The New York Times*:

It's sad what's happening in the NYT – as fellow cartoonist Patrick Chappate writes – a newspaper that occasionally published my work and was an example of freedom of expression, at least for us in Europe. This is just proof that cartoons are really a *dangerous*

33 Krešimir Fijačko, "Felix Nova Godina" [Happy (Felix) New Year], *Vjesnik*, December 31, 1993.

*medium* in danger of disappearing. Obviously, in some countries, the opponents of the critical word have taken positions and become so strong that they can do what they want, even expel cartoons from the pages of newspapers. Why? The pretext that times have changed and there is no money for cartoons is just an empty excuse. Cartoonists have never been adequately paid for their work and could only live off their work, but not get rich. Behind everything there is obviously politics that interferes with public opinion and that, like an octopus, has spread its tentacles and is crawling into every pore of society. They think that they need to get rid of the unsuitable ones who are still spoiling their image, among them are obviously cartoonists, perhaps first of all. In the end, when there are only *acceptable cartoonists*, it will definitely be the end of critical thought.<sup>34</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The examples presented in this chapter confirm that the problem of censorship in various forms is constantly present. What is particularly worrying is the fact that the cartoons that have been created in democracy are gradually disappearing from the media – this points to the growing shortcomings of democracy, both in the example of the cartoons in Croatia and globally.

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Since the 1990s in the Republic of Croatia, the influence of cartoons and caricatures in the media steadily weakened, in accordance with the decline in circulation of print media to which the cartoons were linked. Moreover, cartoons are published less and less in the remaining print media. At the same time, there are fewer and fewer cartoonists, especially those who deal with political cartoons. Therefore, in the last twenty years, it is almost impossible to find an example of cartoon censorship, except for some examples of editorial self-censorship. Caricature is a tool that calls for a critical reflection of reality, and this includes all social topics as well as the questioning of previous values or authorities. But without true questioning and critical reflection, the media lose their stance and principles, and feed exclusively on sensationalism and spectacle. Patrick Chappatte's words seem to confirm this: "If cartoons are a prime target it's because of their nature and exposure: they are an encapsulated opinion, a visual shortcut with an unmatched capacity to touch the mind. That's their strength, and their vulnerability. They might also be a revealer of something deeper. More than often, the real target, behind the cartoon, is the media that published it."<sup>35</sup> At a time when the complex relationship between

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34 Published on Pismestrovic's Facebook profile, under the title: "Moj komentar uz tekst Patrika Chappatea, vrijeme nesloboda ili kako ubiti karikaturu" [My Comment on Patrik Chappatte's Text, the Time of Unfreedom or How to Kill a Cartoon and a Caricature], June 11, 2019.

35 Patrick Chappatte, "The End of Political Cartoons at The New York Times," *Chappatte Globecartoon*, June 10, 2019, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://www.chappatte.com/en/the-end-of-political-cartoons-at-the-new-york-times>.



freedom of expression, hate speech and responsibility for freedom of public expression is insufficiently considered, democracy suffers, and the possibility of a critical understanding of democratic realities is absent. There is no doubt that the political cartoon is an *endangered species*, but more and more examples indicate that it will survive in the form of online political cartoons. Such online political cartoons are present across the internet, and it is only a question of time as to when they will regain importance.

Another key question is whether the disappearance of cartoons from the media is caused by the avoidance of responsibility by editors and cartoonists, or whether it is part of the trend of cancel culture.<sup>36</sup> The organizer of an international caricaturist competition, The Euro-Mediterranean Centre Librexpression, which focused on the topic of “Cancel Culture and Political Correctness” raised this question: “Where will the new taboos of political correctness take us?” The text accompanying the competition highlights a key question in its title: *Can cartoons survive?*<sup>37</sup> This is a question that no one can answer, not even those who think that cartoons will survive on the web. Of course, this is related to the issue of the global censorship in all areas of human activity. On October 20, 2019, almost all newspapers in Australia were published with blacked-out lines at their front pages as a protest by journalists against censorship. On March 31, 2022, *The Guardian* published an article entitled “‘Out of Touch’: Children’s Authors Describe Increasing Censorship of books on diversity.”<sup>38</sup> In May 2022, journalists of RTV Slovenia went on strike due to pressure on journalists, violations of professional standards, damage to their reputation in the public, and, most importantly, because the public interest is increasingly endangered. One can only hope that Slavoj Žižek’s prophecy will not come true: “We are moving into a new, controlled society worse than old totalitarianism.”<sup>39</sup> The disappearance of political cartoons could be the first warning sign.

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36 “What’s arguably even worse, is that cancel culture and social media outrage is making editors afraid of satire, reducing the number of paid spaces cartoonists have to publish their work, or watering down the cartoons that are published. Both not good for the profession.” Tjeerd Royaards, “Cartoons and Cancel Culture,” *Cartoon Movement*, September 3, 2021, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://blog.cartoonmovement.com/2021/09/editorial-cartoons-and-cancel-culture.html>.

37 “Cancel Culture and Political Correctness: Can Cartoons Survive?,” *Voxeurop*, September 15, 2021, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://voxeurop.eu/en/cancel-culture-and-political-correctness-can-cartoons-survive/>.

38 Libby Brooks, “‘Out of Touch’: Children’s Authors Describe Increasing Censorship of Books on Diversity,” *Guardian*, March 31, 2022, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/mar/31/childrens-authors-describe-worrying-trend-of-censorship-of-books-on-diversity/>.

39 “‘We Are Moving into a New, Controlled Society Worse than Old Totalitarianism’ – Zizek on Google leak,” *Azerbaijan24*, August 17, 2019, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://www.azerbaycan24.com/en/we-are-moving-into-a-new-controlled-society-worse-than-old-totalitarianism-zizek-on-google-leak/>.



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## EXAMPLES OF EXPERIMENTAL ART PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL COLLABORATIONS DURING THE 1960s AND 1970s IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

### Abstract

*This research is divided into two case studies. The first includes examples of radical neo-avant-garde artistic practice in Poland and former Czechoslovakia, which were banned for ideological reasons during the 1960s and 1970s. Its basis is the Marinko Sudac Collection. The aim is to contextualise the reality of experimental artists in these two countries, where governing structures controlled the domestic art scene and projects abroad. The second study looks at the Gallery of Contemporary Art and the Students' Centre Gallery in Zagreb as places to meet and exchange ideas between artists in the specific political context of the former Yugoslavia. The study examines examples of international projects organised in the 1960s and 1970s, emphasising the participation of neo-avant-garde artists from former Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary who managed to circumvent regime politics.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The increased interest in post-war Eastern and Central European art that appeared after the fall of the Berlin Wall resulted in many relevant but selective studies, exhibitions and publications. However, experts often used the Western canon as an interpretative model for evaluating the art of the countries “behind the Iron Curtain.” With such an approach, the dominant relationship between the West and the East, shown as the relationship between the artistic centre and the periphery, always came to the fore in comparative analyses. Therefore, curatorial concepts were persistent in finding similarities between Eastern European art and Western art, that is, to what extent Eastern European art gravitated towards the West. However, such a point of view cannot be applied to the artistic production of Eastern and Central Europe due to the different cultural and historical contexts of its creation, and processes of reception, assimilation, import or export of

artistic ideas should be observed depending on local political and economic conditions.<sup>1</sup>

In this essay we focus on the relationship between the countries of the Eastern Bloc and the former Yugoslavia, which during the Cold War period, and especially after the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, served as a particular point of artistic and intellectual exchange between East and West. The creative work of experimental artists during the 1960s and 1970s behind the Iron Curtain showed great innovation, both in concept and execution. However, it was created within a highly constricted area of functioning, often marginalised, censored, and prohibited. This is juxtaposed with the various exhibiting opportunities that those artists had in the Non-aligned Yugoslavia, whose curators and artists hosted several events featuring their colleagues from the Eastern Bloc.

Thus, some of the questions this chapter aims to answer are related to the Marinko Sudac Collection's strategy of collecting, which serves as a starting point for the research of experimental practices.<sup>2</sup> The Zagreb-based collection focuses primarily on avant-garde art and its legacy in Central and Eastern Europe from 1909 to 1989, encompassing diverse global practices and emphasising both artworks and archival materials. Then, it examines how international exhibitions held in the 1960s and 1970s at the City Gallery of Contemporary Art and the SC Gallery in Zagreb played an essential role in connecting the countries of the Eastern Bloc and the West, and how experimental artists in Eastern and Central Europe managed to bypass totalitarian apparatuses and the imposed dictates of the environment in which they were created and, despite censorship, created and exhibited domestically and abroad. Within this overall context, significant individuals and projects stand out.

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The first part of this essay considers examples of radical experimental practice in the 1960s and 1970s in Eastern and Central Europe from the Marinko Sudac Collection with a particular focus on artists of the unofficial scene, that is, those whose works were subjected to the censorship of totalitarian regimes and the dictates of certain cultural policies. The selected examples show a cross-section of the different types of censorship and marginalisation of artists in Poland and former Czechoslovakia. The second part of the study focuses on the events and international participants from the Eastern Bloc in exhibitions organised during the 1960s and 1970s on the territory of Yugoslavia.

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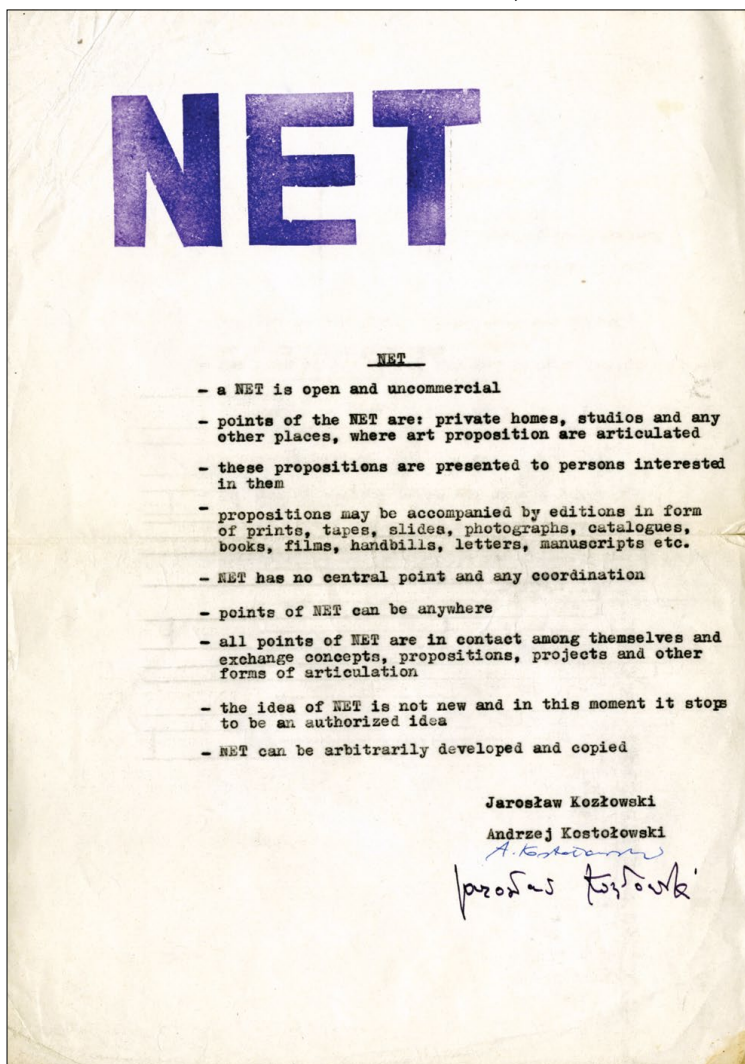
1 Matthias Flügge, Jiří Švestka, *Der Rissim Raum: Positionen der Kunst seit 1945 in Deutschland, Polen, der Slowakei und Tschechien* [Rift in Space: Positions of Art since 1945 in Germany, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic] (Dresden/Berlin: Verl der Kunst, 1994); Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011); Klara Kemp-Welch, *Antipolitics in Central European Art: Reticence as Dissidence under Post-Totalitarian Rule 1956–1989* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013); Klara Kemp-Welch, *Networking the Bloc: Experimental Art in Eastern Europe 1965–1981* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 2018).

2 The Marinko Sudac Collection (Zagreb) focuses on Central and Eastern Europe's radical art and includes all related practices that can be found in the world, from Latin and North America to the Far East. It aims to preserve the cultural heritage of Central and Eastern Europe in its contextual unity and to interweave it into global art history.

## “THE VELVET PRISON”

During the Cold War, art was partly appropriated as a kind of tool of the totalitarian regimes in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, serving as the promoter of their ideological programmes. Cultural issues were under the control of state cultural councils who dictated the artistic paradigm, approved the printing of publications and artistic and other cultural projects at home and abroad. In this sense, any activity that strayed from the mainstream could be interpreted as political activism. Although a regime often perceived it as such, this “art in deviation” was not a way of direct political engagement but a temporary escape for the artists from the then situation.

According to Miklós Haraszti, the artists and intellectuals of 1970s Poland worked in a “velvet prison”<sup>3</sup> as long as they created in the field of pure and politically non-engaged art. Polish conceptual artist Jarosław Kozłowski’s<sup>4</sup> (b. 1945, Śrem) first encounter with censorship took place during his studies.



However, the focus here is on a later instance, the case of *NET*. In 1971, Kozłowski and Andrzej Kostolowski (b. 1940, Buchach) created *NET – An International Network of Artists* and mailed the *NET Manifesto* to artists around the world (fig. 1). Their idea was to encourage the exchange of materials and ideas between artists without any political or geographical boundaries. Kozłowski received many responses and invited ten close friends to his apartment to share these materials with them. After forty minutes, the police arrived and stopped the event. Officially, this closure was due to the fact that the gathering was not registered. As Kozłowski states, the cunningness of Polish law at the time meant that all non-family gatherings had to have official approval. The more likely reason for the arrival of the police is that one of his friends cooperated with the police, and the meeting was considered politically coloured. The works exhibited by Kozłowski were confiscated and only partially returned a year later.

The leader of Polish feminist art, Natalia LL (Lach-Lachowicz; Żywiec, 1937 – Wrocław, 2022), established the PERMAFO gallery in

Fig. 1. Jarosław Kozłowski, Andrzej Kostolowski, *NET Manifesto*, 1971, typewriter text, stamp, paper, Marinko Sudac Collection, Zagreb.

3 Miklós Haraszti, *The Velvet Prison: Artists under State Socialism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1988).

4 See also: Marinko Sudac, ed., *Standstill – Activist Art from the Marinko Sudac Collection* (Zagreb: Institute for the Research of the Avant-Garde, 2011), 264–270.



Wrocław with her then-partner, artist Andrzej Lachowicz, and friends. There she set up her exhibition *Intimate Photography* (1971). The installation consisted of large panels set in the shape of a closed-off screen with doors slightly ajar. The outside panels were lined with Natalia's self-portraits, and the inside ones were explicit photos of lovemaking. The exhibition was closed by a communist censor after being open for just one day, and the installation was removed.<sup>5</sup>

Jerzy Beres (Nowy Sacz, 1930 – Krakow, 2012) was a leader in performance and body art in Poland. His *manifestations* (performances) involved the use of wooden structures and his naked body. Although the mere fact that Beres was naked was enough for communist Poland to condemn his performances, his artwork *Altar of Changes* (1978) was partially censored. It is composed of a windmill-like object equipped with four brooms and a controversial red and white cloth – like the Polish flag. According to Beres: “A censor allowed displaying it only if the white-red textile will disappear. I replaced it with raw linen canvas, and I even thought that I was wrong and there will be no changes in Poland. However, soon it turned out that I was right. And the white-red fabric returned into the *Altar of Changes*.”<sup>6</sup>

## NORMALISATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

<sup>246</sup> In Czechoslovakia, censorship intensified after the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968 and the establishment of a period of normalisation throughout the Czechoslovak territory. “In the resolution of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November of 1972, the committee of the Union of Slovak Visual Artists elaborated a list that denounced a series of subversive artistic activities that took place during the sixties. As a result, their authors were expelled from the Union, their work was excluded from acquisitions in public collections and the artists were banned from participating in exhibitions in Czechoslovakia or abroad.”<sup>7</sup>

The artist Jiří Kolář (Protivín, 1914 – Prague, 2002) was imprisoned for the manuscript of his radical collection of poems *Prometheus' Liver* written in 1950. The collection was discovered in 1953 in the home of the literary historian Václav Černý during a secret police search. Kolář was arrested and spent nine months in prison because of the manuscript, his membership in the group Skupina 42<sup>8</sup> and his friendship with representatives of the Czech Avant-garde who had emigrated. He married Běla Helclová, who took the surname Kolářová

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<sup>5</sup> The censorship of Natalia LL's works also took place in 2014 at the Zlín Regional Gallery, and in 2019, a work from the *Consumer Art* series was removed from the National Museum in Warsaw.

<sup>6</sup> Beres Foundation, *Altar of Changes Spinning Over and Over*, accessed June 24, 2021, <https://vimeo.com/231685296>.

<sup>7</sup> Paula Gortázar, *Transitional Frames: From Normalisation to Democracy Czech and Slovak Art Photography (1968-1998)* (PhD diss., University of Westminster, 2018), 280.

<sup>8</sup> Skupina 42 was a group of artists, theorists and poets founded in Czechoslovakia and active between 1942 and 1948. Its theoretical basis was an article by Jindřich Chalupecký. Titled “The World We Live In,” published in the *Život roku* journal in 1946. See more in Jindřich Chalupecký, “Svět, v němž žijeme”, in: Jindřich Chalupecký, *Obhajoba umění* [Defense of the Arts] (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1991, 68–75.



Fig. 2. Milan Knížák, *Demonstration for One*, 1964, b/w photographs, Marinko Sudac Collection, Zagreb.

in 1949. In 1979, the Kolářs went on a one-year study visit to West Berlin. Kolář was sentenced to one year in prison and lost his property for illegally leaving Czechoslovakia. For this reason, they decided to stay in Paris. Kolářová returned to Prague in 1981, but they did not return together until 1999.

One of the most prominent individuals on the Czechoslovak art scene was the artist, art theorist, professor and curator Jiří Valoch (b. 1946, Brno). Due to his numerous contacts, the relatively peripheral city of Brno hosted exhibitions of some of the most cutting edge types of contemporary art during the 1960s and 1970s. Because of his ties with the West and neighbouring countries, Valoch could not avoid the StB (Státní bezpečnost), i.e. the secret police. As Helena Musilová writes, Valoch was forced to cooperate with the secret police after 1975 under the codename Vaclav.<sup>9</sup> The secret police criticised Valoch for his minimal activity on their behalf. Data shows that he tried to restrict or keep some contacts secret.<sup>10</sup> After the exhibition *Současná česká kresba*<sup>11</sup> (Contemporary Czech Drawing) organised by Valoch in 1980, he was banned from publishing and other public activities.

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Milan Knížák (b. 1940, Plzeň) was one of the first artists to create happenings in the Eastern Bloc, and was also a leading representative of Eastern European Fluxus. He was the head of the Fluxus East division and the founder of the Aktual group. In 1964, in the *Demonstration for One* happening (fig. 2), Knížák lay on the pavement and read a book, eventually scrunching up and burning several pages of it – a clear allusion to strict Czechoslovak censorship laws.<sup>12</sup> During the 1970s, he was followed by the secret police and was imprisoned numerous times.

In the mid-1960s, Eugen Brikcius (b. 1942, Prague) began to organise happenings, leading to a conflict with the totalitarian regime. One of them was

9 Helena Musilová, *Jiří Valoch. Curator, Theoretician, Collector. Years 1965–1980* (Prague: Národní galerie Praha, 2018.), 178.

10 Musilová, *Jiří Valoch*, 178–183.

11 See more in: Helena Musilová, “Současná česká kresba, 1980, Dům umění města Brna – Dům pánů z Kunštátu: Jiří Valoch a možnost realizace kolektivní výstavy v období tzv. normalizace” [Contemporary Czech Drawing, 1980, Brno House of Art – House of Lords of Kubštát: Jiří Valoch and the Possibility of Organizing a Collective Exhibition During the So-Called Normalization Period], *Sešit pro umění, teorii a příbuzné zóny. Vědecko-výzkumné pracoviště Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze*, no. 26 (2019), 64–85.

12 Monica Bauer, “Milan Knížák is Fluxus East’: Aktual and the Found Velvet Dwarf” (Master’s thesis, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1996), 4–5.

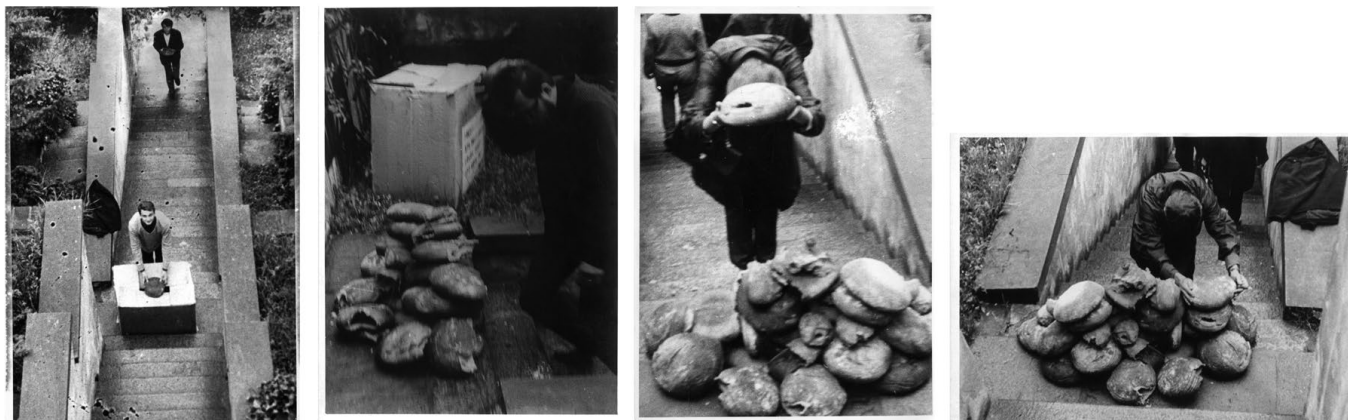


Fig. 3. Eugen Brikcius, *Thanksgiving or the Mystery of Bread*, 1970, b/w photographs, Marinko Sudac Collection, Zagreb.

the *Thanksgiving or the Mystery of Bread* happening (fig. 3). On Thanksgiving 1970, Brikcius wanted to reconstruct a ritual offering to a goddess. The “goddess” sat by a baroque arch at the end of a staircase in a public park. Brikcius and his friends climbed the stairs and laid a pyramid of bread at her feet. The happening was forcibly interrupted by the police, who arrested the participants and confiscated the bread.<sup>13</sup> Brikcius was accused of vandalism and disparaging the symbols of working people. He declared the subsequent court proceedings to be part of the happening itself.<sup>14</sup> He was arrested again in 1973 with three friends for rioting and slandering the nation. One night in a pub, they had a fight with a high-ranking member of the StB and sang a song including the exhortation to “drive the Russians out of Prague.” The StB official called the police, and they ended up in court. Brikcius was sentenced to 14 months in prison. However, an appeal reduced the sentence to eight.<sup>15</sup> He emigrated to Vienna in 1980.

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The *First Open Studio* event marked the emergence of unofficial art, bringing together 19 artists from three different generations, and showcasing a number of neo-avant-garde practices – including conceptual art, body art and actions, land art, installations, Fluxus and kinetic art.<sup>16</sup> The one-day event was organised in the private house of Rudolf Sikora (b. 1946, Žilina), at 32 Tehelna Street in Bratislava, on November 19, 1970. The *First Open Studio* took place in a period of repressive normalisation and ended with a lengthy interrogation of all of the participants by the secret police. As a precaution, the date of the exhibition’s opening was announced as the day after it actually took place. For Sikora, the event was “a reaction to the closure of galleries, an opportunity for political

13 Eugen Brikcius, “The Bread Mysterium Happening,” *Memory of Nations*, accessed June 20, 2021, <https://www.memoryofnations.eu/en/brikcius-eugen-1942>.

14 Andrea Bátorová, *The Art of Contestation. Performative Practices in the 1960s and 1970s in Slovakia* (Bratislava: Comenius University in Bratislava, 2019), 45–46.

15 Eugen Brikcius, “Arrested in a Pub,” *Memory of Nations*, accessed June 20, 2021, <https://www.memoryofnations.eu/en/brikcius-eugen-1942>.

16 See more: Eugénia Sikorová, *1. Otvorený ateliér* [1<sup>st</sup> Open Studio] (Bratislava: Sorosovo centrum súčasného umeni), 2000; Ivana Jankovič, *Slovakian Neo-Avant-Garde. Rudolf Sikora, Július Koller and the First Open Studio* (Zagreb: Institute for the Research of the Avant-Garde), manuscript submitted for publication.

17 Rudolf Sikora, *First Open Studio* [video], 2016, 4’04”, production: Marinko Sudac Collection.

directive after the occupation of the Soviet Army.<sup>17</sup> However, he added that it was not just about fighting the regime, but also stemmed from a desire to exhibit in a non-traditional environment.<sup>18</sup>

Such examples of censorship indicate control over public and private life, which was not always of equal intensity. The presence and activity of artists on the art scene in the Eastern Bloc depended on the degree of the cultural control policies of different countries. The most pronounced control was in Czechoslovakia during normalisation, when experimental artists could not exhibit in public institutions, and the state apparatus often prevented their travels and projects abroad. During this period, artists could exhibit abroad in Poland or non-aligned Yugoslavia, given that trips to the West were infrequent.<sup>19</sup> This led to artists' various initiatives and conceptual projects, but did not stop communications (correspondence and mail art).

## EASTERN BLOC ARTISTS IN YUGOSLAVIAN ART EXHIBITIONS

The political position of the former state of Yugoslavia during the Cold War was different from the socialist countries behind the Iron Curtain. The departure from the Soviet Bloc began in 1948, after which Yugoslav policy focused on the so-called third path of Socialist self-government, balancing between the East and West. In the new circumstances, numerous festivals and events were held in Zagreb<sup>20</sup> during the 1960s and 1970s, presenting contemporary phenomena of experimental music (Music Biennale Zagreb, from 1961), film (Genre Film Festival, 1963–1969) and art that presented artists equally from the East and the West. At the same time, the progressive Zagreb institutions, the City Gallery of Contemporary Art (Gradska galerija suvremene umjetnosti; hereafter cited as GGSU) and Students' Centre Gallery (Galerija Studentskog centra; hereafter cited as SC Gallery) organised important international projects, actions and exhibitions that hosted numerous artists from Central and Eastern Europe over the years. Moreover, during the 1970s, individual examples of projects on both

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18 Ibid.

19 Akumulatory 2 in Poznan or PERMAFO in Wrocław are examples of galleries in which artists from Czechoslovakia, as well as from Hungary and East Germany (and in some events even artists from Western Europe) exhibited. Along with them, it is necessary to mention the following galleries: odNowa, Poznan; Krzywe Koło, Warsaw; Foksal, Warsaw; Mona Lisa, Wrocław; Krzysztofory, Krakow; Pi Gallery, Krakow; Biuro Poezji, Łódź.

20 While the New Tendencies were the most prominent and internationally-driven event of the 1960s, there were other cultural hubs, such as the Students' Centre in Zagreb, which are also discussed in this paper. For visual arts, this includes the independent galleries established by students' centres – in Zagreb (1962) and Belgrade (1968) and the ŠKUC Gallery in Ljubljana (1978). The Podroom gallery, which started its activity with the *Umjetnost u umu* [Art in the Mind] exhibition, should also be mentioned. One of the first examples of an exhibition organised in an alternative gallery space in Zagreb was the international exhibition of conceptual art *At the Moment*, put on by Braco and Nena Dimitrijević in 1971 in the entryway to a residential building 2a Frankopanska Street in Zagreb (1970–1979). April Meetings (starting in 1972) were events that gathered artists and theorists from the East and West in the Belgrade Students' Cultural Centre, hosting some of the greatest names in contemporary art (such as Joseph Beuys, Allan Kaprow, Vito Acconci, Daniel Buren, Jannis Kounellis, John Baldessari, Bill Viola, and others). In Novi Sad, the couple Bogdanka and Dejan Poznanović played a crucial role in connecting the unofficial art scene by creating a network of international artists (especially through Bogdanka's *Feedback Letter-box* project, 1973–1974) contacts as part of Tribina mladih (Youth Tribune) activities.

sides of the Bloc showed a tendency to network, and the dominant Western European discourse in the interpretation of the scene and the construction of the entire history of art was overpowered or neutralised.<sup>21</sup> In this sense, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, individual efforts were replaced by extensive international exhibitions, and conferences and publications began to reevaluate such issues, a process that continues with recent research.<sup>22</sup>

This case study focuses on the participation of neo-avant-garde artists and experts from former Czechoslovakia and Poland in projects in Zagreb, a focus that has been extended to Hungary with further research. Most of the considered representatives of Neo-Avant-Garde art from behind the Iron Curtain were banned or marginalised on the public stage. They were also not allowed to participate in exhibitions outside their countries. This is why their works were often delivered by mail and sometimes at the initiative of specific individuals – art historians, critics, and by private transport. This study intends to contextualise the GGSU and the SC Gallery as meeting places for experts, artists and the exchange of artistic ideas between the East and Yugoslavia. The sources for the research were the holdings and documentation of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, the Marinko Sudac Collection and the Art Archive of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

## CITY GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY ART, ZAGREB

From 1961 to 1973, the City Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb (now the Museum of Contemporary Art / Muzej suvremene umjetnosti; hereafter cited as MSU), in cooperation with several other institutions, organised a series of five international exhibitions of New Tendencies at the initiative of artists, curators, theorists and critics (Matko Meštrović, Radoslav Putar, Dimitrije Bašičević, Boris Kelemen, Božo Bek, Almir Mavignier, Vjenceslav Richter, Ivan Picelj).<sup>23</sup> The New Tendencies Movement was a pioneering artistic and theoretical initiative focusing on the intersection of art and technology while promoting concrete, constructive, kinetic and programmed art principles. The intention was to show a variety of different contemporary artistic practices: Neoconstructivism, kinetic art, programmed art, computer

21 See: Klaus Groh, ed., *Die Aktuelle Kunst in Osteuropa: CSSR, Jugoslawien, Polen, Rumänien, UDSSR, Ungar* [Contemporary Art in East Europe: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania, the USSR and Hungary] (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1972).

22 See footnote 1.

23 See: *Nove tendencije* [New Tendencies] (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1961); *Nove tendencije 2* [New Tendencies 2] (Zagreb: Galleries of the City of Zagreb, 1963); *Nova tendencija 3* [New Tendency 3] (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1965); Radoslav Putar, Boris Kelemen, eds. *Tendencije 4: Kompjuteri i vizualna istraživanja* [Tendencies 4: Computers and Visual Research] (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1968); Božo Bek, Boris Kelemen and Marijan Susovski, eds., *Tendencije 5: konstruktivna vizuelna istraživanja / kompjuterska vizuelna istraživanja / konceptualna umjetnost* [Tendencies 5: Constructive Visual Research / Computer Visual Research / Conceptual Art] (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1973). Margit Rosen with Peter Weibel, Darko Fritz, and Marija Gattin, eds., *A Little-Known Story about a Movement, a Magazine, and the Computer's Arrival in Art: New Tendencies and Bit International, 1961–1973* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); Armin Medosch, *New Tendencies: Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution (1961–1978)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).



art, and conceptual art. An extensive programme, which included colloquia, symposia, exhibitions, round tables and other similar events, was held at several different locations in Zagreb (GGSU, Museum of Arts and Crafts, SC Gallery, and more). At the invitation of one of the most influential theorists, Radoslav Putar, artist, curator and theorist Jiří Valoch from Brno participated in the international colloquium *Computers and Visual Research* held in 1968 at the Cultural Information Centre. In the same year, Valoch organised the *Computer Graphic* exhibition (March 10 – April 5, 1968) at the Dům umění in Brno, which preceded the Zagreb exhibition *Computers and Visual Research* (August 3 – 4, 1968) and the London *Cybernetic Serendipity* exhibition (August 2 – October 20, 1968). As a member of the organising committee of the *Tendencies 4* exhibition at the Museum of Arts and Crafts, Valoch suggested that several artists from Czechoslovakia participate in it a year later (May 5 – June 30, 1969): Milan Dobeš, Miloš Urbásek, Jiří Bielecki, Jiří Hilmar, Štefan Belohradský, Jarmila Čihánková, Tamara Klímová, and Radoslav Kratina. The MSU's holdings include works by Czechoslovak Neoconstructivist artists Dobeš and Urbásek. A year later, they took part in the aforementioned one-day event of the *First Open Studio* in Rudolf Sikora's house in Bratislava.

Some of these artworks are only documented in photographs. These photographs, along with the application forms with additional photographs and titles of the works sent to the curators, are preserved in the MSU documentation. One example shows the work of the Czechoslovak artist Jarmila Čihánková (b. 1925, Roštín) *Object, Environment* (1969) in the right corner of the photograph of the installation view (**fig. 4**). Documentation of the *Tendencies 5* exhibition held in 1973 in the Zagreb Technical Museum testifies that Dobeš exhibited three luminokinetic *Optical reliefs* (1972) and three *Light objects* (1972) in the *Constructive and Computer Visual Research* section. In the *Conceptual Art* section, the Hungarian art historian and artist László Beke presented Xerox copies of A4-size works of the most radical artists of the Hungarian conceptual scene in the form of a book that he named *Anonymous Collective Book*, which speaks volumes about the marginalised position of artists at the time. The book of the anonymous collective was exhibited together with a number of



**Fig. 4.** Installation views of the *Tendencies 4* exhibition at the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb, 1969, b/w photographs, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb. Photographs by Marija Braut.

the most important conceptual artists from the West – John Baldessari, John Latham and others. However, it is not reproduced in the exhibition catalogue, but is only included in the list of works by the participants of the anonymous collective: Gyula Pauer, Endre Tót, János Major, István Harasztý, Miklós Erdély, Tamás Szentjóby, Imre Bak, László Lakner, Péter Türk, Péter Legédy, András Baranyay, Gábor Attalai, György Jovánovics, Ilona Keserü, Tibor Csiky, Gyula Gyulás, Tamás Hencze, Tibor Gáyor, and Dóra Maurer. One of the pages shows the works of János Major, who in 1969 protested at a large exhibition of renowned op-art artist Victor Vasarely carrying a small sign in his pocket that read “Vasarely Go Home”, which he showed to friends. This is interesting because Vasarely presented several works in a separate section at the *Tendencies 5* exhibition, which are today part of the MSU Collection.

The *Polish Contemporary Photography* exhibition held in 1977 at the GGSU in Zagreb, organised by the Centre for Photography, Film and Television (CEFFT) and in cooperation with the Association of Polish Photographers, showed a wide range of approaches to photography, from photojournalism to experimental photography, such as those by Andrzej Lachowicz (Vilnius, 1939 – Wrocław, 2015) and Zdzislaw Sosnowski (b. 1947, Ignacew). Lachowicz presented a conceptual series of photographs *I Am* based on his project *Permanent Photography*, which registers everything the human eye sees in a deliberately indiscriminate way through multiplied images. Sosnowski presented a series of photographs titled *Goalkeeper* (fig. 5). The author examined the presentation and influence of mass media and television on social idols such as football players.

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Fig. 5. Zdzislaw Sosnowski, *Goalkeeper*, 1975, b/w photograph, Marinko Sudac Collection, Zagreb.

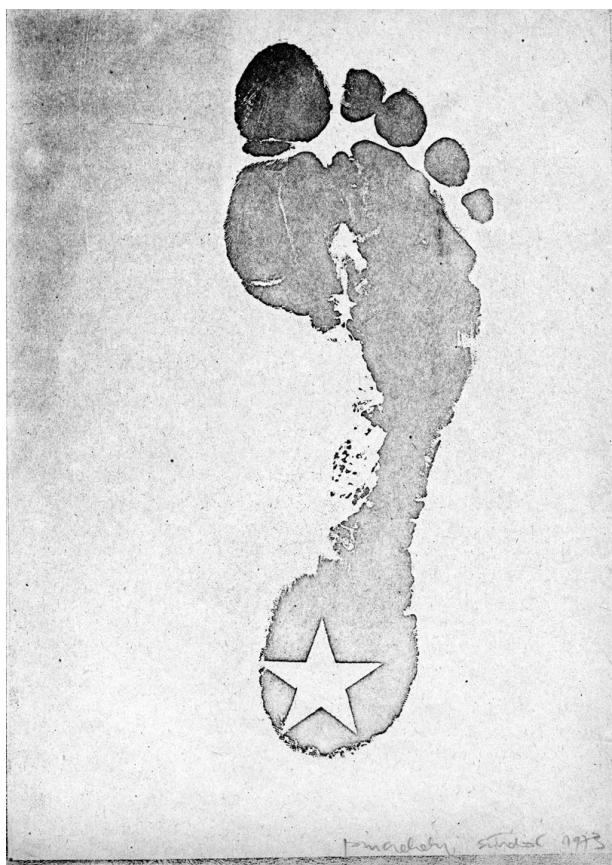
## THE CASE OF THE STUDENT CENTRE GALLERY AS A SPACE OF FREEDOM

One of the most agile curators of the Zagreb SC Gallery during the 1960s and 1970s was Želimir Košćević (b. 1939, Zagreb). He ran the Gallery from 1966 to 1979. Although the state funded the SC Gallery's programme, the staff perceived the Gallery as a space of freedom. Košćević's idea of gallery activity aspired to democracy. From such a starting point, creative projects emerged that required entering the urban environment and interacting with the audience. The Gallery published *Newspapers of the Students' Centre Gallery*, which served as a catalogue and gallery newsletter. It offered information about the current events on the art scene, taking into account the local and international context. The SC Gallery subscribed early on to important art magazines such as *Flash Art* (ed. Giancarlo Politi), which had had an *Eastern European Artist* section since 1976. The Museum of Contemporary Art's holdings include works by artists who participated in the long-running *La Galerie des Locataires* (Tenants' Gallery) project by art historian and critic Ida Biard (b. 1945?, Beočin), who was active between Zagreb and Paris. The project's conceptual basis was the organisation of actions, interventions in urban spaces, mail art projects, and similar non-institutional forms of presentation based on the principle of "ethics and not aesthetics" as a critique of the legality of the art system and market on the activities and position of artists. It included projects such as the *French Window* (exhibitions in the window of a rented apartment in Paris) and projections of artists' slides as part of the propaganda programme of the former Cinema Balkan (today Cinema Europe) in Zagreb, and more.<sup>24</sup> The acquisitions lists include the names of artists who exhibited at two important exhibitions at the SC Gallery. Želimir Košćević, Ida Biard, conceptual artist Goran Trbuljak (b. 1948, Varaždin) and several other relevant foreign curators and artists (László Beke, Klaus Groh, Friederike Pezold), organised the *XEROX* exhibition (June 14 – 30, 1973). It was based on materials collected via an advertisement published in no. 36 of the *L'Art Vivant* magazine from February 1973 and presented 64 artists from all over the world, from Germany to Japan. The exhibition presented various approaches to the Xerox technique, from those for education (Virginia University), and visual research (Bruno Munari, Marina Appolonio) to numerous examples of experimental and conceptual practices (Goran Trbuljak, Marina Abramović, David Mayor, André Cadere, Joan Marin and others). The artists' works were reproduced in issue no. 44 of the *Newspaper of the Students' Centre Gallery*,<sup>25</sup> and then a year

24 See: Ida Biard, *Galerija stanara* [Tenants' Gallery], in *Nova umjetnička praksa* [New Art Practice], ed. Marijan Susovski (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1978). See also: *French Window* exhibition, Galerija SC, Zagreb, 1973; Massimo Riposati, ed., *Simplon-Express*, (Rome: Edizioni Carte Segrete / Data Arte s.r.l., 1989).

25 Ida Biard and Želimir Košćević, eds., *Novine Galerije Studentskog centra*, no. 44 (1973), inv. no. 1515, the Museum of Contemporary Art Library, Zagreb (hereafter cited as MCA Library).

later in issue no. 5 of *Spot* magazine (1975),<sup>26</sup> specialising in photography. They were accompanied by Košćević's text *Xerox – Possibility or Delusion*, in which he points out that he was not interested in distributing or updating the discussion of the relationship between art and technology, as it was the case of computers. He considers the whole exhibition to be the opening of "one more opportunity for the artist in his work," and that it is possible to interpret Xerox as simply a technique that "allows ideas to be distributed beyond galleries and luxurious art magazines," and in some countries as part of the "fight against the system."<sup>27</sup> The last two statements can be directly related to a larger group of artists from socialist countries (Czechoslovakia: Jiří Valoch, Jetleb Zbyněk; Hungary: János Urbán, Gábor Tóth, Pécsi Műhely group – Sándor Pinczehelyi, Károly Halász, Károly Kismányoky, Ferenc Ficzek, Szijártó Kálmán). One example is a work by Pinczehelyi (b. 1946, Szigetvár), who imprinted his hand and foot on the Xerox copy and "struck in" a five-pointed star (fig. 6).



**Fig. 6.** Sándor Pinczehelyi, *Untitled*, 1973, xerox, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb.

26 Radoslav Putar, ed., *Spot – časopis za fotografiju* [Spot – Magazine for Photography], no. 5 (1974), inv. no. 17747, MCA Library, Zagreb.

27 Biard and Košćević, eds., *Novine Galerije Studentskog centra*, no. 44.





**Fig. 7.** Petr Štembera, *Endurance Test*, 1972–1973, b/w photographs, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb.

Ida Biard was the author of the concept for the exhibition titled *Another Opportunity to Be an Artist*, organised in Zagreb's SC Gallery (December 7– 12, 1973). Of the 68 invited artists, 48 exhibited. It included artists from the West (Christian Boltanski, Annete Messager, Klaus Groh, André Cadere), from Czechoslovakia (Jiří Valoch, Dalibor Chatrný, Jiří Hynek Kocman, Miloslav Moucha, Miloš Laky), from Poland (Tomek Kawiak, Petr Štembera) and from Hungary (Gabor Tóth, János Urbán). In this case, too, the artists sent artworks by mail. It is worth mentioning Petr Štembera's (b. 1945, Plzeň) work *Endurance Test* (1972–1973). Together with Karel Miller and Jan Mlčoch, Štembera was the most prominent protagonist of the performance scene in Prague (**fig. 7**). In Czechoslovakia, he created numerous radical performances, works of body art in which he examined the limits of endurance, which can be interpreted through the position of an artist who was forbidden to perform in public at that time.

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## CONCLUSION

The examples of radical experimental practice from Czechoslovakia and Poland presented in the first half of this study show the myriad of ways in which the governing structures controlled the art scene in socialist countries and projects abroad. The rich archival material from the Marinko Sudac Collection served as a source for research into various artistic activities and international projects, both realised and prohibited, during the tectonic changes of the socio-political context behind the Iron Curtain. Artists bypassed the restrictive policies of the state apparatus in various ways, often as part of private initiatives that enabled the communication and networking of art projects and artists between East and West.

The second half of the study shows examples of international projects in Zagreb in the 1960s and 1970s that were platforms for exchanging artistic ideas between the East and West. From this point of view, for Czechoslovak experimental artists during normalisation and for Hungarian artists during the 1970s, these types of international projects and actions represented a gap in the Iron Curtain and, thus, offered the possibility for so-called dissident artists to



exhibit outside the Eastern Bloc. However, most were unable to participate in person, given the regime at the time. Both the first and second parts of the study present examples of the restriction of artistic freedom and the activities of socially marginalised artists in the Eastern Bloc countries, who resorted to various subversive strategies as a form of resistance to the dominant structure.

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# THE SILENT PROTEST OF PROPAGANDA ART: CASE STUDY OF LATVIAN ARTIST JĒKABS BĪNE FROM 1945–1951

**Abstract**

*The basis for this article is a monographic study of the Latvian artist, educator and Dievturis (a name derived from Dievturība – the Latvian national religion) Jēkabs Bīne's (1895–1955) life and creative work in the first half 20<sup>th</sup> century in the context of historical, political, and social events. The Bīne case study shows the conditions under which the artist's creative activity was forced to submit to continue to work in their profession. Through this research, I reveal the living and working conditions of the artist in the first five years of the Soviet occupation. At this time, the activities of artists were strictly dependent on the organization of the Artists' Union of the Latvian SSR. After the war, the restriction, upbringing and regulation of creative activity rapidly became stricter and more critical. At the beginning of 1950, the first meeting was held to determine the compliance of each artist's activity with their status as members of the Artists Union. It was assessed whether each artist would remain a member of the organization or whether this status would be revoked or transferred to other candidates. The most important criteria were artistic achievement and activity, as well as political merit, and any mistakes that could be treated as an offence against Soviet rule.*

**Keywords:** Latvian art history, artist Jēkabs Bīne, Soviet Art, censorship and art

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**INTRODUCTION**

The life and creative activity of the artist Jēkabs Bīne (1895–1955) are closely connected with the artistic, social, and political events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bīne devoted his life and work to exploring the identity of the Latvian people, remaining convinced of the originality and independence of Latvian history and nation. The circumstances and conditions of the time played an important role in the events of the artist's life. Therefore in describing Latvian society, politics, and art in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of historical facts and events using available archival documents and explanations from history professionals, as well as memories from contemporaries, is crucial.

At all times and in every country, the relationship between art and power has been topical and unresolved. Art critic and theorist Boris Groys has acknowledged that "Art and politics originally have been connected in one basic aspect: they both are fields where struggle for recognition occurs."<sup>1</sup> Political regime changes often entail contradictory and unpredictable relations between power and art. Such situations raise the question of the impact of the artist's

<sup>1</sup> Boris Groys, *The Power of Art* (Riga: The Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2015), 22.

creative activity on the world and *vice versa*, as well as how the environment impacts the artist's ability to create and express their creative explorations. The world of art is often forced to abide by power's guidelines and objectives. In this context, an important and topical question is what it means for an artist to live and work under a changing political regime. Each political transformation entails a different model of society. During the era of Latvian independence, people were characterized by hope and faith and their outlook was oriented towards the future. However, a couple of decades later, during the era of Soviet power, the majority of the same society was confronted with fear: the fear of losing their lives and work, as well as the fear of taking action and expressing their views.

The basis for this article is a monographic study of the Latvian artist, educator and *Dievturis* (a name derived from *Dievturība* – the Latvian national religion) Jēkabs Bīne. The artist's extensive interests, active public works, long teaching practice and eclectic creative legacy are one example of how individual understanding and belief in the Latvian State took shape at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bīne devoted his life and work to studies of Latvian national identity, remaining faithful and committed to the individual nature, identity and existence of Latvia's history and that of its people. This faith manifested itself in the content of his artistic ideas, in his quests for and execution of them, and in talking, painting and thinking about this, sometimes loudly, at other times less so. The artist's creative work began and flourished during a period when the cultural space of Latvian art was distinguished by a *crescendo* of classical modernism. However, by the 1920s Bīne had already adopted the idea that a work of art definitely required content. In his works, Bīne tried to express the people's national identity and strength through realistic form. An important role in his works was apportioned to the depiction of Latvian identity, which he endeavoured to find in a synthesis of folk mythology, history and ancient ornamentation. The continued search for this content confused and broke the artist during the Soviet era. As he was unable to execute his ideas of content or to find new ones suitable to Soviet beliefs and principles, quantity eclipsed quality in his works. Bīne painted a lot, experimented and searched, but was unable to achieve a result that satisfied him. He produced countless still lifes and landscapes, as well as domestic genre works and commissioned portraits. Quietly and covertly, the artist repeatedly painted versions of works he had created in years past.

A major role in the development of Bīne's personality and artistic output was played by historical events during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this period Bīne not only articulated his beliefs and personal conviction in works of art, but also actively published his theories and research, and publically stated his views, working and leading the *Dievturi* movement. It should be noted that during the interwar period, the mythological genre in art was often posited as

**Fig. 1.** Jēkabs Bīne, *God, Māra, Laima*, 1931, oil on canvas, Latvian National Museum of Art. Photograph by Normunds Braslins.



Latvian, which ideologically propelled and conformed to the desired narrative about national art. Bīne was one of the most active proponents and prominent exemplars of these beliefs. The interaction between vivid visual depictions of mythological themes and widely published writings, enhanced by the everyday image cultivated by the artist himself gave rise to Bīne's symbolic significance as an artist and *Dievturis*. His contribution to creating the visual image of *Dievturi* and promoting this neo-mythology can be considered to be the most significant legacy of Bīne's oeuvre. One example of this is Bīne's painting *God, Māra, Laima*, which was used as the symbolic *Dievturi* identity not only by *Dievturi* organisations in exile during the Soviet period, but is still used by the contemporary *Dievturi* congregation today. The presence of the context of folklore or the allusion to it is an important component of Bīne's works in the mythological genre (fig. 1).

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## THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE ARTIST'S LIFE: THE SOVIET REGIME'S PERIOD OF OCCUPATION

During the first period of Soviet occupation, the dominant art institution, with whose operating principles Jēkabs Bīne was familiar through his work in Riga, and in which he actively participated, was the Latvian Artists' Union (LAU). Preparations for the process of elevating the LAU date back to October 9, 1944, when the Latvian SSR Council of People's Commissars adopted Decision No. 171 "Regarding the Founding of the Latvian Soviet Artists'

Union Organisation.” The actual initiation of the founding of the organisation originated through a decision made by the LC(b)P Central Committee Bureau at a meeting held on February 15, 1941. However, due to the war, it subsequently proved necessary to revive the organisation.

The first meeting of the Artists' Union's organisation committee took place immediately after the restoration of Soviet power on November 15, 1944. Right from its very first days of operation, the Union posited its main task as being the restoration of national culture, which had to take place in close collaboration with the other Soviet republics, “because USSR artists will set us an example and the heads of arts institutions will very gladly help in this work.”<sup>2</sup>

A lot of artists wanted to join the Artists' Union in the belief that this would pave the way to extensive work opportunities in the form of local and pan-Union contracts, State commissions, grants and loans, and working trips abroad. The first members were admitted in 1945. Moreover, alongside local artists the Union also admitted new arrivals from other cities and republics in the Soviet Union. Jēkabs Bīne also became a member of the Latvian SSR Artists' Union in 1945. The LAU's environment and trends were characterised by the composition of its members. Thus, for example, in order to continue their artistic education and creative work, demobilised soldiers and budding or current artists from other cities in the USSR arrived in Riga. Few among them learned to speak Latvian or tried to appreciate the local culture. Nor did they exhibit any desire to discover the environment or the country in which they had arrived to live and work. These new arrivals were not interested in the opportunity to create works of art that would depict something new and idiosyncratic, enriching local culture. Nor, logically, did they form friendly relationships with local artists based on mutual understanding. Moreover, decrees from the higher powers dictated that precedence should be given to demobilised soldiers and new arrivals.

Prior to admission to the LAU, every application and each artist's biography were carefully assessed and analysed. There was no shortage of artists who were condemned for their work in pre-war Latvia or for their statements during the war. Another reason why it was important for artists to join the Artists' Union was that it enabled them to obtain the materials they needed for their creative work, and this was only possible for LAU members and candidates. They could also aspire to additional living space (in the form of a studio), receive commissions, and apply for working trips to institutions hosting artistic residencies, where they could enhance their experience. Artists who found themselves outside the newly-established system had next to no chance of exhibiting their works or receiving commissions with which they could earn a living solely by means of their creative work. Only LAU members

2 Ilze Konstante, *Stalīna garā ēna Latvijas tēlotāja mākslā 1940–1956* [Stalin's Long Shadow in Latvian Fine Arts, 1941–1956] (Rīga: Neputns, 2017), 233. All translations are by the author.



were guaranteed a future pension and could look forward to the support promised by their trade union.

During its formative working years, artists were admitted to the Union as soon as their application to join had been evaluated. In later years, several stages of admission were introduced – initially the artist could become an LAU membership candidate and would only attain membership status after a certain period of time. Gradually, the evaluation of new membership applications and criteria related to prior artistic activity and the biographies of the artists concerned became more arduous and complicated. First, an application would be studied at a meeting of the relevant section. Next it would be passed to the section's bureau before being considered by the Party's bureau. However, the final decision was made by the LAU organisation committee or the board. Legally, admission to the LAU was only considered to have been ratified after it had been approved by the USSR Artists' Union. While holding the status of an LAU membership candidate, the artists had to demonstrate active creative work, and participation in exhibitions was obligatory. Moreover, before becoming a bona fide LAU member, the artist had to organise a reporting exhibition, thus confirming his or her credentials to join the organisation.

Instructions, prices, commissions and so-called professionalism calculations were received from the USSR Committee on the Arts. Depending on the size of the work, the price of a portrait of Politburo functionary in civilian dress could fetch between 284 and 1,187 roubles, while portraits of these same workers in uniform with medals could net between 314 and 1,300 roubles, while portraits of scientists and artists were more expensive, costing between 344 and 1,412 roubles. Cost estimates for framing works were provided, as were works “manufactured” in larger quantities, in addition to which the selling price of one unit was also specified. The Fine Arts Department of the Latvian SSR Committee on the Arts would subsequently introduce artists to these recommendations, specifying the list of desired subjects for works of art, and adding recommendations as to how these should be executed. Among the subjects increasingly in demand were the Red Army's heroic battles against occupiers, domestic life and the new post-war life in the countryside, and society's joy in the aftermath of victory. Other officially approved subjects were landscapes depicting one's native land, still lifes and any historical subjects, as well as the struggles of the working class in Latvia. Portraits of leaders had to be undertaken with special care. When portraying Lenin, Stalin and other leaders, artists had to strictly adhere to photographs approved by the SC(b)P Central Committee, otherwise an artist was even subject to the threat of criminal liability. In works depicting the group of revolutionary leaders, “Marx – Engels – Lenin – Stalin”, it was of utmost importance to observe their correct positioning, where the historical order required by the political censors was paramount, i.e., from left to right.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 239–241.

The most popular genres in Latvian painting overall were landscape, portrait and still life, while thematically rural work and everyday events were dominant. This explains the large number of landscape and still life works in Latvian art during the post-war years. Thus it was possible to avoid subjects that did not correspond to the artist's sense of life and creative work. However, soon enough, as a result of various decrees and educational edicts, these genres began to be considered as of secondary importance, with much greater significance being attached to the ability to depict tendentious political narratives, a skill that artists were expected to acquire. In order to control their creative activity, LAU members' reporting exhibitions, which were held every other week, became obligatory. These took place on the LAU premises and were closed to the general public.

In regard to their work, artists found themselves being restricted, (re) educated and regulated in a manner that quickly became increasingly stringent and critical. An order was received to review the ranks of LAU members and membership candidates, and at the start of 1950 the first meeting was held to "cleanse the ranks", which decided on the compatibility of each artist's work to LAU membership status. Evaluations were conducted which resulted in the artist remaining an LAU member, having his or her status revoked, or being demoted to candidate status. The key criteria were artistic output, activities and political accomplishments, and any missteps could be deemed to be a crime against the Soviet establishment. In the long résumé of the meeting with authorities from the Artists Union, Jēkabs Bīne appears among the group of artists who were allowed to remain members of the Artists' Union. Overall, 52 members were expelled, while 21 were demoted to candidate status, thus handing them a warning about their impending non-conformity to the status of a Soviet artist. Prior to the re-election of members, the Artists' Union had 224 members and eight candidates, but after the reform it was left with 177 members, including 22 who were newly admitted, while four were admitted having previously been candidates.

1949 was notable for the special attention and animated activity devoted to Joseph Stalin's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. That year, all Soviet republics had to organise extensive exhibitions and events to mark the leader's anniversary. Throughout the year, events were held lauding Stalin, but in the build-up to his birthday on December 21 presents prepared by the people and sent to the leader were displayed in exhibitions and special showcases. This tradition was later introduced in honour of other Soviet state celebrations and important political figures. A particularly important role in the preparation of these presents was played by applied arts specialists – masters in metal art, woodwork, textile art and other fields. That year, the Latvian people sent a "a richly ornamented object to Moscow in the form of a hope chest, forged in silver, and crowned with images of Marx, Engels and Stalin."<sup>4</sup> In 1950, Bīne visited Moscow, and in his notes we find this entry: "The next tour was to the Pushkin Museum,

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4 Ibid., 304.

where some of the presents dedicated to Comrade Stalin were on display. However, the large museum premises were unable to accommodate all the presents, and in many cases the presents were stacked up in a pile. Therefore, in all probability, the eyes of the birthday boy, 'our dear friend, did not even catch sight of his present from the Latvian people."<sup>5</sup>

## JĒKABS BĪNE'S FIRST YEARS OF SOVIET OCCUPATION (1945–1951): KULDIGA

Jēkabs Bīne spent the first five years after the consolidation of the Soviet regime within Latvian territory in Kuldīga. Honestly, but unobtrusively, he tried to fulfil his direct teaching duties in school, while quietly continuing his research and telling the story of Latvian history, ornaments, the ancient past and its meaning. In 1951, when the artist's activities during the era of Latvian independence came to light, he was forced to leave his position at the Kuldīga School of Applied Arts.

On November 24, 1947, the first post-war art exhibition in Kuldīga opened, with the participation of 13 Kuldīga-based artists, who exhibited 83 works. It was a major event for the whole town and attracted a lot of visitors, including representatives of the district party committee and executive committee, and heads of institutions and enterprises. After the exhibition, a review appeared on the front page of the Kuldīga newspaper *Padomju Kuldīga*, which acknowledged Jēkabs Bīne to be "one of the most notable and routine-blessed artists in our republic, who exhibited the most works: portraits, genre works and landscapes. The best works in the exhibition were considered to be his *The Cart Loading*, *In Ancient Times* and *Portrait of Teacher P*" (fig. 2).<sup>6</sup> The article concluded with the observation:

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Fig. 2. Jēkabs Bīne, *The Cart Loading*, 1948, oil on canvas, private collection. Photograph by Normunds Braslins.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Alise Volanska, *Mākslinieku citadeles stāsti: Kuldīgas Daiļamatniecības skola (1945–1952)* [Stories from the Artists' Citadel: the Kuldīga Secondary School of Applied Arts (1945–1952)] (Rīga: Jumava, 2016), 85.



Many artists can learn by opening their eyes to the enormous work to be done every day in the work of Socialist competition, discovering the process of work, with the very best people – Stakhanovites and shock workers. This path will multiply the artistic and cultural values, which are intended for every citizen in our native land. Let us hope that in the next exhibition we will see more monumental works, which reverently depict the great building work to be done during Great Stalin’s fourth five year period.<sup>7</sup>

After the exhibition, artists tried to fulfil their “Stakhanovites” quotas, portraying front-rowers and agricultural workers. Bīne also endeavoured to fulfil his quota by seeking something captivating in the tired daily lives of Kuldīga’s workers. While many used photographs for this purpose, he remained faithful to his pencil, drawing portraits for celebratory plaques, but he did not produce any works of high artistic quality during this period.

The Song Festival took place from July 10 to 18, 1948. In honour of this event, an exhibition was organised at the Kuldīga School of Applied Arts in which ten artists from the town of Kuldīga and its surrounding area took part with 60 works. In its analysis of the exhibition, the first painting mentioned by the district newspaper was Jēkabs Bīne’s painting *The Kauguri Uprising*. While in

this work he addressed a historical subject with reverence, Bīne’s other paintings, *Spring*, *A Fisherman* and *Kuldīga’s Roofs in the Snow*, brought the artist praise for his ability to depict the beauty of winter (fig. 3). Bīne had started to work on the first version of *The Kauguri Uprising* in the spring of 1946 in preparation for the art exhibition, which was organised in honour of the Kuldīga Song Festival. The exhibition was postponed several times before it finally took place from November 24 to December 8, 1946. In the foreground of the work, a farmer on a horse is depicted, with farmers on the right.<sup>8</sup> After the Kuldīga exhibition, in comments on this work by Bīne at the Latvian Soviet artists’ conference in 1947, the artist’s work in previous years was also mentioned:

This ‘holy’ farmyard and its contents had to be linked to the distant romanticised and mystified ancient history and ethnographic nationalism. This turn of events, setting to one side a whole host of other artists, reached its most vivid manifestation in the ancient religious mysticism of Jēkabs Bīne and Ernests Brastiņš,



Fig. 3. Jēkabs Bīne, *Kuldīga’s Roofs in the Snow*, 1949, oil on canvas, private collection. Photograph by Normunds Braslins.

7 Ibid.

8 Jēkabs Bīne, “Mans darbs” [My Work], in *Doma*, ed. Zigurds Konstants (Riga: Latvijas Mākslas muzeju apvienība, 2000), 51.

and in the paintings and graphic works of the decorative folk stylists Ansis Cīrulis and Niklāvs Strunke, who stood on the same foundations of content.<sup>9</sup>

After being repeatedly submitted for approval, the painting *The Kauguri Uprising* was completed in August 1947 and exhibited for the first time at the Latvian art exhibition in Riga dedicated to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. At the centre of the composition, surrounded by farmers, is a young man dressed in folk attire on a prancing horse, who has symbolically raised his arm above the crowd. This hand gesture unequivocally alludes to God's gesture of blessing in Bīne's painting *God, Māra, Laima*. In an article on Soviet Latvian painting, the work was described in the following way: "... as interpreted by Bīne, this subject resonates not so much as a real event, but more as a distant, romanticised (composition, lighting, colours) historical legend."<sup>10</sup>

During the 1950s Bīne painted several commissioned narratives, which extolled people's occupations, such as *Tractor Driver Freibergs* (fig. 4), *Tractor Driver*, *Collective Farmer*, etc. Only sketches and drafts of these works remain. In his commissioned works done during the Soviet period, he met the requirements of Socialist Realism, which was then dominant: the viewer was greeted with a smile and workers were monumentalized. Bīne's painting style corresponded to the so-called method of Socialist Realism, because realism was in vogue. All he had to do was to change the content and ideological understanding of

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**Fig. 4.** Jēkabs Bīne, *Tractor Driver Freibergs*, 1950, paper, pencil, water color, State Archive of Latvia. Photograph by Agita Gritāne.

9 Artūrs Lapiņš, *Latvijas lietišķās mākslas attīstības ceļi* [The Developmental Paths of Latvian Fine Arts], *Žurnāls Karogs*, no. 5 (1948): 543.

10 Artūrs Lapiņš, *Latvijas padomju glezniecība* [Latvian Soviet Painting] (Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1961), 20.



his works. Although the artist's creative oeuvre proves that he often painted the type of painting supported by the Soviet powers, as well as domestic and portrait genres, Bīne did not take advantage of these opportunities, and did not actively devote himself to commissions during the Soviet period.

Jēkabs Bīne's occasionally fearless attitude was exemplified by an event soon after the capitulation of the German Army, when the Soviet authorities brought books to Kuldīga that had been collected from local libraries and were marked for destruction. These books were tipped onto piles in the school courtyard, and pupils had to tear off the covers of all books that did not burn well. Afterwards the books were taken to be burned on a great pyre on the edge of the river Venta, downstream of the town. To everyone's surprise, the intelligent Bīne offered to help carry out this act of destruction. He was wearing a coat with large pockets, which at opportune moments provided refuge not only for wonderful art albums, but also volumes of Alfreds Brems' encyclopaedia *The Animal Kingdom* and much else besides, which were later furnished with replacements for lost covers at the Kuldīga School of Applied Arts' Bookbinding Department.<sup>11</sup> Among the books to be destroyed were works by Latvian authors, as well as everything published in German prior to 1940, even including old cookbooks. Museums also received lists of artworks to be "withdrawn" and destroyed. Thirteen paintings by Jēkabs Bīne were mentioned among the ideologically harmful works. For some unknown reason, the list of works also included Bīne's painting *Mare with Colt*, but the artist succeeded in saving this work, as well as a painting entitled *Ūsiņš* (in Latvian mythology, Ūsiņš was a deity, the god of light and spring). He carefully hid both works in his sofa chest.<sup>12</sup>

## RETURN TO RIGA AND THE CULMINATION OF HIS LIFE (1951–1955)

Living in a small town, decrees, events and understanding of developments nationally resonated more slowly, peacefully and quietly. Meanwhile, the climate in Riga was epitomised by the main tasks published a year earlier in August 1950, which had been proposed by Latvian C(b)P Central Committee Secretary Arvīds Peļše, and were to serve as the leitmotifs for any activity and in the attainment of goals in the Latvian SSR. Peļše stressed that "the struggle against slanting toward nationalism, and in particular against slanting toward local nationalism, is extremely relevant in Soviet Latvia."<sup>13</sup> Reflecting their awareness of the influence of culture and art on people's opinions, matters related to artists' creative work and its related ideology were evaluated by the authorities at various levels.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>13</sup> Augusts Peļše, "The Struggle against Bourgeois Nationalism – The Battle Assignment of the Republic Party," *Journal of Soviet Latvian Bolsheviks*, no. 16 (1952): 5–6.

Upon his return to Riga in 1951, Jēkabs Bīne started work at the applied arts complex Māksla (Art). Bīne was helped in his search for a job by Ernests Veilands, then head of the Māksla complex's portrait workshop, who proceeded to hire him. At the time, this was a quite a courageous gesture on Veilands' part, because on more than one occasion Bīne's past had provoked suspicions and objections on the part of the Soviet governmental institutions. Bīne worked in the Māksla complex's stained glass workshop almost right up to his dying day, parallel to which he tried to find the time to paint and study subjects close to his heart.

Work in the stained glass workshop was not only emotionally and psychologically depressing, because of the complete absence of any freedom of creative or artistic expression, but also physically demanding. Together with his colleagues in the stained glass workshop, he fulfilled official Soviet commissions. Work on stained glass was both technically and thematically complicated. From Bīne's notes, one can conclude that no creative freedom was permitted in this work. Every detail of a composition had to be examined and approved. In essence, it was the artist's task to become an outstanding technical executant of drawings and compositions. There was no shortage of orders, and the workshop's artists designed and made stained glass for Moscow metro stations and the Latvian SSR Pavilion at the Pan-Union Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow, etc. The works produced brought these artists fame and increasing opportunities for new commissions throughout the Soviet Union. During the subsequent years of Soviet power, when the name of Jēkabs Bīne cropped up, his creative oeuvre was most often connected with applied art and his achievements in stained glass art: "Jēkabs Bīne is renowned for establishing and developing Latvian Soviet stained glass art."<sup>14</sup> Stained glass panels created by Bīne adorned the Latvian SSR Supreme Council Hall, the Latvian SSR Pavilion and Ukrainian SSR Pavilion at the Pan-Union Agricultural Exhibition, Novoslobodskaya Metro Station in Moscow and the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant Builders' Cultural Palace.

One of the first tasks entrusted to Bīne as an artist in the Māksla complex's stained glass workshop was to join his colleagues in preparing stained glass panels for the Latvian SSR Pavilion at the Exhibition of the Achievements of National Economy in Moscow. Preparations for the exhibition took place in all the Soviet republics. This was an important assignment to which countless competitions were devoted, involving artists and architects in every field. Each republic was tasked with constructing its own building in the form of a pavilion, which would depict national character and fit into the overall ensemble. The main goal of the exhibition was to highlight the blossoming and abundance of the republic. In April 1950, the Soviet Council of Ministers' State Committee on the Arts issued directions as to how each republic's pavilion should look,

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14 Vija Cekule, *Jēkabs Bīne: 1895–1955* (Riga: Latvian SSR State Art Museum, 1969), 8.

adhering to the uniform concept of the exhibition. At the entrance to the pavilion, two sculptures were to be erected on the subject of the Latvian collective farm depicting the flourishing life of the Latvian people. At the heart of the pavilion, a monumental figure of Stalin had to be erected, while the central wall was to be adorned with a large bas-relief with the figure of Lenin and an inscription referring to the decree regarding the proclamation of the independent republic of Soviet Latvia on December 22, 1918.<sup>15</sup> It was stipulated that letters of a certain size and colour should be used, while patterns characteristic of the applied arts of the Latvian people should be used around the inscription. The main hall had to be decorated with at least two monumental paintings on the subject of “Latvia’s admission to the Soviet Union” and “Latvia as a flourishing republic”.

Painstaking and time-consuming work resulted in the creation of several stained glass panels for the Latvian SSR Pavilion. On April 11, 1954, readers of the periodical *Literature and Art* were informed that

Above the door is a stained glass panel, at the centre of which is a five-pointed star. Also adorned with stained glass panels in their entirety were four eight metre high windows, two on either side of the door, (and) 16 medallions – four in each window – were dedicated to various subjects: agriculture, industry, culture, as well as landscapes depicting a few cities. Upon entering, the visitor was greeted by a great panel. Above the panel were two lines from the Latvian SSR hymn: ‘On Lenin’s road to happiness and fame / With Stalin in our hearts, we will march forever.’<sup>16</sup> (fig. 5)

The artist dictated neither his time nor his working regime – everything was subject to constant commissions and the wishes of his masters. Although on May 17 Bine wrote that he hoped to fly home at the end of the week, ten days later on May 27 he was still waiting for his departure permit: “Today, hopefully, my departure will be clarified. The pavilion’s director will not hear of my wish to leave. He is going to telegraph to Riga to extend my working trip. I told him that this would not do me much good, because nobody was going to increase my working trip remuneration. No matter how frugally one lives – to subsist here (hotel included), one still needs 25 roubles a day.”<sup>17</sup>



Fig. 5. Jēkabs Bīne, *Sketches for stained glass compositions*, 1953, State Archive of Latvia. Photograph by Agita Gritāne.

15 Konstante, *Staļina garā ēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā 1940–1956*, 380.

16 Ibid.

17 Jēkabs Bīne’s letter to Olga Vijuma (Apermane), May 27, 1952, Author’s archive.

A year later, Jēkabs Bīne spent a long time on a working trip to Moscow, where he worked in the Latvian SSR pavilion: “I have now been labouring for six weeks on the pavilion’s design jobs, but I still have no idea how much I will actually be paid for this, and when we will be able to return home. We forecast that it could be at the end of the month.”<sup>18</sup> Arduous work, uncertainty, frequent working trips and continual stress took their toll, and Bīne’s health, already ravaged in his youth, grew ever more fragile.

## A PAINTER WITH “TWO EASELS”

After his return to Riga in 1951, Bīne’s focus on painting gradually diminished. During working hours, the artist worked in the Māksla complex’s stained glass workshop and designed the aforementioned commissioned Soviet propaganda works, which depicted the utopian future of the life promised by Communism and portrayed Stalin, Lenin and other heroes of the era. However, during his free time he continued to paint and study the subjects that he cared about and which mattered to him. For example, in 1952 the artist returned to the subject of *Dievturība*, which had been so important to him back in the 1930s, and painted a new version of the painting *God, Māra, Laima*.

The fact that Bīne was definitely not the only artist who, in order to survive, kept two easels in his studio – one for projects of the heart, and the other for projects of duty – was verified by the general anxiety of the functionaries of the arts organisations of the day. Consequently, new attributes and stricter edicts were quickly introduced. At the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Latvian Soviet Artists’ Union, which took place in September 1950, it was emphasised that formalism had gone on for far too long and henceforth would no longer be permissible, “whereby one work is painted fulfilling a State commission, seemingly adhering to the requirement for Socialist Realism, another work is done in the formalist direction, with other methods, old ones, which artists used in their work 20 years ago. Oftentimes, artists say that this is ‘art’s kitchen’, but I am afraid that this is linked to people’s beliefs, and that thus, ‘tomorrow formalism will be art.’”<sup>19</sup>

After years of studying the development of Latvian art during the complex period, art historian Ilze Konstante concluded “it was the fact, that many artists really did work at ‘two easels’, which saved Latvian fine art from destruction. It is hard to imagine what Latvian art would have looked like during the period from 1944 to 1956 if there had not been artists who should have been ‘sent to the psychiatric hospital’, and if emerging artists had only painted according to the recipe decreed by the Government’s diktat.”<sup>20</sup>

The conditions in which works were created during the Soviet era are characterised by the history of Bīne’s painting *17<sup>th</sup> Century Riga*. In order to

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18 Jēkabs Bīne’s postcard to Iza Bīne (Grevina), April 15, 1953, Author’s archive.

19 Konstante, *Staļina garā ēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā 1940–1956*, 338.

20 *Ibid.*, 380.



augment and organise a chronological exhibition on Latvian history from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Director of the Latvian SSR Central State History Museum wanted to invite artists who would paint a narrative depiction of this period based on research into historical materials. Initially, the Cultural Education Authority did not consider the Director's idea to be appropriate. Moreover, the LC(b)P Central Committee was reluctant to approve the subject matter for the paintings, rejecting it as irrelevant and incompatible with the list of paintings to be ordered from artists, which had been drawn up and approved at the time, the majority of which was filled with depictions of events from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as "The Great Fatherland War" and "Socialist construction". After making the excuse of a lack of materials with which to create an exhibition of the period in question, the Director received permission to commission a few paintings. At the time, LSU History Faculty student Heinrihs Strods had started work as an academic co-worker at the museum. The historian recalled collecting the required materials in the form of books, engravings, excerpts from chronicles and historians' descriptions, which he presented to Bīne during the period that the painting was being prepared. Jēkabs Bīne's first sketch was rejected by the commission as being politically immature. The biggest objections were due to the fact that the artist had painted a bright sky above Riga, which was deemed an impossibility during the sombre Swedish era, and because the work did not depict class warfare in 17<sup>th</sup> century Riga. The next time, Bīne repainted dark clouds above Riga and drew a two horse chariot next to the Red Guards' tower in Pardaugava, whose occupants were assailed by beggars beseeching them for alms, while others were arrested. This version was approved by the commission, which allowed the artist to paint the large version of the painting.<sup>21</sup>

From day to day, Bīne received and fulfilled works commissioned by the State, bowing to externally dictated conditions and instructions, because in order to work and survive he had no alternative. At the same time, individual works previously painted by Bīne were withdrawn from museum collections and destroyed.

In later years too, the attitude of the Soviet authorities towards Bīne's earlier works was quite negative. "His name belonged among those artists whose works were placed in special repositories."<sup>22</sup> During post-war years, the installation of special repositories, or more commonly special collections, in museums became commonplace. Special instructions were issued that stipulated which works of art should be stored in these special collections. In the special instructions regarding special collections approved by the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers' State Committee on the Arts on March 2, 1953,

21 Heinrihs Strods' Letter to Janis Bīne, May 23, 2010. Author's archive.

22 Zigurds Konstants, "Rīgas mākslas muzeji okupācijas gados: 1940–1990" [Riga's Museums during the Occupation Years: 1940–1990], *Journal of Doma: Collection of Articles*, no. 5 (2000): 159.



it was stated that all art exhibits that are harmful due to their conceptual direction or formalistic execution, as well as works by émigré artists, should be removed from joint repositories overseen by the State Committee on the Arts and placed in a special repository that will be organised at the State Museum of Latvian and Russian Art, in accordance with the USSR Council of Ministers' State Committee on the Arts Chairman's Decree No. SP-1256/32.<sup>23</sup> Lists of exhibits to be delivered were confirmed by museum heads, in accordance with the verdict of the Latvian SSR Council of Ministers' State Committee of the Arts' special commission. Art historians, researchers and museums' academic co-workers could only inspect the works included in these collections after receiving written permission from the Chairman of the State Committee on the Arts, and only in the special repository's premises, in the presence of the repository's responsible official and after registering in a special journal. Not only the works of art themselves, but also photographic negatives and copies ended up in the special repository.<sup>24</sup>

In the summer of 1955, Jēkabs Bīne was awarded the honourable title of a Distinguished Latvian SSR Art Worker for his accomplishments in stained glass art. Of this event, the artist merely wrote, "On July 21 I read in the newspaper that I have been awarded [...the title of...] 'distinguished art worker'."<sup>25</sup> The artist was increasingly offended and bemused by the prevailing system and organisation of work. After a visit to the Artists' Union, Bīne commented, "A Union, whose criterion is the 'appearance of one's nose' seems increasingly strange."<sup>26</sup> Anxiety, uncertainty and emotional tension broke the artist, compounding his existing health problems with weakness and exhaustion. Bīne continued to embark on working trips, to fulfil commissioned works and to design stained glass panels, but at home in the evening he would seek succour by drawing and studying various ornaments.

Jēkabs Bīne died suddenly on October 24, 1955. He was accompanied on his final journey from the Artists' Union, with the procession passing the Art Academy *en route* to Rainis's Cemetery. In front of the car, girls in folk costumes carried colourful garlands. Seeing this, people stopped at the side of the street and said, "A Latvian is being buried..."<sup>27</sup> Of the artist's final journey, Māris Brancis wrote, "The funeral turned into a quiet, wordless protest against the powers-that-be, but most importantly – it was an attestation to an Artist and Latvian."<sup>28</sup>

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23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Jēkabs Bīne, "Mans darbs" [My Work], in *Doma*, ed. Zigurds Konstants, 51.

26 Ibid.

27 Anita Volanska, "Mākslinieks un pedagogs Jēkabs Bīne – 100" [Artist and Teacher Jēkabs Bīne – 100], *Kurzemnieks*, April 11, 1995, 3.

28 Māris Brancis, *Jēkabs Bīne* (Riga: Preses nams, 1995), 12.

## CONCLUSION

Bīne's artistic subjects and beliefs were strongly influenced not only by his interests, but also by the time in which he lived and worked. Blessed with outstanding working abilities, a wide range of interests and artistic talent, Bīne's artistic career sheds light on 40 contrasting and complex years for the Latvian art scene during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the diversity of artistic practices during its formative period. During the independence period, the artist was inspired and confidently painted everything that he found interesting to his heart's content. However, during the first Soviet occupation and the German occupation he became increasingly quiet, focusing more on commissioned works. After the Second World War, during the Soviet era, Bīne lived out the reality of life as a Soviet period artist.

Jēkabs Bīne tried to divide his talent and imagination between the twists and turns of power and artistic directions. The artist's creative *oeuvre* does not reveal the ambiguity of the historical situation, or the problems and pain resulting from the time he lived in. In his works of art, the painter revealed his truest and deepest essence. He painted events, people, and places he cared about and infused them with his thoughts and feelings. His eclectic creative *œuvre* ostensibly invites one to decipher Jēkabs Bīne's personal endeavours and deepest nature through his works of art, as opposed to his words and actions. Throughout his life the artist tried to assiduously combine the pleasures of his heart with the reality of life. During the post-war years, when he lacked materials for painting, Bīne was reduced to painting on canvases painted during his time at the Academy.

# Art

and

**the State**

in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# Sites of Artistic Politics

**Ivan Kokeza**

THE FRESCO BY KRSTO AND ŽELJKO  
HEGEDUŠIĆ IN THE PALACE OF THE  
CROATIAN INSTITUTE OF HISTORY ON 10  
OPATIČKA STREET FROM THE YEAR 1943:  
HISTORY PAINTING IN THE CONTEXT OF  
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**Vanja V. Stojković**

EDUCATION, ART, AND POLITICS: THE  
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ALEXANDER'S CHURCH IN WARSAW:  
BUILDING A STATE IDENTITY

**Matea Brstilo Rešetar**

THE GALLERY OF RADE GERBA:  
A HISTORICAL ANACHRONISM IN THE  
TWILIGHT OF THE MONARCHY

Ivan Kokeza

Croatian History Museum,  
Zagreb

**Key words:** Krsto  
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# THE FRESCO BY KRSTO AND ŽELJKO HEGEDUŠIĆ IN THE PALACE OF THE CROATIAN INSTITUTE OF HISTORY ON 10 OPATIČKA STREET FROM THE YEAR 1943: HISTORY PAINTING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA\*

## Abstract

*On the premises of the Croatian Institute of History at 10 Opatička Street in Zagreb, there is a fresco by the Hegedušić brothers, completed in 1943. The fresco, located in the so-called Hegedušić Hall, is named "The Croatian School" and shows a number of prominent figures from Croatian history. The initial part of this paper will summarize the wartime circumstances of the genesis of the fresco, with special reference to the artists' biographies. The central part of the discussion provides basic information about the work, with the aim of identifying the individuals portrayed and conducting a general iconographic analysis. Lastly, the fresco is considered in the context of the implementation of specific cultural policies of the Independent State of Croatia.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Hrvatska škola* (The Croatian School) fresco (**fig. 1**) by Krsto and Željko Hegedušić is located at the Croatian Institute of History in the so-called Hegedušić Hall. It was completed in 1943, as evidenced by the signature in the lower right. The fresco was created during World War II, at a time when the seat of the Ministry of Education of the Independent State of Croatia could be found there. Before the war, the Department for Education of the Banate of Croatia was located there, which from 1918 to 1939 functioned as a branch office of the Central Yugoslav Ministry of Education in Belgrade.

Earlier, during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the building at Opatička 10 was converted from a noble palace into state's Department for Religion and Education. It was then thoroughly renovated under the direction of the head of the Department at the time, Izidor Kršnjavi, and the architect Hermann Bollé. Its renovation and decoration aimed to emphasize Croatia's role in the development of European and Austro-Hungarian culture on the basis of a heritage which could be denominated as classical, Christian and humanistic. The Hegedušić brothers' fresco abided by such concepts in its content, although

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Fig. 1. Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, *The Croatian School*, 1943, fresco, Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb. Photograph by Ivan Kokeza.

under completely different historical circumstances.<sup>1</sup> From 1945 to 1998, the fresco was allegedly covered with a cloth. Upon completing the renovation of the palace in 1999, the cloth was removed and the fresco has thus been made available to the public ever since.<sup>2</sup>

## THE FRESCO IN VARIOUS SOURCES AND LITERATURE

276 Data on the fresco in the literature so far could best be described as scarce, and often unreliable.<sup>3</sup> In Darko Schneider's monograph *Krsto Hegedušić* (1974), this work is mentioned under one entry. It gives the name, year of creation and technique used in creating the fresco.<sup>4</sup> In the foreword to the catalogue of Željko Hegedušić's works (1999), the same author also mentions the fresco in one sentence, stating how Željko served as a model for the characters of Nikola Božidarević and Marin Držić in the *Croatian School*.<sup>5</sup> In 1997 Biserka Rauter Plančić proposed that Krsto portrayed Ivan Generalić in the form of Marin Držić.<sup>6</sup>

The most extensive text on the fresco was published by Meri Štajduhar in the *Cicero* journal (1999). In a short review, she presented the historical context and offered an iconographic interpretation of one group of the motifs

1 Gordan Ravančić, "Hrvatski institut za povijest – 60 godina suživota historiografije i *Gesamtkunstwerka* u Opatičkoj 10" [Croatian Institute of History – 60 Years of Coexistence of Historiography and *Gesamtkunstwerk* in 10 Opatička Street], in *Povijest i umjetnost na zidovima palače u Opatičkoj 10 u Zagrebu*, ed. Petra Vugrinec (Zagreb: Galerija Klovičevi dvori, 2020), 12–13.

2 Ibid., 12–13.

3 I would like to thank Matea Brstilo Rešetar, Snježana Pavičić and Kristijan Gotić from the Croatian History Museum for their help with this research.

4 Darko Schneider, "Kronika" [Chronicle], in *Krsto Hegedušić* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1974), 116–117.

5 Darko Schneider and Ana Medić, *Željko Hegedušić: retrospektivna izložba* [Željko Hegedušić: Retrospective Exhibition] (Zagreb: Galerija Klovičevi dvori, 1999), 27–28.

6 Biserka Rauter Plančić, "Krsto Hegedušić," in *Tko je tko u NDH: Hrvatska 1941.–1945.*, ed. Darko Stuparić (Zagreb: Minerva, 1997), 154.

present.<sup>7</sup> To this day, this remains the only, although short and informal, research paper produced on the *Croatian School*. Later texts continued to mention the fresco only marginally. The biographies of Krsto and Željko Hegedušić from the *Croatian Biographical Lexicon* (2002) mention the fresco's name with the year of its creation, stating that it shows the most significant individuals from the Croatian cultural circle.<sup>8</sup> In the catalogue made for the exhibition on Krsto Hegedušić (2011), Igor Zidić mentions the *Croatian School* in the context of the painter's compromises with the authorities, citing the existence of preparatory cards, although without any further explanation given.<sup>9</sup> Somewhat later, Mira Kolar Dimitrijević mentions the fresco on two occasions. In the first article (2010), she points out that it was created by following in the footsteps of Vlaho Bukovac's *Dubravka* and Izidor Kršnjavi's vision of an artistic gathering of famous Croats; she also gives information on how it depicts the medieval elite. Among them, she singles out the Franciscans Antun Bačić and Andrija Kačić Miošić.<sup>10</sup> In the second article (2013), Marko Marulić, Ivan Gundulić, Petar Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan stand out among the presented characters. She interprets the painting as an artistic achievement that emphasizes the connection between the Croatian north (humanist Zagreb) and the Croatian south (renaissance Dubrovnik).<sup>11</sup> Finally, in an article dedicated to Hegedušić's frescoes in Marija Bistrica (2015), Iva Kožnjak mentions this work as a fresco composition created at Opatička 10.<sup>12</sup>

In the periodicals of that time, the fresco is mentioned only once. In the weekly *Readiness – the Thought and Will of Ustasha Croatia* (1944), a reproduction was printed in two parts (the left and right sections of the fresco on two different sheets), entitled *Hrvatska kultura* (Croatian Culture). Besides this, no other information is provided.<sup>13</sup>

The archival sources and personal files of Krsto and Željko Hegedušić have proven both sparse and, it seems, thoroughly used.<sup>14</sup> While the files belonging

7 Meri Štajduhar, "Ratni zadaci Krste Hegedušića – Tko je tko u Hrvatskoj školi" [Krsto Hegedušić's War Tasks - Who's Who in the Croatian School], *Cicero*, no. 3 (1999): 31–33.

8 Višnja Flego, "Hegedušić, Krsto", in: *Hrvatski biografski leksikon* (2002), accessed September 28, 2021, <http://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=56>; Višnja Flego, "Hegedušić, Željko", in: *Hrvatski biografski leksikon* (2002), accessed September 28, 2021, <http://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=7376>

9 Igor Zidić, *Krsto Hegedušić* (Rovinj: Galerija Adris, 2011), 13.

10 Mira Kolar Dimitrijević and Elizabeta Wagner, "Izidor Kršnjavi i povijesne slike u zagrebačkoj Zlatnoj dvorani u Opatičkoj 10" [Izidor Kršnjavi and Historical Paintings in Zagreb Golden Hall on 10 Opatička Street], *Godišnjak Gradskog muzeja Sisak*, no. 10 (2010): 273–314, 279, 293.

11 Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, "Izidor Kršnjavi i simbolika zagrebačke Zlatne dvorane" [Izidor Kršnjavi and the Symbolism of the Zagreb Golden Hall], *Kolo*, no. 5 (2013), accessed September 27, 2020, <https://www.matica.hr/kolo/401/izidor-kršnjavi-i-simbolika-zagrebacke-zlatne-dvorane-22926/>.

12 Iva Kožnjak, "Borba za život i umjetnost Krste Hegedušića. Predložak za fresku Golgota i njezina realizacija" [The Struggle for the Life and Art of Krsto Hegedušić. Template for the Fresco of Golgotha and Its Realization], *Radovi Zavoda za znanstveni rad HAZU Varaždin*, no. 26 (2015): 271–272.

13 *Spremnost – misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske* [Readiness – The Thought and Will of Ustasha Croatia], no. 107, March 12, 1944, 1, 3.

14 Ljiljana Kolečnik states that the archives of Krsto Hegedušić have undergone a process of significant 'purification' and that the associated materials today are either inaccessible or unreliable. Compare: Ljiljana Kolečnik, *Između Istoka i Zapada* [Between East and West] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2006), 220.

to other important names from the archives of the Ministry are often quite detailed, this is not the case with the files related to the Hegedušić brothers. Krsto's files contain only the official tribunal gazette of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia with basic information about the artist,<sup>15</sup> while Željko's files consist of only one page – also containing overview information about the artist.<sup>16</sup> The Archive of the Croatian Society of Fine Artists is also modest and too unspecific in this regard, and does not reveal anything further.<sup>17</sup> According to Darko Schneider, in the aftermath of World War II, Krsto submitted a report on his public activities from the period of the existence of the Independent State of Croatia.<sup>18</sup> However, no trace of this can be found in the sources.<sup>19</sup> Just as there is no trace of a preparatory document with a list of characters, nor is there a contract by which the Independent State of Croatia government commissioned the creation of the fresco.<sup>20</sup>

## KRSTO AND ŽELJKO HEGEDUŠIĆ DURING WORLD WAR II

Even before the proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia, Krsto (1901–1975) and Željko Hegedušić (1906–2004) were known as left-wing, socially engaged artists. During the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Krsto was arrested in 1931 and again in 1932. Grupa Zemlja (The Earth Group), of which Krsto was a leading member and Željko an associate, was banned by the authorities in 1935.<sup>21</sup> In the so-called conflict on the Left, the Hegedušić brothers were opponents of social realism in art. Among some members of the Communist Party, such an attitude caused a feeling of aversion. Therefore,

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15 The following is quoted: ethnicity “Croat”, religion “Roman Catholic”, residence “Zagreb”, under the official civil service title of “Civil servant trainee”, “appointed at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb”, and at the end of the document are the date of “21<sup>st</sup> August 1937” and the place of “Zagreb”, along with the handwritten signature of Krsto Hegedušić and the seal of the Academy. Compare: Hegedušić, Krsto, no. 2532, II A - Ž, HR-HDA-216, Ministry of Education of the Independent State of Croatia, Croatian State Archives in Zagreb.

16 The following is quoted in the excerpt: title and place of office (“professor”, “The First State Men’s Real Grammar School in Zagreb”), nationality and citizenship (“Croatian, Independent State of Croatia”), military service and rank (“lieutenant, card 26. VIII. 43, no. 1550”), service in the war (“from March 8 to April 14, 1941 in the 57<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment”) and annual grades (very good grades for 1941 and 1942) and promotions. The facticity of the citations in the document dating from March 24, 1944, is confirmed by the signature of two professors and the principal of the First State Men’s Real Grammar School in Zagreb. Compare: Hegedušić, Želimir, no. 11429, II A - Ž, HR-HDA-216, Ministry of Education of the Independent State of Croatia, Croatian State Archives in Zagreb.

17 There is no significant information to be found among the sources belonging to the Archive of the Croatian Society of Fine Artists regarding the activities of Krsto and Željko during the war. Member descriptions are brief and formal. Among the founders of the Association of Visual Artists of Croatia from the 1945 register, Branka, Krsto and Željko Hegedušić can be found (under numbers 18, 19 and 20). Compare: Commission for admission and revision of members 1946–1992, lists of members of the Society 1945–1990, box 74, HR-HDA-1979- Croatian Society of Fine Artists.

18 Darko Schneider, “Kronika,” 116–117.

19 Vladimir Crnković believes that Krsto did not mention the fresco after the war for two reasons. First, he was a staunch leftist and during the war he painted in an effort to save his own life and the lives of his colleagues. Second, he was generally extremely self-critical of his work. As the fresco had only documentary and not artistic value, he did not talk about it further. I thank Vladimir Crnković for the information provided.

20 I thank Darko Schneider for the information provided.

21 Višnja Flego, “Hegedušić, Krsto,” and “Hegedušić, Željko.” For more on the “Earth” Association of Artists and the national artistic expression, compare: Petar Prelog, *Hrvatska moderna umjetnost i nacionalni identitet* [Croatian Modern Art and National Identity] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2018), 213–274.

it cannot be argued that both Krsto and Željko enjoyed unreserved support and trust from partisan circles, even during the war, despite unambiguously declared political views.<sup>22</sup>

With the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, and especially with the intensification of armed conflict, both Krsto and Željko came under government surveillance. In 1941 alone, Krsto managed to avoid the possibility of imprisonment or execution on three occasions thanks to the intervention of Đuro Vranešić's (1897–1946).<sup>23</sup> Vranešić intervened for the first time in April 1941, preventing Hegedušić's detention. The second time, he pulled him out of Lika – away from the shootings at Gospić and Jadovno. The third intervention happened with the help of Slavko Kvaternik (1878–1947) after a partisan attack on the members of the 13<sup>th</sup> Assault Company at the botanical garden in August 1941.<sup>24</sup> After that, Krsto was placed under house arrest. Đuro Vranešić gave him refuge in his sanatorium in the district of Zelengaj, where other political dissidents were also in hiding.<sup>25</sup>

Željko, who also stayed there in 1942, testified about the days in the sanatorium when he and Krsto, out of gratitude and as a sign of friendship towards Vranešić, made a fresco on the front of the sanatorium with the Hippocratic oath as the fresco's theme.<sup>26</sup> For a more precise dating of the *Croatian School*, it is important to note that the fresco *Hippocrates* was made in August 1942, which means that they started working at Opatička 10 in September or October of the same year at the earliest.<sup>27</sup> Željko pointed out that for *Hippocrates*, he chose the colors because, as he claimed, he was better at assessing what the paint on the wall would look like after it had dried.<sup>28</sup>

During the war, both Krsto and Željko continued to work as professors of drawing (and painting) in Zagreb.<sup>29</sup> Krsto participated in the first and second exhibition of Croatian artists held during the existence of the Independent

22 Krsto, for example, was kept under surveillance by an OZNA agent who, in a report, called him and Krleža party “defectors”. Compare: Frano Glavina, “Nadbiskup Stepinac i nacionalsocijalizam u svjetlu izvješća Gestapoa” [Archbishop Stepinac and National Socialism in the Light of the Gestapo Report], *Croatica Christiana periodica*, vol. 21, no. 40 (1997): 90.

23 Milan Gavrović, *Čovjek iz Krležine mape, Život i smrt Đure Vranešića* [The Man from Krleža's Map, The Life and Death of Đuro Vranešić] (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2011), 249.

24 The attack at the botanical garden was followed by persecutions, regardless of involvement in the attack. Slavko Kvaternik wrote about intervening on behalf of Krleža and Hegedušić in his memoirs. Compare: Nada Kisić Kolanović (ed.), *Vojskovođa i politika: sjećanja Slavka Kvaternika* [Military Leader and Politics: Memories of Slavko Kvaternik] (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1997), 207; On Vranešić's interventions on behalf of Krsto, see: Milan Gavrović, *Čovjek*, 88 (about the first intervention), 95–96 (about the second intervention), and 157–158 (about the third intervention).

25 Miroslav and Bela Krleža, Branka Hegedušić and Milan Sachs also found refuge in the sanatorium. In total, Vranešić hid 78 people, some even according to the will of the Party. He was shot after the war, despite Krleža's intervention with the authorities. See: Meri Štajduhar, “Hipokrat i hipokriti: zagonetka Hegedušićeve freske” [Hippocrates and Hypocrites: the Riddle of Hegedušić's Fresco], *Cicero*, no. 2 (1998/1999): 51–55, 53.

26 *Ibid.*, 53–54.

27 Željko Hegedušić testified that there was a photograph of him and his brother making a fresco under a cloth curtain due to the unbearable summer heat. Compare: *Ibid.*, 51.

28 *Ibid.*, 55.

29 Flego, “Hegedušić, Krsto” and “Hegedušić, Željko.”



State of Croatia, and he also took part in the exhibitions of Croatian art held in Berlin, Vienna and Bratislava.<sup>30</sup> For a more precise dating of the fresco, it is equally important to emphasize that at the end of 1943, Krsto, in agreement with the sculptor Antun Augustinčić (1900–1979), accepted an offer to paint the Sanctuary in Marija Bistrica.<sup>31</sup> The press of that time briefly reported on the progress of the work.<sup>32</sup> It was actually a cover by means of which Krsto, his family and a total of 35 painters and students were placed under the protection of the Catholic Church and thus made exempt from mobilization and shielded from persecution. The entire activity took place under the supervision of the Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac (1898–1960).<sup>33</sup> After the war, Krsto continued to work as a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, and in 1950 he founded and thenceforth led a master class within the frame of postgraduate painting studies. Željko continued to work as a drawing teacher in a grammar school until 1950, when he became employed as a professor at the Zagreb Academy of Applied Arts. Therefore, their pragmatic attitude during the war did not put their professional reputation in peril, nor did it threaten their chances of survival in any significant way.<sup>34</sup>

## BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE FRESCO

280 Based on the few sources available, it can be said with certainty that the brothers Krsto and Željko Hegedušić completed the *Croatian School* fresco in 1943. This is ultimately confirmed by the signature found on the fresco (“K Heg / Ž Hg / 1943”) (**fig. 2**). Judging by the location (Opatička 10) and the year of its creation, it can be stated that the contracting entity was the Ministry of Education of the Independent State of Croatia, under the auspices of minister Mile Starčević (1904–1953),<sup>35</sup> who was head of the Ministry from October 10, 1942 to October 11, 1943.<sup>36</sup> In August 1942, Krsto and Željko painted a fresco in Vranešić’s sanatorium. The fresco at Opatička 10 was, therefore, created in the period between (at the earliest) September 1942<sup>37</sup> and (at the latest) November 1943, when the Hegedušić brothers began work on the frescoes at Marija Bistrica.<sup>38</sup>

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30 Rauter Plančić, “Krsto Hegedušić,” 154.

31 Ivanka Reberski, “Zidne slike u crkvi Uznesenja Bl. Dj. Marije u Mariji Bistrici” [Wall Paintings in the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Marija Bistrica], *Peristil*, no. 52 (2009): 181–196.

32 “Freske hrvatskih umjetnika u Gospinoj bazilici na Bistrici” [Frescoes by Croatian Artists in Our Lady’s Basilica in Bistrica], *Hrvatski narod*, May 28, 1944, 4.

33 Schneider, “Kronika,” 117–118; Ivanka Reberski, “Svijetli put vjere i nacionalnog identiteta” [The Bright Path of Faith and National Identity], *Glas Koncila*, April 2, 2009, accessed October 10, 2021, <http://www.ktabk-bih.net/hr/iz-katolickog-tiska/glas-koncila-19883/19883>.

34 Flego, “Hegedušić, Krsto” and “Hegedušić, Željko.”

35 Briefly on Mile Starčević: Hrvoje Matković, *Povijest Nezavisne Države Hrvatske* [History of the Independent State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Naklada Pavičić, 2002), 270–271.

36 Jere Jareb, “Svjedočanstvo hrvatskog književnika Gabrijela Cvitana iz jeseni 1944.” [Testimony of the Croatian Writer Gabrijel Cvitan from the Autumn of 1944], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2003): 973–994, 976.

37 Štajduhar, “Hipokrat,” 53–54.

38 Reberski, “Zidne slike,” 181–196.



**Fig. 2.** Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, *The Croatian School*, signature, 1943, fresco, Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb. Photograph by Ivan Kokeza.



In 1942, Vladislav Kušan's book *Artworks in the Building of the Ministry of Education* was published in memory of Izidor Kršnjavi and printed by the Ministry of Education. The book talked about the history and arrangement of the rooms at Opatička 10, and the paintings from the so-called Golden Hall were described and interpreted.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps it was this book that prompted the commission of the *Croatian School*. The name *Croatian School* as well as the choice of colors might indicate that Raphael's fresco *The School of Athens* (1509–1511) from the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican served as a model from which the artists drew inspiration. The presence of a lyre motif indicates a certain influence on the part of Raphael's *Parnassus* fresco (1509–1511), also from the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican (compare Apollo or Orpheus with a lyre on the Hegedušić brothers' fresco with Terpsichore holding a lyre on Raphael's fresco).<sup>40</sup>

The thematic invocation of the Croatian north and south (through motifs from Ragusan and Dalmatian history on the left and characters from the history of Zagreb and continental Croatia on the right) could find a model in the works of earlier Croatian painters. It is known that Vlaho Bukovac painted *Dubravka* in 1894 for the Golden Hall. However, this painting ended up in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, so painting the *Croatian School* almost half a century later might represent a kind of recovery for a settlement loss that had taken place much earlier.<sup>41</sup> Minister Starčević viewed the Croatian north (Zagreb) and the Croatian south (Hvar and Dubrovnik) as “two hotspots around which Croatian art rose to its highest point,” as he stated in his speech

39 Vladislav Kušan, *Likovna djela u zgradi Ministarstva nastave* [Artworks in the Building of the Ministry of Education] (Zagreb: Ministarstvo nastave, 1942), 5–27.

40 “Room of the Segnatura,” accessed October 10, 2021, <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/stanze-di-raffaello/stanza-della-segnatura.html>.

41 Olga Maruševski, *Iso Kršnjavi: kultura i politika na zidovima palače u Opatičkoj 10* [Iso Kršnjavi: Culture and Politics on the Walls of the Palace on 10 Opatička Street] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2002), 166.

at the opening of the “Croatian Art Day” on August 10, 1942, just two months before becoming Minister of Public Education.<sup>42</sup>

Presumably, a contract for the commission of the work once existed. It has not been found yet, and perhaps it was not even preserved. Since both Krsto and Željko hid in Vranešić’s sanatorium before performing this task – and with their political and dissident status in mind – it is possible that they conducted the work on the basis of verbal agreement with the leading members of the Ministry. On the other hand, it is hard to believe that such a significant and large assignment (measuring approximately 2.7 x 5.6 meters) would be done without legal regulations or a written agreement, moreover, in the very center of the city and in a historically prominent building.<sup>43</sup> The lack of sources leaves too much room for speculation, so it is not possible to claim anything definitively. It is not known whether the Hegedušić brothers attained the commission through their contacts with Vranešić as their earlier benefactor or Stepinac as their later benefactor. Whether they were paid for the task or used it to buy time with the authorities is also an enigma. Mile Starčević maintained contacts with Stepinac in the earlier years, and it has often been pointed out that he negotiated with the leaders of the Hrvatska seljačka stranka (the Croatian Peasant Party; HSS) about joining the government of the Independent State of Croatia, and also with Miroslav Krleža regarding his potential intendency at the Croatian National Theater in Zagreb.<sup>44</sup> This information is all the more interesting when one takes into consideration the fact that the HSS retained a certain influence over the educational sector and the administrative bodies of the Ministry during the war years, too.<sup>45</sup>

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## ABOUT THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE FRESCO

It is not yet known whether the authors chose the characters at their own discretion or whether they were limited by a list of historical figures included in the contract. Therefore, the question of “Who is who?” in the *Croatian School* fresco remains relevant (**fig. 3**). While the literature primarily emphasizes the thematic connection between Dubrovnik and Zagreb, according to the characters shown (as will be presented below) the fresco is more about the thematic connection of the entire coastline, led by the city of Dubrovnik, and the entire continental area, led by the city of Zagreb.

To determine the iconography of the fresco, one should start from the architectural backdrop. On the left, there are the capitals of the Rector’s Palace and the fortress of St. John in Dubrovnik, while on the right are the Old Capitol Town Hall and the Bakač Tower in Zagreb. The motifs of Dubrovnik and Zagreb exteriors are separated by a sculpture of Apollo or perhaps Orpheus

42 Mile Starčević, “Hrvatska kulturna posebnost” [Croatian Cultural Peculiarity], *Prosvjetni život*, no. 3, September 1942, 97–99, 98, my translation.

43 Štajduhar, “Ratni zadaci,” 33.

44 Matković, *Povijest*, 270–271.

45 Jareb, “Svjedočanstvo,” 981, 985–986.

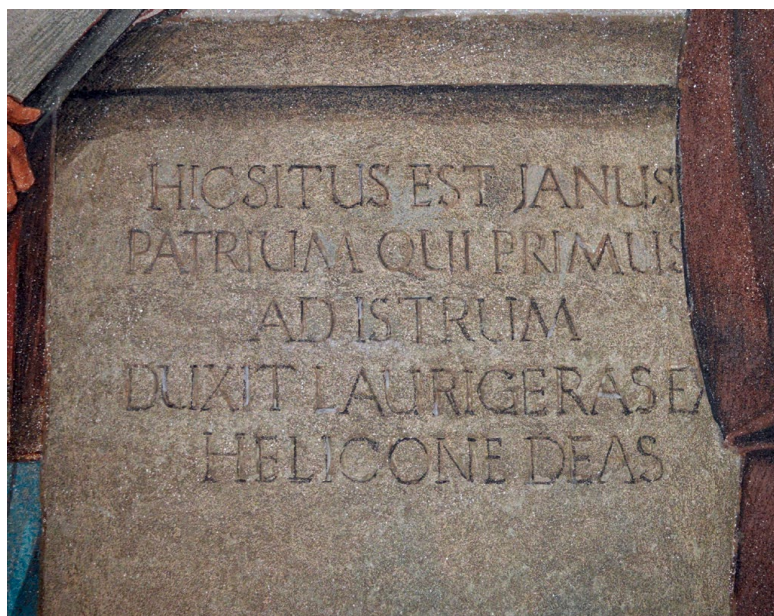




**Fig. 3.** Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, *The Croatian School*, numbered characters, 1943, fresco, Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb. Photograph by Ivan Kokeza.

with a lyre (similar to Apollo from the Pio–Clementino Museum in Rome).<sup>46</sup> On the pedestal of the statue there is a distich (**fig. 4**) by the famous Renaissance poet Ivan Česmički, i.e. Janus Pannonius (1434–1472), taken from the Elegy in Tabor (*Hic situs est Ianus, patrium qui primus ad Istrum / Duxit laurigeras ex Helicone deas*; translated by Nikola Šop as: There lies the poet Ivan / who brought first a poem / from the divine Helikon / to the native Danube).<sup>47</sup> The elegy was written on the battlefield a few years before the poet's death, and was probably chosen for its melancholy expression, war symbolism and the prominent role of Ivan Česmički in Croatian and European Renaissance literature.<sup>48</sup>

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**Fig. 4.** Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, *The Croatian School*, detail with verses on the pedestal of the monument, 1943, fresco, Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb. Photograph by Ivan Kokeza.

Most historical figures can be identified by their physical characteristics or other specific attributes. On the right side of the painting under number 1, judging by her face and the treatment of her hair, the Ragusan poet Cvijeta Zuzorić (1552–1648) can be found. Under number 2, the Ragusan writer Nikola Vitov Gučetić (1549–1610), Cvijeta's friend, can be seen in her company. He pointed Cvijeta out as a prime example of intellect and beauty, that is, goodness, thus defending her from the unfavorable environment of the city of Dubrovnik. For this reason, it can be concluded that he is placed under number 2, despite the fact that the character

<sup>46</sup> "Apollo Musagetes," accessed October 10, 2021, <https://www.theoi.com/Gallery/S5.7.html>

<sup>47</sup> Štajduhar, "Ratni zadaci," 33.

<sup>48</sup> Francesco Coppola, "Tema smrti u Elegijama Jana Pannoniusa (Ivana Česmičkog)" [The Theme of Death in the Elegies of Jan Pannonius (Ivan Česmički)], *Dani Hvarškoga kazališta: Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu*, vol. 18, no. 1 (1992): 184–200.

was obviously made according to the likeness of the Dubrovnik poet Junije Palmotić (1607–1657).

On their right, under numbers 3, 4, 5 and 6, there is a group of Ragusan and Dalmatian writers and poets, and perhaps painters, too. Among them are the faces of Ivan Gundulić (1589–1638) with a book in his hands, under number 5, and Marko Marulić (1450–1524), whose appearance is among other things revealed by the recognizable cover of his poem *Judita* (Judith), under number 6. It is not yet possible to determine who the characters under numbers 3 and 4 are. It is known, for example, that Željko Hegedušić was the model for the Ragusan painter Nikola Božidarević (ca. 1460–1517/18). However, it would be more logical for Božidarević's character to be placed to the right of this group, in the company of other painters, sculptors and builders. Perhaps number 3 could be Marin Držić (1508–1567), for whose depiction Željko also served as the model. Meri Štajduhar thought that Petar Zoranić (1508– before 1569), Šiško Menčetić (1457–1527) or Džore Držić (1461–1501) could be hidden in the fresco too.<sup>49</sup> However, she did not explain her proposition of the presence of the latter characters in more detail.

On the right side, from number 7 to number 10, there is a group of painters, sculptors and architects. Among them is the face of the miniaturist Julije Klović (1498–1578) under number 8. Other characters, however, are not as easy to identify, especially since two of the four characters (under numbers 9 and 10) are painted without any clear attributes, or from the back. The artist under number 7 is holding a draft of a building under his feet, probably the dome of the Šibenik Cathedral, which would mean that a portrait of Juraj Dalmatinac is included in the fresco (ca. 1400–1473/1475). The figure under number 9 is holding an empty flat work object in his hands and is standing on a grave without a completely visible coat of arms (next to that grave there is another grave with a blind coat of arms). To his right, there is a similarly dressed Renaissance figure (under number 10), but without any attributes. Whether it is Lucijan Vranjanin (ca. 1420–1479), Franjo Vranjanin (ca. 1430–1502) or Andrija Aleši (1425–1505) remains unknown.

The next group (from number 11 to number 14) consists of monks, three Franciscans and one Jesuit. The first Franciscan on the left, under number 11, might be Marin Držić who, as Štajduhar noted, is holding chains in his hands as a symbol of his burdensome fate. Držić, however, is not considered to have been a Franciscan, so this thesis remains questionable. The other Franciscan on the left (number 13) is holding his hands folded and is painted without any attributes, so it is not possible to determine who he is either. Štajduhar and Kolar Dimitrijević have proposed a number of individuals, including Filip Grabovac (1697–1749), Antun Bačić (ca. 1690–1758), Matija Petar Katančić (1750–1825) and Juraj Dragišić (ca. 1445–1520).<sup>50</sup> However, it is not yet possible to say who

49 Štajduhar, "Ratni zadaci," 33.

50 Ibid., 33; Kolar Dimitrijević, "Izidor Kršnjavi," 279, 293.

is who. The third Franciscan on the left (number 14) is holding a piece of paper in his hand on which there are verses written in two columns, so it is probably Andrija Kačić Miošić (1704–1760). The Jesuit, under number 12, may be the physicist and philosopher Ruđer Bošković (1711–1787), although this is not certain either. This group of characters is located above a grave with the Rama coat of arms, representing Bosnia (with the depiction of a hand with a sword), which could suggest a close connection between the Franciscan order and the Bosnia and Herzegovina area. Generally speaking, this is the most demanding group in terms of identification.

On the right side of the above-mentioned monks there are four more figures, one of whom (number 18) has his back turned, so it is not possible to establish his identity. The other three are, as is evident from the depiction of faces and clothes, respectively: Fran Krsto Frankopan (1643–1671), under number 15, Petar Zrinski (1621–1671), under number 16, and the Ottoman statesman Mehmed-paša Sokolović (1506–1579), under number 17.<sup>51</sup> Such a choice of characters corresponds to the then current socio-political situation and particularly to the social position of Muslims in the Independent State of Croatia and the strong cult of the Zrinskis and the Frankopans as fighters for Croatian independence.<sup>52</sup>

On the far right under number 19, a picture inside of a picture can be noticed. Bernardo Bobić (? – ca. 1695) is probably depicted as he is painting an image of the construction of the Zagreb Cathedral, perhaps with St. Ladislav in the foreground. Painting accessories are located nearby, a clue which together with the illustration on the canvas facilitates the process of identification in this case, given that the character has his back turned. This choice is in line with the righthand, predominantly Zagrebian part of the exterior. Under number 20, as can be seen by the face, Baltazar Adam Krčelić, theologian and historian, can be found (1715–1778). By his side, under number 21, judging by the white pen, there is another Enlightenment writer, Matija Antun Relković (1732–1798).

The character under number 22 is a kind of a riddle. According to the monk's (Pauline) clothing, it could be the satirist Tituš Brezovački (1757–1805). There is a fly close to his feet (**fig. 5**); it is not certain whether this has anything to do with the character, the theme of the painting in general, or whether it is connected to both of these things. Brezovački's comedic status and the symbolism of the fly could indicate the Hegedušić brothers' political distancing from the fresco and the work in the Ministry. *Musca domestica* would therefore be associated with mortality and an unwanted compromise with the authorities.<sup>53</sup>

51 Mehmed-pasha Sokolović was considered a Croat, as evidenced, for example, by the "Famous and Deserving Croats" lexicon from 1925. Compare: Emilij Laszowski, ed., *Famous and Deserving Croats* (Zagreb: Committee for book publishing, 1925), 242.

52 Matković, *Povijest*, 132–134.

53 On the symbolism of the fly in general see: Ivana Podnar, "O simbolizmu životinja" [On the Symbolism of Animals], *Vijenac* (November 19, 2009), no. 410, accessed October 10, 2021, <http://www.matica.hr/vijenac/410/o-simbolizmu-zivotinja-2805/>.



The figure with the book, under number 23, would be a continuation of the characters from the Enlightenment period and could represent their predecessor, the historian and diplomat Pavao Ritter Vitezović (1652–1713). In the characters next to him (numbers 24 and 25), Štajduhar saw Faust (1551–1617) and Antun (1504–1573) Vrančić. While Faust, in her opinion, is leaning on a crosier, his uncle Antun is holding his book *Illyrica historia* in his hand.<sup>54</sup> However, as the cover of the book proves, it is not about Antun Vrančić, but about Antun Vramec (1538–1587), a priest and writer, who is holding his work *Kronika vezda znovich zpravliena Kratka Szlouenzkim iezikom* (A Chronicle written in the Slavic Language) in his hand. The figure next to him, sitting on a tombstone identical to the one from the Radmilja necropolis, does not represent Faust Vrančić, but the Lutheran reformer Matija Vlačić Ilirik (1520–1575). This is evidenced by the recognizable clothes, hat and an ordinary old man's stick (**fig. 6**).<sup>55</sup> This choice is interesting in the context of the Axis cooperation with the Germans and the political status of Istria of that time.

286 The last three characters (numbers 26, 27 and 28) prove once again that an important segment of the picture is provided not only by characters from



Fig. 5. Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, *The Croatian School*, detail of a fly, 1943, fresco, Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb. Photograph by Ivan Kokeza.



Fig. 6. Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, *The Croatian School*, Antun Vramec and Matija Vlačić Ilirik, 1943, fresco, Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb. Photograph by Ivan Kokeza.

54 Štajduhar, "Ratni zadaci," 33.

55 Laszowski, ed., *Znameniti*, 80–81.

Fig. 7. Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, *The Croatian School, St. Jerome*, 1943, fresco, Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb. Photograph by Ivan Kokeza.



Dubrovnik, but also by figures from Dalmatian history in general. Their appearance in the context of the capitulation of Italy in 1943 is all the more interesting. By painting famous people from Dalmatian history, the historical affiliation of the eastern Adriatic coast to the Croatian state was emphasized. This narrative was popularized anew in public during 1943, when the Independent State of Croatia took over the Adriatic coast with the help of the German army (*Wehrmacht*).<sup>56</sup>

Judging by the habit, the relief of the lion (the saint's attribute) and the crescent (a symbol of Illyricum as the birthplace), St. Jerome (ca. 342–420) is found under number 26. Next to his feet there is an unknown (only partially visible) sealed document and a depiction of Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić (ca. 1350–1416) from Hrvoje's missal (fig. 7). In addition to St. Jerome there is also a piece of an altar rail on which Duke Trpimir's inscription (*Pro duce Trepim/ero*) is engraved. This fragment originated from the Benedictine monastery in Rižinice near Klis, and also appeared on the cover of the *Journal of Croatian History* from 1943.<sup>57</sup>

Illustrating St. Jerome (with allusions to the area of his birth), Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić and a fragment with Duke Trpimir's inscription confirms that the fresco covers the wider area of Dalmatia and Bosnia with its motifs. The meaning of the fresco, in short, is not only a symbolic connection between Dubrovnik and Zagreb, but also the entirety of their regions and hinterlands, i.e. all the territories under the real or at least nominal rule of the Independent State of Croatia.<sup>58</sup> This narrative also includes areas that were claimed in

<sup>56</sup> On the culture of the Independent State of Croatia, see: Matković, *Povijest*, 135–150.

<sup>57</sup> *Časopis za hrvatsku povijest* [Journal of Croatian History] (Zagreb: Hrvatski izdavački bibliografski zavod, 1943), 1–2.

<sup>58</sup> Such a narrative was also present in other artistic fields, as evidenced, for example, by the reviews of the Zagrebian and Ragusan theatrical traditions of the time. Compare: Dušan Žanko, "Kulturno sjedinjenje našeg XVI. i XX. st." [The Cultural Unification of Our 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Spremnost: misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske*, December 24, 1942, no. 44, 45, 12.



a political sense (the example of Vlačić Ilirik and Istria).<sup>59</sup> That this is so is also confirmed by the characters under numbers 27 (master Radovan works on a sculpture of Eve for the portal of the Trogir Cathedral) and 28 (master Andrija Buvina observes a fragment from the bottom of the door of the Split Cathedral). Both artists lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and worked in the Trogir and Split areas, which were ceded to the Kingdom of Italy by the Treaties of Rome in May 1941. Their appearance on the fresco from 1943 represented a kind of claim or symbolic demand for the recovery of these areas.

## CONCLUSION

The *Croatian School* fresco was created in the period between September 1942 and November 1943 by order of the Ministry of Education of the Independent State of Croatia, under the authority of minister Mile Starčević. The authors of the fresco, Krsto and Željko Hegedušić, were known as political dissidents and sympathizers of the Communist Party. It is not yet known if this fresco represents a kind of deal with the authorities of the time, and whether it was created in order to protect its authors from further detention.

288 The authorities of the Independent State of Croatia did not work in a systematic and disciplined manner on a new vision for the fine arts, as Hitler's Germany did, for example. This is proven, among other things, by exhibits from exhibitions of Croatian artists in the Independent State of Croatia in 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944. The fresco of the Hegedušić brothers is an integral part of this stylistically heterogeneous wartime period. In public commissions, the political structures of the time often relied on renowned painters and sculptors, or at least on the tried-and-tested artistic practices of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, as in the case of the *Croatian School*, the emphasis remained on national content, and less on artistic form, for the creation of which (following the examples of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy) there was neither logistics nor time under the conditions of constant war.

Although the concept of the arrangement of the rooms at Opatička 10 originated from the times of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the choice of motifs and iconography correspond primarily to the era of the Independent State of Croatia. The theme of the work does not refer exclusively to the connection between Dubrovnik and Zagreb as two cultural hotspots, but is also inclusive of other areas of the state of that time. In this regard, motifs from the histories of Bosnia and Dalmatia, in particular, are represented. The background of the painting with the sights of Dubrovnik and Zagreb is an architectural backdrop under which important figures from Croatian history are gathered from the whole region. The ideological and territorial consolidation of that area was an important part of the educational and cultural policy of the new authorities. In this respect, the Hegedušić brothers' fresco was symbolic, and, within

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59 During World War II, Istria was part of fascist Italy (first the Kingdom of Italy, and later the Italian Social Republic - when it was also an integral part of the German operational zone).

the framework of historical painting, their only contribution toward such aspirations. During the war, the fresco was not given special attention. It seems to have carried the burden of the ideological unsuitability of its authors. After World War II, in the context of socialist Yugoslavia, both the commission and the content were controversial. Neither Krsto nor Željko Hegedušić wanted to remember the compromise by which they put their own political and artistic convictions to the test.





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## EDUCATION, ART, AND POLITICS: THE ALTAR OF SAINT STEPHEN AT THE PIARIST GYMNASIUM CHAPEL IN NAGYBECSKEREK\*

**Keywords:** Sacral heritage,  
Saint Istvan, Hungarian  
nationalism, Torontál county

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### Abstract

*This paper will use the altarpiece of St. Stephen of Hungary as a case study to analyse the social and cultural circumstances on the southern outskirts of the Kingdom of Hungary and their consequences on the Torontál County school and church administration. The portrayal of the Hungarian Holy King in the Piarist Gymnasium Chapel in Nagybecskerek (Zrenjanin) is a testimony to the continuance of the narrative about the Christian past of the Hungarian people and the need to keep emphasising it in multi-ethnic regions during the Hungarian Revolution and the Serb Uprising of 1848–1849. Having reconsidered the mutual relationship between revolutionary events, education reforms, and assimilation tendencies, the paper sheds light on the dynamic political situation at the time when the Gymnasium Chapel altarpiece of St. Stephen of Hungary was made.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The Piarist Gymnasium Chapel was established in 1846 as part of the city gymnasium compound in (Veliki) Becskerek (Nagybecskerek, present-day Zrenjanin), the capital of Torontál County. Torontál County (Latin: Comitatus Torontaliensis; Hungarian: Torontál vármegye; German: Torontaler Comitat) was a political and administrative area of the former Kingdom of Hungary, which was part of the western Banat from the Middle Ages until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918.<sup>1</sup> Significant political, administrative and demographic changes that took place on the territory of Torontál County influenced everyday life of the Banat region, becoming an essential part of its cultural and historical heritage.<sup>2</sup>

In these historical circumstances, an initiative was launched to establish a gymnasium in Becskerek.<sup>3</sup> The construction of the Becskerek Gymnasium was a long and arduous process that was financially supported not just by the local self-government but also by church institutions, citizens, and guilds of bootmakers, tanners, masons, tailors, and bakers. The interest in fundraising

\* Translated by Tijana Borić, PhD.

1 For more on this topic, see Filip Krčmar, “Torontalska županija 1860–1918” [Torontál County 1860–1918], (PhD diss., University of Novi Sad, 2016), 2–7.

2 Ibid., 17.

3 Saveta Stojanović, *Monografija Zrenjaninske gimnazije* [Monograph of Zrenjanin Gymnasium], book no. 2 (Zrenjanin: Narodni muzej Zrenjanin, 1997), 11.

on the part of the Beckserek community members reveals the importance of establishing a sixth-grade educational institution in this part of Banat and the awareness of its citizens about the role of the educational system in the state corps of southern Hungary. The Gymnasium Compound was built and artistically designed mainly owing to the initiative of wealthy citizens and craft guilds. Shortly after the Gymnasium Compound was completed, an altarpiece representing the Holy King Stephen was placed in the Gymnasium Chapel. The artist József Wippler (1793–1867) created the image of the patron saint of the Gymnasium.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the altar painting was a gift from the Beckserek Guild of Bootmakers emphasised the local community's devotion to the cult figure. Master guilds competed in donations to stress their social position and become established local community members.

Despite the successful fundraising for the construction of the Gymnasium Compound, the issue of the educational goal of schooling remained open. The Serbian population of Beckserek demanded a non-confessional city school to avoid the Catholicization of Orthodox students and those of other confessions. Despite this initiative for non-confessional education, the Csanád Bishop József Lonovics found the Piarist Catholic Religious Order to be the best option for the *milieu* of Torontál County.<sup>5</sup> Assigning the administration to the Piarists was a compromise solution that was supposed to satisfy the needs of all the residents of Beckserek. The Piarist Gymnasium administration provided education to Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Jewish students. As a monastic order focused on educating the lowest social stratum, the Piarists ran an extensive school network in the territories belonging to the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Children of different religious groups, nationalities and economic statuses attended the Piarist schools, and the Piarist type of education was very suitable for the diverse demographics of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>7</sup> The Chapel of St. Stephen of Hungary was the first institution under the administration of the Piarists in the Banat part of Torontál County.<sup>8</sup>

The Order of the Piarists (*Ordo scholarum piarum*) was founded in 1621 by the priest Joseph Calasanz, and was the first Catholic religious order primarily dedicated to children's education.<sup>9</sup> This model of religious education proved to

4 Goran Malić, "Delovanje jevrejskih fotografa u srpskoj kulturi u XIX i XX veku" [Activities of Jewish Photographers in Serbian Culture in the 19th and 20th Centuries], *Godišnjak grada Beograda*, no. 53 (2006): 54–56.

5 Stojanović, *Monografija Zrenjaninske gimnazije*, 12–13.

6 Antonio Lezáun, *The History of the Order of the Pious Schools* (Madrid: Instituto Calasanz de Ciencias de la Educación, 2011), 112.

7 Montserrat Guibernau, "Anthony D. Smith on Nations and National Identity: A Critical Assessment," in *History and National Destiny: Ethnosymbolism and its Critics*, eds. Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2004), 139–140; Lezáun, *The History of the Order of the Pious Schools*, 2011, 77–78.

8 Dubravka Đukanović, *Arhitektura rimokatoličkih crkava Vojvodine od 1699. do 1939. godine* [Architecture of Roman Catholic Churches in Vojvodina from 1699 to 1939] (Novi Sad: Pokrajinski zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture, 2015), 166.

9 Mileva Šijaković, "Velikobečkerečki slikar Jozef Goigner" [Nagybecskerek painter Josef Goigner], *Ulaznica: časopis za kulturu, umetnost i društvena pitanja*, no. 110, December 1987, 106–115.

be very successful, and in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became the dominant educational system in Central Europe, mainly in Hungarian lands with centres in Budapest, Kecskemét, Szeged, Nagykanizsa and Timișoara.<sup>10</sup> Education played a significant role throughout the Kingdom of Hungary, especially in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Piarist Gymnasium in Bečskerek was opened. The curriculum reflected the current national and cultural aspirations. Therefore, in order to understand the historical circumstances in Torontál County in the late 1840s, it is necessary to examine the educational reforms as well.

Major school reforms in Hungary began as early as the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, modelled on the Austrian educational system, i.e., the regulation (*Ratio Educationis*, 1777) passed during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780).<sup>11</sup> This regulation marked the initial phase of education reform cloaked by the ideology of assimilation espoused by the Hungarian authorities, which would reach its final form with the adoption of the Law on Nationalities (1868. évi XXXVIII törvénycikk a népiskolai közoktatás tárgyában). Its provisions were the cornerstone of the further assimilation process of Hungarianization, which would be developed until the disintegration of Austria-Hungary.<sup>12</sup>

The schooling community of Torontál County suffered pressure from the Viennese court and the Catholic Church throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Then, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was exposed to the pressure of the Hungarianization process.<sup>13</sup> The new school reforms also affected the Piarists' curriculum, which promoted Hungarian culture and language, encouraged by the local government.<sup>14</sup> The government elevated education the best means of integrating the Hungarian people as the state firmly controlled this field, making organisational changes and reforms in the school system's curriculum from the lowest to the highest level.<sup>15</sup> The goal of these reforms was the nonviolent, soft assimilation of non-Hungarian peoples through the Hungarianization of intellectuals in literature, science, and education.<sup>16</sup>

The construction of a chapel within the Gymnasium Compound dedicated to the Holy Hungarian King points to the complex set of national and religious circumstances in Torontál County in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Political, administrative, and demographic changes affected Torontál County, which led to the establishment of this crucial educational institution on the southern

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10 Đukanović, *Arhitektura rimokatoličkih crkava Vojvodine*, 142.

11 Krčmar, "Torontalska županija 1860–1918", 378; Petar Rokai, Zoltan Đere et al., *Istorija Mađara* [History of Hungarians] (Beograd: Clio, 2002), 235; Stojanović, *Monografija Zrenjaninske gimnazije*, 10.

12 Anthony D. Smith, "The Crisis of Dual Legitimation," in: *Nationalism*, eds. Smith and Hutchinson, 113–121.

13 Alfred Cobban, "The Rise of the Nation-State System," in: *Nationalism*, eds. Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 249–250.

14 Lezáun, *The History of the Order of the Pious Schools*, 109.

15 Rokai, Đere et al., *Istorija Mađara*, 234..

16 *Ibid.*, 226–227.

outskirts of the Kingdom of Hungary. The fundraising activities of citizens, church administration, and local authorities additionally confirmed the importance of establishing the Gymnasium Compound for the multi-ethnic community of Becskerek.

The choice of the Piarists for the management of the Becskerek Gymnasium satisfied the multi-confessional criteria of the region. At the same time, the Chapel's dedication to the Holy King Stephen emphasised the dominant position of Hungarians in Torontál County. The period at which the Gymnasium was founded (i.e., during which the central altar painting was created) was an era of national tensions and the beginning of the assimilation process on the border territories of Hungary. In such circumstances, the portrayal of St. Stephen of Hungary in the Gymnasium Chapel was much more than just an altarpiece. It was a testimony to the Hungarian pretensions in the pre-revolutionary period, i.e., the instrumentalization of the sacred object for the sake of national objectives.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

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The period preceding the 1848 Revolution (the Reform Period, Hungarian: *reform kór*, 1825–1848) was a time of the growing Romanticism and national revival in the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>17</sup> The rise of the ideology of nationalism among the Hungarian people was reflected in culture, and the Reform Period caused the development of various cultural centres across the southern territories of the Kingdom of Hungary. The flourishing of cultural life in Becskerek corroborates this fact. Becskerek was at the time a county seat, so in 1839 the city theatre was built, along with the first city reading room. A bookstore opened in 1843, and the first printing house owned by the Regensburg bookstore vendor Franz Paul Pleitz was opened in 1847.<sup>18</sup> The Piarist Gymnasium was built in 1846 under this wave of construction, establishing Becskerek as an important educational and cultural centre in the southern part of the Kingdom of Hungary.

Apart from the decade-long cultural revival, the revolutionary events in 1848–1849 affected the further progress of Becskerek because Torontál County was pivotal in the civil war between Hungarians and Serbs. The Hungarian Revolution of 1848, which started as a peaceful protest of liberal politicians in Buda and Pest, emerged from the longstanding conflict between the Hungarians and the Viennese court, which sought to govern the Austrian Empire centrally.<sup>19</sup> The conflict with the Serbs arose later, when the newly formed independent Hungarian government refused to fulfil the national demands of the non-Hungarian nationalities.<sup>20</sup>

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17 Krčmar, "Torontalska županija 1860–1918," 144; Alfred Cobban, "The Rise of the Nation-State System," 249–250.

18 Ibid., 145.

19 Ibid., 146.

20 Feliks Mileker, *Istorija varoši Veliki Bečkerek 1333–1918* [History of the Town of Nagybecskerek] (Zrenjanin–Beograd: Istorijски arhiv–IP Beograd, 2011), 315; Rokai, Đere et al., *Istorija Mađara*,

At the 1848 County Assembly, a letter from the governor's office was read, proclaiming the freedom of the press and the establishment of the Hungarian People's Army. That proclamation triggered a reaction by Serbian citizens, who set the Hungarian language registry books on fire and attempted to remove the Hungarian tricolour flag from the Beckserek town hall.<sup>21</sup> After the May Assembly and the constitution of the Serbian Vojvodina (which included the Torontál County) on May 13, 1848 in Sremski Karlovci, the Hungarian-Serbian conflict worsened. The National Guard designated Beckserek and Vršac as key strongholds.<sup>22</sup>

Due to the war atmosphere, the Vienna administration abolished schools on 10 June 1848. Hence, the Piarist school was turned into a military hospital.<sup>23</sup> After the Serbs conquered Veliki Beckserek on January 12, 1849, the Serbian People's Committee of Veliki Beckserek took over the city government. It started forming new authorities, electing Patriarch Josif Rajačić (1785–1861) as acting governor of the Serbian Vojvodina.<sup>24</sup> From January 23 to April 3, Patriarch Rajačić led an active process of establishing the authority of the Serbian People's Movement in Torontál County. Residing in the Piarist Gymnasium, he served liturgy in the Gymnasium Chapel of St. Stephen of Hungary.<sup>25</sup>

During the Revolutionary Period, the Piarist Gymnasium, i.e., the Piarist Chapel, served various purposes – as an ammunition depot, a military hospital, and a temporary seat of the Serbian Orthodox leader. While the exterior was considerably damaged, the Chapel's interior remained intact. Consequently, the altar and the image of St. Stephen of Hungary were preserved, and represent one of the few known sacral artworks of József Wippler. The preserved altarpiece of St. Stephen was the starting point for the art programme of the Gymnasium Chapel, which would only be fully completed thirty years later.<sup>26</sup>

This turbulent revolutionary environment marked the first decade of the Beckserek Gymnasium, paving the ground for the further development of the educational and social system of Torontál County. The Gymnasium was reopened in the school year 1849/1850 with a significantly changed curriculum: the schooling length was reduced to four years, while German language became the medium of instruction. Even Hungarian history courses were taught in German, which confirmed the post-revolutionary national tension, whereas

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248; Peter Sugar, "Nationalism in Eastern Europe," in *Nationalism*, eds. Smith and Hutchinson, 171–176, 174–175.

21 Krčmar, "Torontalska županija 1860–1918," 147.

22 Dejan Mikavica, Nenad Lemajić et al., *Srbi u Habsburškoj monarhiji 1526–1918* [Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy 1526–1918] (Novi Sad: Prometej, no. 1, 2016), 417–474; Krčmar, "Torontalska županija 1860–1918," 148; Rokai, Đere et al., *Istorija Madara*, 245–248.

23 Krčmar, "Torontalska županija 1860–1918," 148; Stojanović, *Monografija Zrenjaninske gimnazije*, 15.

24 Krčmar, "Torontalska županija 1860–1918," 151.

25 Miloš Popović, "U Velikom Bečkereku, 10. februara" [10<sup>th</sup> of February in the Nagybeckserek], *Srbske novine*, February 15, 1849, 2.

26 Vanja Stojković, "Pijaristička kapela Svetog Stefana u Zrenjaninu: Istorija i slikarstvo" [The Piarist Chapel of Saint Stephen in Zrenjanin: History and Art], in *Zbornik Matice srpske za likovne umetnosti*, no. 49 (2021): 143–160.



Serbian history was left entirely out of the curriculum. The new educational policy, with its tendency toward Germanization, lasted until 1860, when the Hungarian language was gradually reintroduced into the curriculum.<sup>27</sup>

The national revolution of 1848, lasting from March to September, significantly influenced the further development of culture and education in Becskerek. The revolutionary events of 1848 abruptly interrupted the flourishing of the cultural life in the city, and the change of the Gymnasium Compound's function mirrored the outcomes of the Serbian-Hungarian conflict in Becskerek.<sup>28</sup> Despite the revolutionary events and dynamic changes in the Chapel's function, the altarpiece of St. Stephen was not damaged. Thus, the altarpiece has a historical memorial aspect apart from its sacral and national character. The altarpiece symbolises hardships during the revolutionary conflicts and struggles to preserve the Hungarian national idea in challenging times.

## THE CULT OF SAINT STEPHEN: ORIGIN AND RECEPTION IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

296 The dedication of the Gymnasium Chapel to St. Stephen (Szent István király, 995–1038), the first Christian Hungarian ruler, points to the widespread cult of this mythical person, crucial for the development of national consciousness on the part of the Hungarian people.<sup>29</sup> According to the prevailing cultural and political currents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, European nations used visual representations as a mechanism for promoting their longevity.<sup>30</sup> Following the example of other European countries, the Kingdom of Hungary also initiated the development of historiography at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Historiographical works dealt with the origins of the Hungarian people, emphasising its longevity rooted in the pagan and/or Christian past. Despite their scientific pretensions, such historiographical works were mostly romantic; applying the ideals of the Modern Age to the fictional Middle Ages, contemporary historiographers presented the Kingdom of Hungary as a single state, although it has been established that the concept of Hungarian statehood developed gradually.<sup>31</sup> Referring to the ancient and medieval past, embodied in the figure of the epic forefather King Stephen and the narrative of ethnogenesis, the Hungarian nation invented its tradition<sup>32</sup> to confirm national identity.<sup>33</sup>

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27 Lezáun, *The History of the Order of the Pious Schools*, 100.

28 Rokai, Dere et al., *Istorija Madara*, 239–249.

29 Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 163–164.

30 Erzsébet Király, Júlia Papp, *A magyar művészet a 19. században (Képzőművészet)* [Hungarian Art in the 19th Century (Fine Arts)] (Budapest: Mta Btk–Osiris, 2018), 97.

31 Rokai, Dere et al., *Istorija Madara*, 15.

32 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3–10, 263–288; Eric Kaufmann and Oliver Zimmer “Dominant ethnicity and the ethnic-civic dichotomy in the work of Anthony D. Smith” in *History And National Destiny*, eds. Guibernau and Hutchinson, 63–65., Anthony D. Smith “History and national destiny: responses and clarifications” in *History And National Destiny*, eds. Guibernau and Hutchinson, 196–199.

33 Nenad Makuljević, *Umetnost i nacionalna ideja u XIX veku sistem evropske i srpske vizuelne kulture u službi nacije* [Introduction to the National Idea of the 19th Century European System of European and Visual Culture] (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2006), 255–318.

Hungarians first embraced Christianity during the reign of King Árpád (845–907). However, mass baptisms and the ecclesiastical territorial organisation only took place upon Vajk's ascension to power in 995 (Vajk was the pagan name of the Holy King Stephen/István). The first Christian ruler of Hungary, King Stephen I, continued his predecessor Árpád's activities and started systematically baptising the Hungarian people, opening many monasteries, and establishing dioceses.<sup>34</sup> The Christianization of the Hungarians was quite advanced by the year 1000, and, according to tradition, King Stephen petitioned the Holy See to officially crown him for his successes in the field of church organisation. According to legend, an angel addressed to Pope Sylvester II (Silvestro II/Gerberto di Aurillac, 940/50–1003) in a dream, telling him to hand over the crown to the envoys of the ruler of the “unknown people” instead of to the Prince of Poland (Mieszko I, 935–992), for whom it was initially meant. With that crown, the first Archbishop of Esztergom Astrik crowned King Stephen, making him the official Christian ruler in 1001, the year that also marks the beginning of Hungarian statehood.<sup>35</sup> The reign of St. Stephen was a turning point in the history of the Hungarian Crown, and succeeding rulers mostly looked up to St. Stephen when it came to church organisation and fair-minded government under the auspices of Christian values.<sup>36</sup>

Commissioned at the time of the building construction in 1846, the central altarpiece dedicated to St. Stephen of Hungary is the earliest surviving painted artwork of the Piarist Gymnasium Chapel (**fig. 1**). In the altarpiece, the Polish-Jewish artist József Wippler<sup>37</sup> portrayed the first Hungarian Christian monarch St. Stephen dressed in royal attire, presenting the royal regalia to the Virgin Mary, the patroness of the Hungarian lands.<sup>38</sup> Apart from the most important regalia – the Holy Crown (*Szent Korona*) – the image also shows the sceptre, the orb, and the mantle, which together constitute the Hungarian coronation insignia and symbolise the power and continuity of the Hungarian nation.<sup>39</sup> The narrative is associated with the legend of the Holy King Stephen, who raised the Holy Crown before his death (1038), handing it over to the Virgin Mary to seal a Divine contract between the patroness and the most important

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34 Rokai, Đere et al., *Istorija Mađara*, 13–19.

35 Zoltan J. Kosztoľnyik, *Five Eleventh Century Hungarian Kings: Their Policies and Their Relations with Rome* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 52–66.

36 Király, Papp, *A magyar művészet a 19. században (Képzőművészet)*, 231–232; Rokai and Đere, *Istorija Mađara*, 16–19.

37 Malić, “Delovanje jevrejskih fotografa,” 52.

38 Olivera Milanović-Jović, “Iz slikarstva i primenjene umetnosti u Banatu” [From Painting and Applied Art in Banat], *Grada za proučavanje spomenika kulture Vojvodine*, no. 6–7 (1976): 173–176; Németh Ferenc, “A Nagybecskerek Piarista Gimnázium Története 1846–1920” [History of the Piarist High School in Nagybecskerek 1846–1920], 18; accessed November 27, 2021, <https://mtt.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/Nemeth-Ferenc-Piaristak-2015.pdf>; David H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 487.

39 On the Crown of Saint Stephen I, see Zoltan Györe, “Ideologija mađarske Svete Krune” [The Ideology of the Hungarian Holy Crown], in *Vojvodanski prostor u kontekstu evropske istorije 1*, ed. Vladan Gavrilović (Novi Sad: Univerzitet u Novom Sadu–Filozofski fakultet, 2012), 137–159, 158.



Fig. 1. Jozsef Vipppler, *Saint Stephen and the Madonna*, 1846, oil on canvas, Piarist Gymnasium Chapel, Nagybecskerek. Photograph by Vanja Stojković.

symbol of the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>40</sup> That moment marked the beginning of the historical process by which the royal regalia became the official symbols of Hungarian statehood and the Virgin Mary became the holy protectress and Queen of the Hungarian territories.

There were many reasons for offering the Hungarian territories to the Virgin Mary, both religious and diplomatic, as the cult of the Mother of God was partly connected with essential elements of Hungarian pagan beliefs, and was therefore supposed to facilitate the acceptance of Christianity.<sup>41</sup> Among numerous theories, the theses of ethnologists Mihály Hoppál and József V. Molnár stand out as the best-accepted interpretations of the pre-Christian past of Hungarian tribes. These theorists emphasise the presence of the archetypes of the Virgin Mary and Christ (*Boldogasszony*, *Fény Jézus*) in the pantheon of pagan Hungarians, thus considering the acceptance of Christian doctrine as a logical continuation of already known sacral narratives. Furthermore, *táltos* shamans played an essential role in the life of pre-Christian communities as spiritual leaders and mediators between the sensual and the otherworldly,

whose role was taken over by rulers in the Middle Ages starting with the Holy King Stephen I.<sup>42</sup>

According to historian Gyula Szekfű, two religious events constitute the nucleus of Hungarian statehood: the Divine intervention involving angels when Pope Sylvester II decided to send the Crown to Stephen I and the act of offering the Holy Crown of Hungary to the Virgin Mary.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, St. Stephen's address to the Mother of God has its roots in ancient customs of *táltos* addressing a pagan deity, and represents a moment of unification of the old pagan and the new Christian understandings of Hungarian spirituality and the birth of the statehood under the auspices of the holiness.

At that time, the Doctrine of the Holy Crown (*Szentkorona-tan*) was constituted as a system of ideas composed of legal, religious, and ethical

40 Rokai, Đere et al., *Istorija Mađara*, 13–14, 17–20.

41 Györe, "Ideologija mađarske Svete Krune," 138–143.

42 More on the pagan tradition of the Hungarian tribes is available in Adam Kolozsi, *Social construction of the native faith: mytho-historical narratives and identity-discourse in Hungarian Neo-Paganism* (Budapest: Central European University Nationalism Studies Program, 2012), 39–41, 80–83.

43 Bálint Hóman, Gyula Szekfű, *Magyar történet I–IV* [Hungarian History I – IV] (Budapest: Király Magyar egyetemi nyomda, 1936) IV, 376; Péter László, "The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 81, no. 3 (2003): 464, 511.

elements related to the Crown of St. Stephen. The ideology of the Holy Crown is a complex concept that refers primarily to the subject itself, the crown of Stephen I, including myths and legends related to the royal regalia. It also includes a belief in the tradition of Hungary being the state of the Virgin Mary and the role that the Holy Crown has had in the development of Hungarian public law.<sup>44</sup> The Doctrine emphasises the complex attitude about the regalia of the Kingdom of Hungary. The Holy Crown has not been understood as a sublime symbol of royal authority but as a symbol of the Hungarian people's acceptance of Christianity, given that King Stephen I received it via Divine intervention.<sup>45</sup> The sacred aspect of the Crown is also reflected in the legend of Holy King Stephen, who offered his territories to the Virgin Mary after he discovered that he was left without a male heir. Later, during the reign of Saint Ladislaus, the Kingdom of Hungary also received the Catholic name of *Regnum Marianum* (Kingdom of Mary). The Holy Crown represents the mystical body (*Corpus Mysticum*), and thus the king is not the highest authority, but the Crown itself.<sup>46</sup>

Over the centuries and under the new political circumstances, the concept of the Holy Crown has been modified and interpreted in various ways in favour of the governing state systems.<sup>47</sup> 19<sup>th</sup>-century liberals also used the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, making it the backbone of their political *credo*, calling for respect for traditional constitutionality and the existing legal system to form the civil idea of the Hungarian political nation.<sup>48</sup> The identity of the Hungarian nation, based on the legends of the mythical founder Árpád and the Christian ruler István, was often emphasised throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century in multi-ethnic environments such as Torontál County. Such a premium on the longevity and orthodoxy of the ethnic group (embodied in the narratives of epic kings) was in keeping with the mechanism of national identity formation of young European nations in general.<sup>49</sup>

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## THE ALTARPIECE

The momentum of the Hungarian national awakening from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century reached the climax in the revolutions of 1848–1849 and echoed in both artworks and historiographical works.<sup>50</sup> The most influential movement, Romanticism, coupled with contemporary national aspirations, gave birth to 19<sup>th</sup>-century history painting in Hungary. Large paintings that depicted

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44 Györe, "Ideologija mađarske Svete Krune," 138–143.

45 László, "The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible," 464.

46 Hóman, Szekfű, *Magyar történet I–IV*, IV, 153–4.

47 László, "The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible," 464–465.

48 Szekfű Hóman, *Magyar történet I–IV*, I, 160; László, "The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible," 503–506.

49 Bálint Varga, *The Monumental Nation, Magyar Nationalism and Symbolic Politics in Fin-de-siècle Hungary*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 177–178; Smith, "The Crisis of Dual Legitimation," 171.

50 *Ibid.*, 232–239, 295.



Hungarian historical events had the effect of maintaining patriotic enthusiasm during the revolution. The altarpiece of Holy King Stephen I in the Piarist Chapel in Beeskerek also fits into the broader national and romantic corpus of Hungarian art. It illustrates the famous epic narrative about the progenitor of the Hungarian Christian state.

The altarpiece of Holy King Stephen in the Beeskerek Gymnasium incorporates sacral, national, and memorial elements. As an altarpiece, it is primarily a ceremonial object which functions within the chapel's space, within which it is placed at a crucial and spiritually uppermost spot. As the focal point of every sacral building, the altarpiece has the task of bringing a beholder into a state of mind suitable for prayer. Thus, it served as a mnemonic device for contemplation while, at the same time, encouraging personal piety and collective communion with the Divine.<sup>51</sup> The portrayal of the Holy Hungarian King was an essential part of the religious ritual, which took place in the Gymnasium Chapel and was shaped by the national aspect due to historical circumstances. The image of the chapel's patron saint on the central altarpiece of the Piarist Chapel provides evidence of the developed cult of the Hungarian Holy King. It goes beyond the original historical and mythological framework to become a stronghold for the young Hungarian nation in its further national aspirations throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The cult of medieval rulers bears witness to the use of myth for the sake of affirming the national *credo*.

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The narrative of a medieval pagan ruler who gained legitimacy by being crowned with a Christian regalia was a helpful tool in confirming the orthodoxy and longevity of a nation. For that reason, the myth of St. Stephen belongs equally to the sacral and the national tradition of the Hungarian people. The chapel's dedication and the portrayal of the mythical ruler in the main altarpiece reveal the political and cultural climate in Beeskerek in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The cartouche (**fig. 2**) with an inscription above the altar highlights the importance of the cult of St. Stephen for the local community: "N. Beeskereki Csizmadia, és Szijjártò egyesültérd. czéhnek R. katol. tagjai készítették. 1846" (Commissioned by the Nagy Beeskerek Guild of Bootmakers for the Roman Catholic chapel, 1846).

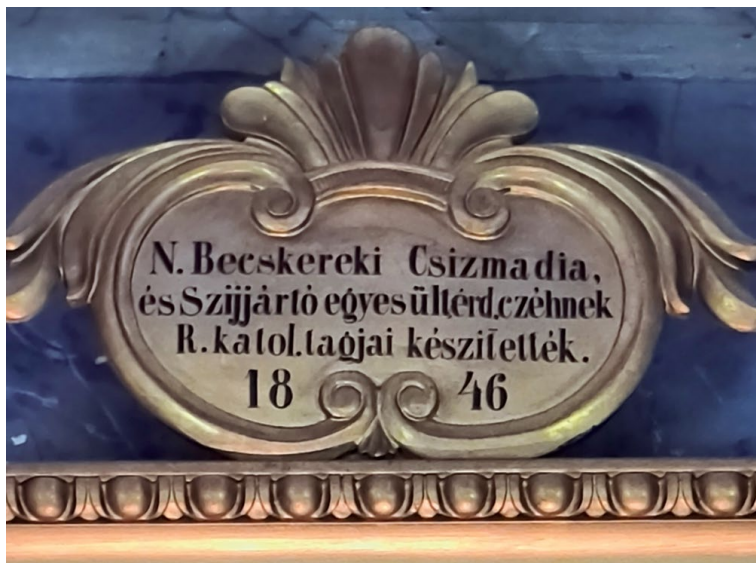
The archival materials point to the donation of the Beeskerek Guild of Bootmakers that commissioned an altar painting depicting the patron saint, Saint Stephen I, in the year of the chapel's construction. Apart from the inscription of the cartouche, the brightly coloured boot of the Holy King Stephen, shown while praying, also points to the guild's role. It is known that many local guilds helped the construction of the Gymnasium Compound. The Beeskerek Guild of Bootmakers stood out in terms of the number of donations. In a sacral context, donations imply special treatment to the benefactor. The

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51 Hans Belting, *Slika i kult istorija slike do epohe umetnosti* [Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art] (Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2014), 519.



**Fig. 2.** Jozsef Vippler, Cartouche detail on the altar of Saint Stephen, 1846, Piarist Gymnasium Chapel, Nagybecskerek. Photograph by Vanja Stojković.



donation commemorated an individual, a community, or, in this case, a craft guild and included a will or specific request to have masses offered on behalf of the benefactor. Engaging in charity and donations was doubly-motivated, and was a method for some guilds or individuals to highlight their position and reputation in the community. Commitment to the cult of the mythical Hungarian ruler expressed through the local guild's donations reveals the importance of emphasising national identity as a key aspect of the foundation of the Piarist Gymnasium as a vital educational institution for the community of Torontál County.

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The altar in the Piarist Chapel of St. Stephen is evidence of the search for the national identity in the multi-ethnic environment of Torontál County. It indicates the presence of the Hungarian national cult of the mythical ruler within the local community of Beeskerek. The image of the Chapel's patron, the Hungarian King Saint Stephen, was made right after the construction of the building and before the beginning of the revolution. It represents the ideological foundations of the local community of Beeskerek. The first Christian ruler, St. Stephen, is a nucleus of Hungarian statehood. Thus, the locus of his image within the holiest space of the chapel discloses the unbreakable bond between the state and the church on which the duality of Hungarian national identity was based. The local guild's donation of the altarpiece to the Piarist Chapel also confirms a commitment to the cult of St. Stephen and a need to stress the Hungarian national credo in Beeskerek.

The depiction of St. Stephen on the main altarpiece illustrates the most important moment in Hungarian Christian history: the union of the Hungarian nation with the Virgin Mary. Having offered the royal regalia of the Kingdom of Hungary, including the cult object *Szent Korona*, to the Holy Protectress Virgin Mary, an indissoluble religious and political basis for Hungarian statehood was formed. Furthermore, the dedication of the Gymnasium Chapel to the mythical founder of Christian Hungary reflected the contemporary nationalist

aspirations of Hungary that considered the border area of Torontál County a relevant territory.

## CONCLUSION

The building constructed in honour of the Holy Hungarian King illustrates the complex mechanism of forming national identity and a sense of belonging for the Hungarian people in the southern territories of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dedication of the Gymnasium Chapel to St. Stephen, the first Hungarian Christian ruler, testifies to the widespread cult of the mythical person, a vital link in the formation of national consciousness of the young Hungarian nation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Hungarian national impulse was the backbone of important events in southern Hungary's political and cultural life, and establishing the Becskerek Gymnasium Compound under the jurisdiction of the Piarists was one aspect of the Hungarian integration and assimilation of the non-Hungarian population.

Having emphasised their longevity based on Christian values, the Hungarians established primacy over the territory of Torontál County, which revealed the tense relationship between different ethnic groups, which would later grow into an open conflict immediately after the founding of the Gymnasium. The Hungarian Civic Revolution of 1848 shaped the further development of Becskerek's cultural and educational life in great measure.

<sup>302</sup> The unstable political situation is best illustrated by the dynamic change in functions of the Gymnasium building – in the revolutionary years, it served as a military hospital, an ammunition depot, and the temporary seat of Patriarch Rajačić.

The Gymnasium Chapel of St. Stephen was constructed during the Serbian-Hungarian conflict and artistically designed under the contemporary ideological aspirations in Torontál County. The symbolic value of the altarpiece in the Gymnasium Chapel is also reflected in its historical and memorial characteristics. The altarpiece made in the years before the revolution remained undamaged during the Hungarian-Serbian conflicts despite the dynamic changes in the chapel's function. Accordingly, the painting represents a memorial *topos*, a testimony to the Revolutionary Period, which inevitably changed the further course of events in Torontál County.

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## STATECRAFT: THE ARTWORKS OF VILLA ZAGORJE IN ZAGREB\*

### Abstract

*Villa Zagorje was built in Zagreb between 1963 and 1965 as the residence of President Josip Broz Tito. This modernist building represented an important state project that brought together prominent architects, artists and engineers. They were commissioned to work on the exterior and interior design, which would correspond not only to the requirements of modern architecture and the theory of synthesis of the arts, but also to those of state representation since, in addition to being a residence, the villa was planned to be used for the reception of numerous statesmen. Following this premise, this paper examines the complex relationships between modernist aspirations and the role of artwork in representing the state's ideological program. The works of art commissioned and purchased for the interior and exterior of Villa Zagorje during the 1960s have been analyzed and interpreted based on the preserved archival and museum material and periodical publications.*

### INTRODUCTION

Beginning with the founding of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) in 1945, an extensive number of official buildings were built throughout the entire country for Marshal (and later President) Josip Broz Tito's domestic and international political duties and residential purposes. In a large number of cases, especially in the first years after World War II, existing mansions and villas were nationalized and transformed into official residences of the President of the Republic. Additionally, the period from the 1950s to the early 1980s saw the construction of numerous new buildings, whose architectural design and artistic furnishings were created in such a way as to unite the requirements of modern artistic production, national representation, and Josip Broz Tito's personal taste. In other words, these official residences served as a sort of ritual space where architecture, carefully selected paintings, sculptures, graphic art and the design of each segment of exterior and interior space contributed to forming the image of the new state and its ruler.

Tito's residence in the capital of what was first the People's and then the Socialist Republic of Croatia (hereafter either PRC or SRC) was built relatively late. It was originally called the residential building of the Parliamentary Executive Council of the People's Republic of Croatia, but was better known as Villa Zagorje. The villa was built from 1963 to 1965 in Zagreb according

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to design of architects Kazimir Ostrogović and Vjenceslav Richter, from the Centar 51 Architectural Studio. It was a highly important state project, which involved architects, artists and engineers with well-established and renowned careers. It was a new, high-modernist building meant to host numerous international politicians and statesmen; for this reason both its exterior and interior appearance had to correspond to the requirements of modern architecture and the then-current synthesis of the arts, but also to the goals of state representation.

The artistic furnishings of Tito's presidential buildings throughout Yugoslavia are a largely unresearched topic. Numerous buildings were repurposed, abandoned or destroyed during the 1990s and afterwards, and numerous works of art were returned to various institutions or disappeared without a trace. A significant contribution to the topic was made by Nenad Radić in the exhibition and book *Pusen i petokraka. Zbirka slika druga Predsednika* (Poussin and Five-pointed Star. Comrade President's Collection of Paintings, 2012), which analyses and interprets the artworks formerly housed in Tito's former residence at 15 Užička Street in Belgrade.<sup>1</sup> Ana Panić explored and interpreted the landscapes from the same collection in the exhibition and accompanying catalogue *Umetnost i vlast: pejzaži iz zbirke Josipa Broza Tita* (Art and Power: Landscapes from Josip Broz Tito's Collection, 2014), while an important contribution in the context of presidential buildings in the National Republic of Slovenia was made by Katarina Mohar in her paper on Villa Bled.<sup>2</sup> Villa Zagorje in Zagreb was researched by Vanja Brdar Mustapić and Vesna Meštrić, who showcased their findings at the exhibitions *Iz arhiva arhitekta – Vila Zagorje* (From the Architect's Archives – Villa Zagorje, 2018) and *Vila Zagorje – kratka povijest zagrebačke "bele hiže na Prekrižju"* (Villa Zagorje – A Short History of Zagreb's "White House at Prekrižje," 2021) and in texts dedicated to the relationship of the building to Vjenceslav Richter.<sup>3</sup> The two authors thoroughly investigated the construction process and architectural designs, as well as the constructed buildings and their interior design, and interpreted

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1 Nenad Radić, *Pusen i petokraka. Zbirka slika druga Predsednika* [Poussin and Five-pointed Star. Comrade President's Collection of Paintings] (Zagreb: Galerija Matice srpske, 2012).

2 Ana Panić, *Art and Authority: Landscapes from the Collection of Josip Broz Tito* (Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske; Beograd: Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, 2014); Katarina Mohar, "Art Representing the State: The Villa Bled Official Residence," in *Art and Politics in the Modern Period*, eds. Dragan Damjanović, Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić, Željka Miklošević and Jeremy F. Walton (Zagreb: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia, FF-press, 2019), 83–91.

3 Vanja Brdar Mustapić, "Od plastike namještaja do interijerskih kontroverzija / Teorija i praksa dizajna i unutrašnjeg uređenja u Richterovu opusu / From the Plastics of Furniture to Controversies about Interior / Theory and Practice of Design and Interior Decoration in Richter's Opus" in *Vjenceslav Richter: Buntovnik s vizijom / Vjenceslav Richter: Rebel with a Vision*, eds. Martina Munivrana and Vesna Meštrić (Zagreb: Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2017), 232–267; Vesna Meštrić and Vanja Brdar Mustapić, "Vila Zagorje – kratka povijest zagrebačke 'bele hiže na Prekrižju'" [Villa Zagorje – A Brief History of Zagreb's 'White House at the Prekrižje'], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 1–4 (2021): 16–29; Vesna Meštrić and Vanja Brdar Mustapić, *Iz arhiva arhitekta: Vila Zagorje* [From the Archive of the Architect: Villa Zagorje], exhibition, Zagreb: Zbirka Richter, December 20, 2018 – February 24, 2019; Vesna Meštrić and Vanja Brdar Mustapić, *Vila Zagorje – povijest zagrebačke „bele hiže na Prekrižju"* [Villa Zagorje – The History of Zagreb's "White House at the Prekrižje"], exhibition, Zagreb: Ured predsjednika Republike Hrvatske, April 24 – May 8, 2021.

them in the context of Vjenceslav Richter's principle of artistic synthesis. Despite previous research, the commissioning and purchase of paintings and sculptures for Tito's Zagreb-based official residence in the second half of the 1960s have remained unresearched.

In light of this lacuna in research, this chapter, explores the paintings and sculptures commissioned for Villa Zagorje's interior during the building's construction and in the second half of the 1960s. They are analyzed and interpreted based on the preserved archival documents, periodicals, exhibition catalogues, monographs, and photographs. The chapter foregrounds the originally conceived union of architecture, design, painting and sculpture, but also the compromise made with regard to the state's influence on the selection and definition of the topics and themes depicted by individual works. The aim of the research is to explore the complex relationship between modernist aspirations in interior design, the commissioners' requirements in choosing the works of art for the purpose of representing the state's ideological program, and the artistic taste of the president.

## VILLA ZAGORJE – CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

The construction history of Tito's Zagreb residence began in the late 1950s with the selection of a site at Pantovčak,<sup>4</sup> which had until then belonged, among other private owners, to the painter Vera Nikolić-Podrinska, the daughter of the Croatian deputy ban Baron Vladimir Nikolić and Baroness Ella Scotti.<sup>5</sup> It was and still is a prominent, peaceful green residential area in Zagreb that was deemed suitable for the construction of the main building, which was to have an important political purpose, as well as the auxiliary buildings that were to be used for servicing and securing it. The Parliamentary Executive Council of the People's Republic of Croatia (after 1963 the Parliamentary Executive Council of the Socialist Republic of Croatia), in the role of the investor, hired architect Drago Ibler and his associate Tomislav Petrović to design the so-called residential building of the PRC's Parliamentary Executive Council.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1960 and 1962, Ibler created a detailed design for a two-story building of a regular geometric form, dominantly lit from the south side and with a clear organization of space, which manifested a "division into a representative public part on the first floor, a residential private part on the

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4 Meštrić, Brdar Mustapić, "Vila Zagorje," 17.

5 In 1964, an assessment was made of all privately-owned buildings in the area from Villa Zagorje to Villa Weiss, the expropriation of several properties, land, orchards and vineyards was completed, and a temporary contract was concluded with Vera Nikolić-Podrinski and Gabriela Lotringen von Habsburg on the amount of compensation for the buildings and land they owned. See: Komisija za nacionalizaciju pri Narodnom odboru Općine Donji grad Zagreb [Nationalization Commission at the People's Committee of the Municipality of Donji grad Zagreb], Rješenje, broj: 02-KN-1272/2-1959 [Decision, number: 02-KN-1272/2-1959], Zagreb, December 16, 1959, Box 274, Fond 280, Izvršno vijeće Sabora Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske [Parliamentary Executive Council of the Socialist Republic of Croatia], Hrvatski državni arhiv u Zagrebu [Croatian State Archives in Zagreb] (hereafter cited as HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH).

6 Meštrić, Brdar Mustapić, "Vila Zagorje," 17.



second floor and a service area in the basement.”<sup>7</sup> In 1962 the construction of the building according to Ibler’s design was suspended because, as the investor stated, it was necessary to find a more economical solution.<sup>8</sup> A reason for this suspension could also be found in the strained relations between Ibler and Ivan (Stevo) Krajačić, then the vice-president of the PRC’s Parliamentary Executive Council.<sup>9</sup>

In November 1962, the Council launched an invited design competition whose participants included, among several architectural studios, architects Drago Ibler, Zvonimir Marohnić and Vjenceslav Richter.<sup>10</sup> Among the competition entries, the most remarkable was Vjenceslav Richter’s, titled “White House at Prekrižje.” Richter’s proposal was a “radically modern two-story cubic structure conceived as a precisely modelled ‘three-dimensional picture.’”<sup>11</sup> Despite the high quality of most of the proposals, the committee consisting of, among others, Krajačić and architects Drago Galić and Kazimir Ostrogović did not select any submitted work. Rather, Ostrogović invited Richter to cooperate with him and his Centar 51 Architectural Studio in order to create a new design together.<sup>12</sup> The new design was a representative, high-modernist two-story building called “Villa Zagorje,” which was based on Ibler’s design and Richter’s “White House at Prekrižje.”<sup>13</sup>

The building’s regular, geometric form, the physical links between the exterior and interior spaces, and a clear organization of the interior into, on one hand, the public and representative section, and, on the other, a residential and service section, clearly show that Villa Zagorje was grounded in modernist principles.<sup>14</sup> The architects planned for every segment of the interior to be designed and furnished with artwork, and for the building site to include the adjoining plateau, park and the surrounding landscaped area. Finally, the construction of this so-called residential building of the Parliamentary Executive Council was carried out from 1963 to 1965.<sup>15</sup> The main contractor

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7 Ibid., 17, 20.

8 Ibid., 19.

9 Ivan (Stevo) Krajačić was a prominent Croatian politician, a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia since 1933, and the first head of the Department for the Protection of the People for Croatia (1944–1946), who at the time of the construction of Villa Zagorje held the position of vice-president of the Executive Council of the Parliament of the People’s Republic of Croatia (1953–1963) and President of the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (1963–1967). He was one of Josip Broz Tito’s closest collaborators. Architect Vjenceslav Richter stated that the reason for the suspension of construction according to Ibler’s project was the influence of Krajačić. See: Nina Ožegović, “Intervju s Vjenceslavom Richterom: Vjenceslav Richter. Slikarska retrospektiva avangardnog arhitekta” [Interview with Vjenceslav Richter: Vjenceslav Richter. A Retrospective of the Paintings of an Avant-Garde Architect], *Nacional*, October 22, 2002, 41.

10 Meštrić, Brdar Mustapić, “Vila Zagorje,” 19.

11 Maroje Mrduljaš, “Vjenceslav Richter i arhitektura: angažiranost protiv asistencije” [Vjenceslav Richter and Architecture: Engagement Versus Assistance], in *Vjenceslav Richter: Buntovnik s vizijom*, eds. Munivrana and Meštrić, 111.

12 Meštrić, Brdar Mustapić, “Vila Zagorje,” 20.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Construction was completed after the death of architect Kazimir Ostrogović in 1965. Ibid., 27.

was the Tempo construction company, and although Ostrogović and Richter were cited as the creators of the detailed design, the building was a product of teamwork.<sup>16</sup>

## INTERIOR DESIGN AND THE SYNTHESIS OF THE ARTS

New construction projects and the allocation of a percentage of the state budget for artwork in investment building projects in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s led to the revival of the principle of artistic synthesis, which implied the unification of painting, sculpture, design and applied arts within a work of architecture, or, the creation of a synthesis of all art.<sup>17</sup> The synthesis of the arts in Croatian and Yugoslav postwar art was congruent with similar ideas in the international context, and one of its ardent advocates was Vjenceslav Richter, a co-founder of the EXAT 51 group whose goal, among other things, was to “direct artistic activity towards the synthesis of all fine arts.”<sup>18</sup> Until the mid-1960s, Richter tried to implement this principles not only in architecture, but also in the interior design of important state buildings, such as the Croatian Hall in the building of the Federal Executive Council in New Belgrade (1961).

As Vanja Brdar Mustapić and Vesna Meštrić's research shows, Richter consistently tried to implement the synthesis principle along with his own theoretical research when designing patterns of parquet flooring, ceilings, lighting fixtures and furniture.<sup>19</sup> The process of designing the interior of Villa Zagorje was based on a clear division of labor – Richter was in charge of the representative first floor, while architects Daša Crnković and Božica Ostrogović designed the residential sections on the second floor.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, by designing flooring, ceilings, lighting fixtures, entrance doors, furniture, radiator covers, wallpaper and other elements, the architects followed the synthesis principle by trying to establish a visual connection among the rooms of the first floor, second floor, basement and the exterior. For example, the first-floor rooms had a geometrically designed parquet, while the rooms on the second floor – the library, dining room and living room – had parquets that were simplified versions of the pattern on the first floor.<sup>21</sup> The geometric design of the flooring is also repeated in the exterior, so when designing the

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16 In addition to the two architects, the project involved numerous collaborators such as architects Milan Can-ković, Daša Crnković, Ljubo Iveta, Olga Korinek, Franjo Lavrenčić, Božica Ostrogović, Ivan Senegačnik, Maja Šah-Radović, Nebojša Weiner and others, as well as experts, engineers and architects from the field of landscape architecture such as Dragutin Kiš, Angela Rotkvić, Silvana Seissel and Pavao Ungar, along with consultant Ciril Jeglič, and engineers and experts such as Sergije Kolobov, Ratko Pečarić, Ivan Trzun, etc.

17 Patricia Počanić, “Između ideje i realizacije: prilog poznavanju umjetničkih djela u interijeru Zgrade društveno-političkih organizacija – Kockice” [Between Idea and Realisation: A Contribution to the Study of Art-works from the Interior of the Building of Socio-Political Organisations – Kockica], *Život umjetnosti*, no. 110 (2022): 106–129.

18 EXAT 51, “Manifest Exat-a 51” [Exat 51 Manifesto], in *Exat 51: 1951–1956*, Ješa Denegri, Želimir Košćević (Zagreb: Galerija Nova Centra za kulturnu djelatnost SSO Zagreb, 1979), 135.

19 Meštrić, Brdar Mustapić, “Vila Zagorje,” 16–29.

20 Angela Rotkvić, Silvana Seissel and Ljubo Iveta worked on the terraces of the second floor. *Ibid.*, 20.

21 *Ibid.*, 23.

southern plateau, Angela Rotkvić and Silvana Seissel created 11 types of mosaic art in the form of meanders, which were made out of different materials.<sup>22</sup> Geometry was also the common denominator in designing ceilings in both the interior and exterior, which can be attested to by the coffered ceiling in the Great Hall on the first floor where lighting fixtures were placed in calottes within square fields, the coffered ceiling in the library on the second floor, the geometric patterns created by wooden slats on the ceiling of the dining and living room on the second floor, and the ceiling of the canopy where, according to Richter's design, graded slopes of the wooden slats formed the circumference motif.<sup>23</sup> Richter's aesthetics and the principle of synthesis also played an important role in the design of the double doors that were created by multiplied "multi-colored glass prisms forming a geometric composition."<sup>24</sup>

The concept of synthesis was adopted in furniture design, and the preserved archival material gives insight into the process of making design decisions that corresponded simultaneously to the requirements of a representative space and to the contemporary production criteria for modern and standardized furniture. Although different fabrics and materials such as plush, silk and fur were used for the second-floor furniture in order to bring it closer to the taste of the commissioners and the occupant,<sup>25</sup> generally speaking, features such as the inlaid surfaces of the tables and chairs, which repeat the geometric shapes of the floors and ceilings, were mainly characteristic of the rational design of the 1960s.

Despite the architects' obvious efforts to achieve a work of total design, they surrendered their idea of interior design to compromise, resulting in the end in a reflection of individual taste and political requirements. In 1964, when Richter and Ostrogović organized a detailed presentation of the interior design project to the Parliamentary Executive Council, Ivan Krajačić suggested the type of furniture that would be suitable for receiving ambassadors, while he remained reserved regarding the designers' idea of using modern furniture. On that occasion, he said that he could not imagine Villa Zagorje having "protruding sticks of furniture like those made by your Corbusier,"<sup>26</sup> and, instead, suggested period furniture. Respecting his decision, the architects included pieces of furniture of a more conservative style alongside the modern

22 Arhitektonski biro Centar 51 [Centar 51 Architectural Studio], Dopuna troškovnika kamenarskih radova Južnog platoa na terenu [Supplement to the Cost List of Stonework Done at the South Plateau on the Construction Site], October 22, 1964, Box 267, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

23 Richter developed the theory of a new division of the circle at 512°. See: Vesna Meštrić, "Buntovnik s vizijom / Rebel with a Vision," in *Vjenceslav Richter: Buntovnik s vizijom*, eds. Munivrana and Meštrić, 73.

24 Meštrić, Brdar Mustapić, "Vila Zagorje," 24. Arhitektonski biro Centar 51 [Architectural bureau Centar 51], Staklarski radovi [Glassworks], Box 279, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

25 See: Sheme pokretnog namještaja – prvi kat [Mobile Furniture Schemes – First Floor], 1964, Box 272, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

26 Zapisnik sa sjednice održane 20.II.1964. u Predsjedništvu Sabora SRH [Minutes of the Session Held on 20.II.1964. in the Presidency of the SRC Parliament], February 20, 1964, p. 7, Box, 279, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

ones. Krajačić also exerted an influence on the choice of materials and the style of the parquet flooring when he suggested Schönbrunn as a model.<sup>27</sup> However, despite Krajačić's attitude, the architects clearly emphasized the importance of a consistently implemented principle of synthesis within the sphere of modernist architecture: "The whole house is typical of 20<sup>th</sup> century houses with air conditioning, etc., but we don't know to what degree habits and representation are related to period furniture. We strive to take a step forward, into the modern, to express ourselves in a modern way, not by borrowing from history but by taking the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as our frame of reference."<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the aesthetic aspiration towards a complete work of art, a somewhat different "synthesis" was executed in Villa Zagorje – one that reflects the economic and socio-political power of a relatively young state. The majority of products, services and materials used for the construction of the villa were made in Yugoslavia, and only a small percentage was imported.<sup>29</sup> This was meant to show that Yugoslav industry was self-sufficient and that this representative building was the product of Yugoslav workers. However, since it was the residence of the state's ruler, this self-sufficiency was disregarded when importing luxury furniture and materials from Austria, Italy and West Germany.<sup>30</sup> The interior design of Villa Zagorje therefore represents a complex relationship between the architects' artistic concepts, the requirements of the commissioners, the occupant's taste, and the economic possibilities of a new (socialist) state.

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## ARTWORK IN THE NEWLY BUILT VILLA ZAGORJE

Although concessions were made regarding the commissioners' requirements concerning the building's exterior and interior design, safety conditions and the meaning of the object, the architects mainly followed the tradition of high modernism and the principle of the synthesis of the arts. However, the situation was somewhat different when it came to the selection of artworks for the villa. It was not the architects who had the main say in choosing art, but politicians and artists who had achieved prominence in the

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27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 A number of domestic factories participated in the furnishing of the building, including: Drvno proizvodno poduzeće "Marko Šavrić" (Zagreb), Elektrokovina (Maribor), Exportdrvo (Zagreb, Rijeka) Interplet (Brčko), Jugokeramika (Zaprešić), Osječka ljevaonica željeza i tvornica strojeva (Osijek), Otočanka (Zadar), Sloboda (Čačak), Stol (Kamnik), Gradsko stolarsko poduzeće "Andrija Žaja" (Zagreb), Tovarna emajlirane posode Celje (Celje), Tvornica rasvjetnih tijela "Ivan Šikić" (Zagreb), Tvornica namještaja "Stjepan Sekulić" (Nova Gradiška), Tvornica stakla "Kristal" (Samobor) and others.

30 Contracts, specifications and objects from foreign companies have been preserved, such as the luxurious equipment of the lighting fixtures of the first floor purchased from the cult Viennese company E. Bakalowitz & Söhne or the famous German Tekko wallpapers. Arhitektonski biro Centar 51 [Centar 51 Architectural Studio], Specifikacija uvoznih tapeta [Specification of Imported Wallpapers], 1964, Box 262, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH; Arhitektonski biro Centar 51 [Centar 51 Architectural Studio], Obrtnički radovi. Specifikacija opreme zgrade Izvršnog Vijeća SRH u Zagrebu [Craftworks. Specification of the Equipment of the Building of the Executive Council of SRC in Zagreb], 1964, Box 266, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

initial postwar years. Therefore, the course of the commissions is crucial for understanding the artistic and ideological program of Tito's Zagreb-based residence.

### The Course of Artwork Commissioning Process

Commissioning artwork for the interior of the residence was an integral part of the building's concept from the very beginning, even in Ibler's design. Different versions of Ibler's design also envisaged expenditures for paintings, sculptures, or marble, ceramic and glass mosaics, tapestries, inlays, etc. and their placement.<sup>31</sup> All this shows that the original ideal of decorating the interior of this representative social building with monumental artworks was continued throughout the project.

Ibler's concept was partially taken over and extended by Ostrogović and Richter. From the minutes of the sessions of the Parliamentary Executive Council of the SRC held in February 1964, we learn that the two architects gave a detailed presentation, and that the participants in the sessions discussed the design of the "residential building of the Executive Council at Pantovčak in Zagreb," including artworks for the interior.<sup>32</sup> The sessions were usually attended by Ivan Krajačić (president of the Parliament), Dr. Zvonko Petrinović (secretary of Construction, Communal Affairs and Urbanism), Vojislav Vukotić (head of the Directorate of the State Administration's Joint Departments),  
310 engineer Milivoj Graf (assistant to the head of the Directorate), Stjepan Kralj (a member of the construction supervisory committee) and architects Kazimir Ostrogović and Vjenceslav Richter. The session minutes reveal that the involvement of the authorities, especially Krajačić, was crucial in certain aspects of the design.

Ostrogović and Richter envisioned monumental artworks for the interior of Villa Zagorje.<sup>33</sup> Respecting the principle of the synthesis of painting, sculpture and design under the umbrella of architecture, Richter conceived different "wall paintings"<sup>34</sup> for the representative space on the first floor and the residential space on the second floor. For example, in the covered area in front of the dining room, which could serve for outdoor receptions, he planned a "decorative treatment of wall surfaces" with built-in ceramics, which, according to Ostrogović's design, would be done by an artist of great experience and international recognition.<sup>35</sup> Richter also claimed that it was necessary to choose artists who had already gained experience in creating

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31 RIII/6 Prekrižje. Oprema i unutarnji uređaji [RIII/6 Prekrižje. Equipment and Internal devices], 1960–1961, Box 287, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

32 Executive Council of the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, Zapisnik sa sjednice održane 20.II.1964. u Predsjedništvu Sabora SRH [Minutes from the Session Held on 20.II.1964. in the Presidency of the SRC Parliament], February 20, 1964, Box 279, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

33 Ibid., 4.

34 Ibid., 5.

35 Ibid., 8.



artwork on monumental wall surfaces.<sup>36</sup> In the discussion about possible artists and artwork, Richter felt that it would be “best if the paintings were created for the space.”<sup>37</sup> The architects even predicted the materials with which certain walls in the South and Great Halls would be adorned.<sup>38</sup> It follows that the artworks were conceived of as an integral part of the architecture, and that their dimensions, material, and appearance were supposed to correlate with the space in which they were to be placed.

Unlike Richter and Ostrogović, Krajačić’s preoccupations with the “wall paintings” were more related to the issues of which artists, artworks and depicted scenes to choose, primarily in order to meet the ideological and representative criteria. For a big wall surface, Krajačić suggested the painting *Jajce* by Ismet Mujezinović, given that the theme of an artwork “must firmly connect with a historical moment.”<sup>39</sup> Despite Richter’s suggestion that such a composition would better be placed in the smaller South Hall, Krajačić’s mind was set on the Great Hall because of its historical and ideological significance, as well as the size of the painting. Nevertheless, he left the final decision to “those who know better.”<sup>40</sup> Krajačić left the consultation about sculptures and their final selection to Frano Kršinić and Vanja Radauš, whose role would not be exclusively that of consultants but also of artists since they would be commissioned to produce artworks for the villa.<sup>41</sup> Krajačić also suggested that the sculptor Antun Augustinčić should consult with Richter in relation to his proposal to place sculpture in line with the main entrance.<sup>42</sup> In addition to the artistic furnishings of the representative first floor, Krajačić also discussed the decoration concept of the residential second floor. He suggested having the space decorated with smaller pictures and gifts, the choice of which must be left entirely to the President of the SFRY, Josip Broz Tito.<sup>43</sup>

In March 1964, the office of the President of the Republic’s Parliament was the venue of the consultative meeting on the furnishing of the Executive Council’s residential building at Pantovčak in Zagreb.<sup>44</sup> The aforementioned protagonists in matters of interior design were joined by newly appointed consultants – a prominent writer, Miroslav Krleža, and sculptors Antun Augustinčić and Frano Kršinić – who played a key role in the selection of representative works. The participants in the consultative meeting defined the

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36 Ibid., 4.

37 Ibid., 5.

38 Ibid., 4.

39 Ibid., 4, 5.

40 Ibid., 5.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 4.

43 Ibid., 5.

44 Konzultacija o umjetničkoj opremi stambene zgrade Izvršnog vijeća na Pantovčaku u Zagrebu [Consultative Meeting on the Artistic Equipment of the Residential Building of the Executive Council on Pantovčak in Zagreb], Box 279, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH, pp. 1–12.

media and techniques of the future works and proposed oil frescoes, sgraffito, reliefs, tapestries, etc.<sup>45</sup> Krleža, Augustinčić and Kršinić evidently expanded the architects' idea of having artworks created specifically for this particular interior, but the thematic framework they set shows their inclination, at least in part, to Krajačić's suggestions. In March 1964, they proposed the artists from whom they would commission works, namely, Krsto Hegedušić, Ismet Mujezinović, Miljenko Stančić, Raul Goldoni, Frano Kršinić and "possibly" Vanja Radauš.<sup>46</sup>

Since in February 1964 Krajačić mentioned the creation of the painting *Jajce*, the following month Augustinčić offered Ismet Mujezinović's first sketches to be discussed in the consultative meetings.<sup>47</sup> At the same meeting, Krleža decided that *Jajce* should be placed in the Yugoslav president's office, and also proposed what he called a "decorative Varaždin panel" as the theme of Stančić's work.<sup>48</sup> On the same occasion, Kršinić suggested that a bas-relief in silver-plated copper be realized on the eastern wall of the vestibule on the first floor, and announced that he himself would make a sketch. Krleža, on the other hand, chose the subject of the mentioned relief: a free, bucolic theme of an Arcadian, lyrical mood.<sup>49</sup> Kršinić suggested painter Frano Baće, who could create a small-scale composition of a maritime topic. The name of Ernest Tomašević was also mentioned during the meeting as someone who could create various works in sgraffito.<sup>50</sup> In addition, Krleža believed that Jean Lurçat tapestries could be purchased, due to their affordable price.<sup>51</sup> Although today not all the information about the executed works is known, it is possible to conclude that the consultants' and commissioners' suggestions led to the commissioning of artwork from Antun Augustinčić, Krsto Hegedušić, Frano Kršinić, Miljenko Stančić and Ismet Mujezinović.

The course of the commissioning process reveals the following: 1) the role of the state, or more specifically, the Parliamentary Executive Council of the SRC as the body of commissioners was important in the selection of artists, artistic media, techniques and topics; 2) the commissioners took into account the opinions of experts and sought consultation with artists who in the mid-1960s enjoyed a privileged artistic and political status, and were themselves the creators of numerous works commissioned by the state; 3) Krleža (and to a lesser extent Augustinčić and Kršinić) determined the topics of the works which, according to the instructions of the Parliamentary Executive Council, were supposed, at least partly, to reflect the Yugoslav ideological program; 4)

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45 Ibid., 2.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

considering the large number of submitted proposals, it is clear that the artists' advice and suggestions were taken into account, but also that the purchase and commissioning process was agreed upon in advance and that the works were not acquired through open or invited competitions; 5) the proposed artists were those who had already received numerous government commissions for public art and were, partly, included in the consultative meetings. The commissioning process makes it clear that the selected artists, artworks and topics had an ideological and representational role that went beyond the aesthetics.

### Commissioned and Purchased Artwork for Villa Zagorje

While the minutes of the Parliamentary Executive Council's official and consultative meetings bearing witness to the procedure and criteria for the selection of artworks for the interior of Villa Zagorje have been well preserved, the acquired individual pieces of art have only partly been available for research. However, according to the archival material, periodicals, literature and photographs, it is possible at least to gain partial insight into their commission, acquisition and location within the building.

Two large paintings (240 × 660 cm) were placed in the Great (Ceremonial) Hall on the representative first floor – those by Krsto Hegedušić and Miljenko Stančić – which have adorned that space to this day. Miljenko Stančić's painting, *The City of Varaždin* (1966, **fig. 1**), hangs on the eastern wall of the Hall. The horizontally placed cityscape shows the stylized architecture of Varaždin (the bell tower of St. Nicholas' parish church, the Ursuline, Franciscan and Pauline churches, St. Florian, etc.), empty streets and squares with a few pedestrians, dimmed lights and a gloomy atmosphere. Although Krleža defined the theme of the composition, Varaždin cityscapes and urban motifs had been part

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**Fig. 1.** Miljenko Stančić, *The City of Varaždin*, 1966, oil on canvas, Villa Zagorje (today Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia), Zagreb. Photograph by Patricia Počanić.

of Stančić's oeuvre for more than a decade. After completing his studies in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb (1949) and a specialized course in printmaking with Tomislav Krizman, Stančić had built up his career by 1952, and his scenes of Varaždin were considered to be one of the apogees of the new post-war expression. The same year, at a joint exhibition with Josip Vaništa at the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb, he exhibited works in which he treated scenes of Varaždin in a surrealist manner. Stančić's individual artistic expression, dissociated from the tendencies of Socialist Realism and the first signs of postwar abstraction, continued to develop through the 1950s and 1960s, when he taught painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. In the mid-1960s, his paintings were dominated by a linear treatment of depicted motifs and a "strong painterly brushstroke with dense layers of paint,"<sup>52</sup> and *The City of Varaždin* corresponded to the metaphysical and surrealist painting that characterized his style at the time. Stančić created a surreal scene of his hometown not only with painted motifs such as empty streets, few stylized figures, simplified architecture, lighting and long shadows, but also with meticulous tonal nuances for which he drew on techniques of the old masters. In this way, Stančić connected the baroque architecture of Varaždin with its artistic heritage.

As his personal and artistic background was associated with Varaždin, Stančić's use of motifs of this city can be interpreted as a logical choice.

314 However, the reasons behind Krleža's proposal for the Varaždin theme can be found in his knowledge of Stančić's works, of the personal history of Josip Broz Tito, and the name of the building project. In the same year that he proposed Miljenko Stančić as one of the artists for the villa, Krleža published an essay about him in the *NIN* magazine, and then used it as a preface to the *Reproduction Portfolio by M. Stančić* (1964). Krleža noted that Stančić was "first and foremost a Varaždin painter."<sup>53</sup> Varaždin, a city that was perceived by establishment as part of Zagorje region, was also linked to Tito's personal history. Tito was born in 1892 in Kumrovec, a village in Zagorje, and since his life had been turned into a myth, including his childhood and his native region, Zagorje was the subject of numerous paintings.<sup>54</sup> It was with the same goal of referring to Tito's biography as the occupant of the villa, as well as the proximity of Zagorje to Zagreb, that the building was given the name *Vila Zagorje*.

The western wall of the Great Hall, opposite Stančić's work, contained the painting *Croatian Historical Cities* (or just *Historical Cities*, 1966, **fig. 2**) by Krsto Hegedušić. This is also a large-scale oil on canvas, depicting the cities of Ostrožac, Ključ, Sokolac, Podzvizd, Brinje, Knin, Slunj, Nehaj, Otočac and

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52 Mirjana Dučakijević, "Miljenko Stančić," in *Miljenko Stančić. Retrospektivna izložba. Slike / crteži / grafike / 1942. – 1977.* (Varaždin: Gradski muzej Varaždin, 1996), 13.

53 Miroslav Krleža, *Miljenko Stančić. Mapa reprodukcija* [Miljenko Stančić. *Reproduction Portfolio*] (Zagreb: Author's own edition/samizdat), 8.

54 Panić, *Art and Authority*, 35.

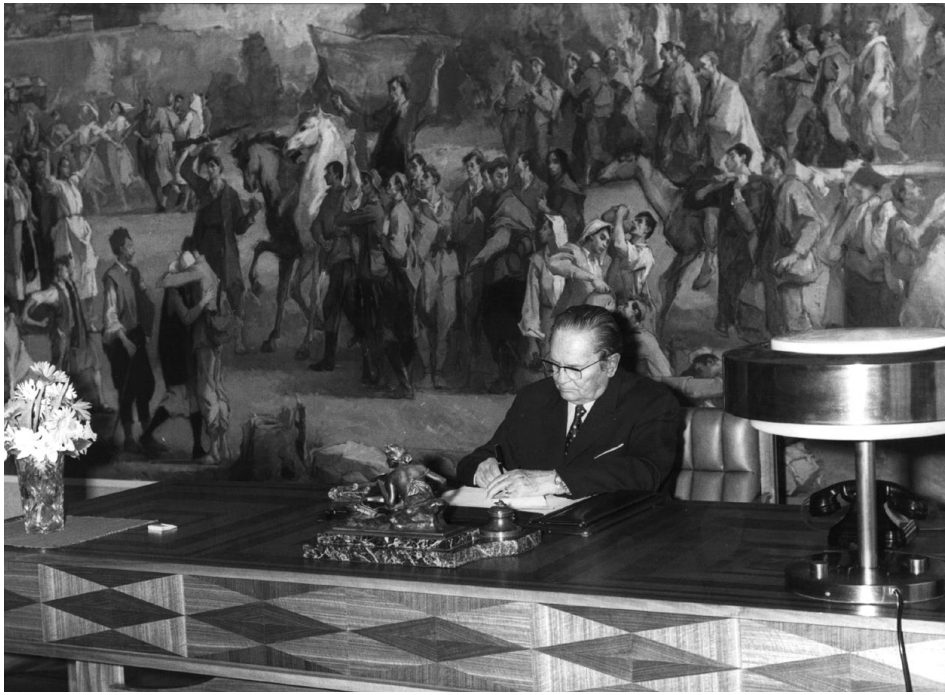
**Fig. 2.** Krsto Hegedušić, *Historical Cities*, 1966, oil on canvas, Villa Zagorje (today Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia), Zagreb. Photograph by Patricia Počanić.



Sinj, i.e. various old towns and forts immersed in the landscape. Continuing the previous development in his oeuvre, Hegedušić contrasts the rounded, modelled forms and a descriptive treatment of historical fortifications with landscapes depicted through free brushstroke, and more intensely colored areas without distinct contours. The expressive color of Hegedušić's work on the western wall forms a contrast to Stancić's composition and its color palette, bordering on the monochromatic. As in other works, Hegedušić made use of certain aspects of Flemish painting, as well as a specific naïve form of expression and surreal elements that he connected to historical topics. The selection of the canvas's topic can be viewed ideologically as a construction of the new state's historical legitimacy. In addition to the painting's theme, the choice of the artist was justifiable. At the time Villa Zagorje was constructed, Krsto Hegedušić was an established artist known for his works of critical realism, his involvement in the Zemlja Group (1929–1935), and his contribution to the so-called *Hlebine School* of naïve art. He was a member of the Mart Group, a lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, a key advocate of free artistic expression in the early 1950s, the head of a master class, and a long-time member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts. The reputation Hegedušić had built in the interwar period undoubtedly had an impact on the choice of the topic and the commission of his work. In the postwar years, Hegedušić was also much appreciated by Josip Broz Tito, who furnished his residences with Hegedušić's paintings, the most famous of which was *The Battle of Stubica*, which was placed in the office of Tito's residence at 15 Užička in Belgrade and which also had the role of revising and affirming the centuries-old Yugoslav history.<sup>55</sup> Hegedušić's composition met both artistic and political requirements, as well as Tito's affinity for his works.

<sup>55</sup> See: Radić, *Pusen i petokraka*, 68–73.





**Fig. 3.** Josip Broz Tito in his office, in front of the painting *The Liberation of Jajce* by Ismet Mujezinović, 1972, Villa Zagorje, Zagreb. Museum of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.

*The Battle of Stubica* at Tito's residence in Belgrade was certainly a source of inspiration for the theme and setting of Ismet Mujezinović's composition, *The Liberation of Jajce* (**fig. 3**), in Villa Zagorje. Although Krajačić suggested that this historical painting be placed in the Great Hall, it was placed in Tito's office, behind his desk. It is a monumental painting with "epic" scenes of the 1943 liberation of the town, which Mujezinović began painting in 1964 and completed in 1966.<sup>56</sup> This excellently executed monumental example of historical painting depicts the liberation of Jajce and the Second Session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia. Mujezinović constructed a national narrative and commemorated this historical moment through 120 figures,<sup>57</sup> symbols of the town such as walls, a waterfall, a watermill on the Pliva River, and symbols of war: the arrival of the army and the wounded, liberation and victory, people bearing gifts to the army, the happy youth, tired soldiers, the reunion of a mother and a son, a girl offering a soldier water, etc. In the painting, Mujezinović refers to Socialist Realism, but also to the great painters of historical scenes, from the Baroque masters to Delacroix.

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<sup>56</sup> While researching the dating of the work of Ismet Mujezinović *Oslobođenje Jajca*, realized for the office of Josip Broz Tito in Villa Zagorje, I came across different pieces of information. According to the press of the time, as well as archival sources (presented with a sketch from 1964), Mujezinović began the composition in 1964 and completed it in 1966. Also, the dimensions of the canvas (7 × 3 m) are stated in periodicals. See: Vezuz Tinjić, "Gosti našeg grada. Prilagođavanje kamena" [Guests of Our City. Customizing the Stone], *Glas*, Banja Luka, May 9, 1966. However, the work *Oslobođenje Jajca* (inv. no. 90000003865), which is today in the possession of the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia, has the dimensions 600 × 300 cm. In 2012/2013, it was presented at the exhibition *Reflections of Time 1945 – 1955* (Klovičevi dvori Gallery, Zagreb), and was minimally restored in 2012 at the Croatian Conservation Institute. In the Croatian Conservation Institute, the painting is dated around 1948, while in the catalogue of the exhibition *Reflections of Time 1945 – 1955*, it is dated in 1955.

<sup>57</sup> Pašaga Đurić, "U ateljeu Ismeta Mujezinovića. Majstor tema iz revolucije. Umjetnik završio svoju dosad najveću kompoziciju – Oslobođenje Jajca" [In the Studio of Ismet Mujezinović. Master of Themes from the Revolution. The Artist Completed his Biggest Composition to Date – Liberation of Jajce], *Oslobođenje*, Sarajevo, December 26, 1965.

The selection of this particular artist and topic, which was proposed by Krajačić in 1964, was not unexpected. Mujezinović was a prominent artist from Bosnia and Herzegovina, a student of the Zagreb Academy (until 1929), one of the founders of the School of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, a regular member of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Academy of Sciences and Arts and a corresponding member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts. Tito respected Mujezinović's work, as evidenced by his several visits to the artist's studio.<sup>58</sup> However, the painting *Liberation of Jajce* also had an important role in the personal history and oeuvre of the artist, as well as for the national construction of history and identity that would form a common ground for all the Yugoslav ethnic groups. Although Mujezinović joined the National Liberation Struggle in 1941, he was not present in Jajce during the war, but his view of the events that took place there was formed in the years after the liberation when he arrived in the town.<sup>59</sup> The painting represents a historical construct, an idealized and mythologized event.<sup>60</sup> In the political context of Yugoslav history, Jajce was the place where the Second Yugoslavia was founded, where Tito's authority was firmly established and where the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia took place in 1943. Therefore, it is not surprising that this theme was extremely popular in painting and applied arts, as evidenced by numerous artifacts given as gifts to and by Tito that were specifically dedicated to Jajce.<sup>61</sup>

Želimir Janeš created an engraved and polychrome relief entitled *A Pastoral* (or *Hunting Pastoral*, 1965–1966) on the villa's first floor (fig. 4).<sup>62</sup> It was an



**Fig. 4.** A conversation with a socio-political asset in front of the relief *A Pastoral* by Želimir Janeš, 1972, Villa Zagorje, Zagreb. Museum of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.

58 [N.N.], "Ismetovi portreti druga Tita" [Ismet's Portraits of Comrade Tito], *Front slobode*, Tuzla, May 24, 1972.

59 Stanislav Kovačević, "Revolucija u djelima Ismeta Mujezinovića" [Revolution in the Works of Ismet Mujezinović], *Male novine*, Sarajevo, December 28, 1970.

60 Mujezinović tried his hand at painting this theme several times, and another large-scale *Liberation of Jajce* was realized and installed in the Dom Armije (Army Hall) in Sarajevo. The popularity of the painting is also evidenced by the sale of reproductions of this painting during the 1970s. See: [Š. G.], "Reprodukcija 'Oslobođenje Jajca' – u prodaji" [Reproduction of 'Oslobođenje Jajca' – On Sale], *Večernje novine*, Sarajevo, August 29, 1974.

61 Panić, *Art and Authority*, 39.

62 Direkcija zajedničkih službi [Directorate of the State Administration's Joint Departments], Isplata autorskog honorara [Payment of Royalties], Zagreb, April 26, 1966, Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH. Direkcija zajedničkih službi [Directorate of the State Administration's Joint Departments], Ugovor o izradi reljefa "Pastoral" [Contract for the Creation of the "Pastoral" Relief], July 31, 1965, Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

“engraved drawing” executed on the stone surface of the dining room wall.<sup>63</sup> Frano Kršinić acted as a consultant during the work’s execution.<sup>64</sup> The relief depicts a range of hunting motifs – hunters, birds, forest, a hunter on horseback hunting boars and roe deer with dogs, a hunting dog chasing a grouse, pheasants, etc. This narrative scene and its protagonists were treated figuratively, with stylized depictions of hunters, nature and animals, which, in addition to Janeš’s individual artistic signature, was also influenced by an unusual technique. Archival documents state that the piece was an engraved and polychrome relief, which is also depicted in the photographs of various meetings in Villa Zagorje.<sup>65</sup> Several times during the 1960s, Janeš reapplied color and used different approaches to treating the materials on his reliefs and sculptures to enhance their expressive features.<sup>66</sup>

Unlike the technique, the choice of Želimir Janeš for this art piece was not unusual. In 1945, Janeš started attending Antun Augustinčić’s specialized course and Frano Kršinić’s master class, and from 1961 he himself taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb.<sup>67</sup> Although Janeš established himself in the art world with his medallions and small sculptures, it was in the mid-1960s that he created several works commissioned for the interiors of banks and ships. Also, the theme of the relief was expected, especially in the context of Tito’s residences. We can learn from the minutes of the Parliamentary Executive Council of the SRC that Krleža indicated that one of the works should be of an Arcadian or pastoral topic, and that Ostrogović proposed the arrangement of a room for an exhibition of weapons, having been aware of Tito’s interest in hunting and the fact that many of Tito’s residences had armories or artworks with hunting motifs. Janeš’s *Pastoral* thus fit into the countryside character of the building, the personal affinities of the occupant and the construction of the image of the ruler.

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In addition to being involved in the process of commissioning Janeš’s work and acting as a consultant, Frano Kršinić – a prominent Croatian sculptor who taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb (from 1924), headed his own master class (from 1947) and was member of the Zemlja Group – created two artworks that were purchased for Villa Zagorje: *Braid my Hair, Mommy* (1946/1950) and *Inhibited* (1955/1957). The sculpture *Braid my Hair, Mommy* (**fig. 5**) was placed in the villa in alignment with the main entrance on the east side of the building, where it still stands today as an illustration of adherence

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63 The contract states that it is a stone surface measuring 2232 × 116 cm. Direkcija zajedničkih službi [Directorate of the State Administration’s Joint Departments], Ugovor o izradi reljefa “Pastorala” [Contract for the Creation of the “Pastoral” Relief], July 31, 1965, Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Josip Bratulić, *Želimir Janeš* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, Nacionalna i sveučilišna i biblioteka Zagreb, 1992), 98.

67 Ibid., 14.



Fig. 5. Frano Kršinić, *Braid my Hair, Mommy*, 1946/1950, Seget stone, Villa Zagorje, Zagreb; photograph, Croatian State Archives, Zagreb.



to Richter's original idea.<sup>68</sup> Kršinić first made a plaster version in 1946, but carved a larger stone sculpture in 1950 in honor of Yugoslavia's first postwar participation in the Venice Biennale.<sup>69</sup> In the sculpture, which depicts a mother combing her daughter's hair, the artist "successfully synthesizes his carving skill with the need to most subtly establish a very precise unity of matter, form, space and content."<sup>70</sup> Although Kršinić often explored motherhood as a motif in the 1940s, his work *Braid my Hair, Mommy* in fact depicts an intimate scene typical of periods of war – a mother combing her daughter's hair to remove lice.<sup>71</sup> Both figures are dressed in simple folk clothing and topically corresponded not only to the need to represent Yugoslavia as a socialist country at the Venice Biennale, but also to the construction of the socialist narrative that the sculpture, when placed at the main entrance of the villa, should present to guests. In the mid-1960s, the villa also housed Kršinić's stone sculpture *Inhibited*, which depicted a female figure and was also made according to a smaller model and placed on the lawn near the building, where it still stands today.<sup>72</sup> In addition to the aforementioned circumstances of the commission, Kršinić's status and the topic of the sculptures, it is important to note that the selection of Kršinić's works for the building was not surprising. His works had enjoyed Tito's attention

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68 Arhitektonski biro Centar 51 [Centar 51 Architectural Studio], *Nacrti – Pantovčak, ulazni dio* [Plans – Pantovčak, Entrance Part], Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

69 This was the first postwar participation of Yugoslavia at the Venice Biennale. That year, the selector was Petar Šegedin and the participants were Gojmir Anton Kos, Petar Lubarda, Božo Ilić, Ismet Mujezinović, Antun Augustinčić, Frano Kršinić, Vanja Radauš, Vojin Bakić, Kosta Angeli Radovani, and Zoran Mušič. See: Želimir Košćević, *Venecijanski Biennale i jugoslavenska moderna umjetnost 1895–1988*. [The Venice Biennale and Yugoslav Modern Art, 1895–1988.], eds. Marijan Susovski, Milan Zinaić and Želimir Košćević (Zagreb: Galerije grada Zagreba, Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1988), 189.

70 Božena Kličinović, *Frano Kršinić* (Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1998), 29.

71 According to Maro Grbić, Kršinić's grandson and one of the artist's heirs.

72 *Ibid.*



**Fig. 6.** Antun Augustinčić, *A Monument to Marin Držić*, 1963, bronze. In: Ante Gavranović (ed.), *Augustinčić* (Zagreb: Privredni vjesnik, 1976), 124. Photograph by Tošo Dabac.

for many years. Many of them were bought for Tito's residences all over Yugoslavia, as well as for numerous public buildings such as that of the Federal Executive Council in Belgrade, and Kršinić's sculptures also ended up in different parts of the world as presidential gifts.<sup>73</sup> Kršinić himself claimed that Tito was one of the rare people who was passionate about sculpture, and that when he visited his studio, he would stop in front of each work, paying careful attention to them, especially small-scale relief sculptures.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to Kršinić's contributions, the acquired sculptures for the villa included several works by Antun Augustinčić, yet another consultant, who was also a prominent sculptor and member of the Zemlja Group who taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, headed his own master class and served as a member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts. Until the mid-1960s, this artist was commissioned to execute numerous monumental sculptures, including the most famous portraits and monuments honoring President Tito, and his works were placed in the park and interior spaces at Tito's Belgrade residence.<sup>75</sup> Augustinčić's work *A Monument to Marin Držić* (fig. 6) depicts this famous Dubrovnik poet, playwright, and author of political texts as an actor in "commedia dell' arte; wearing a

short gown with wide sleeves, his arms outstretched in a theatrical pose, and standing on a plinth in the shape of a Ionic capital."<sup>76</sup> The work was executed in 1963 and was soon after purchased and installed in Villa Zagorje's park.<sup>77</sup> The selection of this monument was also guided by political goals based on the state's ideological program. Not only did Držić represent the leading figure of Croatian and Dubrovnik literature, but he was also construed as a socialist utopian. As stated by Dr. Franjo Ševelec in the mid-1960s: "As far as we know today, Držić began his career as a cleric and manager of two churches only to end up as a conspirator against the Dubrovnik feudal regime."<sup>78</sup>

73 Zorica Mutavdžić, *Tito i umetnici* [Tito and Artists], second edition (Beograd: "Vuk Karadžić," 1977), 88.

74 *Ibid.*, 87.

75 Augustinčić's bronze *Victory* was in the garden of Tito's residence at Užička Street in Belgrade, as was the white female torso. *Ibid.*, 6.

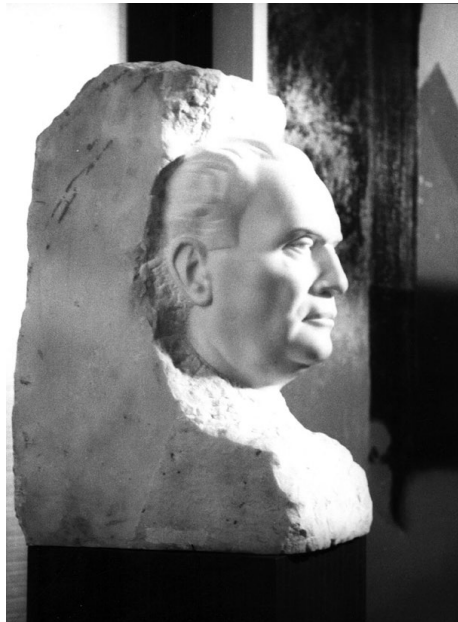
76 Galerija Antuna Augustinčića, "Spomenik Marinu Držiću" [Monument to Marin Držić], accessed March 13, 2023, <http://www.gaa.mhz.hr/fundus-s69/1202>.

77 The sculpture was cast again in 1989 for the patio of the Antun Augustinčić Gallery in Kumrovec and in 2008 for the Babin Kuk Hotel in Dubrovnik.

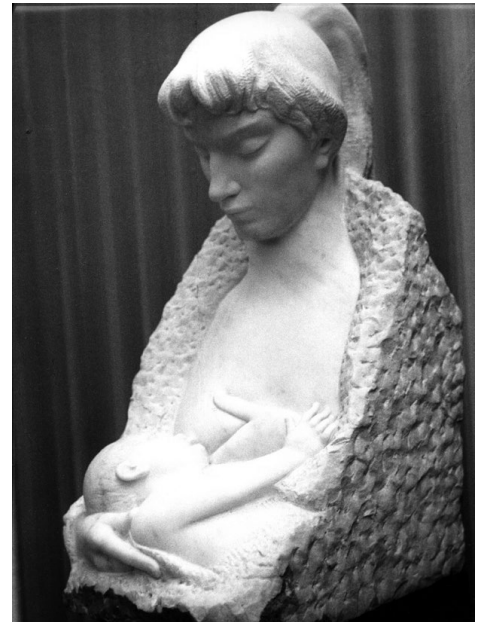
78 Franjo Ševelec, "Uvijek živi Držić. U povodu 400-godišnjice smrti velikog dubrovačkog komediografa" [Držić Always Lives. On the Occasion of the 400th Anniversary of the Death of the Great Dubrovnik Comedy Writer] *Narodni list*, Zadar, May 26, 1967, 5.



**Fig 7.** Antun Augustinčić, *Josip Broz Tito*, 1963, marble, Villa Zagorje, Zagreb; photograph, Museum of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.



**Fig. 8.** Grga Antunac, *Breastfeeding*, marble, 1959/1967, Villa Zagorje, Zagreb; photograph, Museum of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.



The interior of the Great Hall was also decorated with two Augustinčić sculptures. The first, a model for the monument *Carrying the Wounded*, shows the merged barefoot figures of two partisans carrying a third. The first sketch for this well-known monument to those who died in the anti-fascist struggle was created in 1946, and from the 1950s to the 1980s it was cast several times and placed in public spaces. The second sculpture was a realistic relief bust of Josip Broz Tito (1963, **fig. 7**), which was placed in the Great Hall at the end of 1960s, and whose removal in the 21<sup>st</sup> century caused numerous debates.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to these two sculptures, several more were placed both in the interior and exterior spaces of the villa in the second half of the 1960s and in the early 1970s. The sculpture *Breastfeeding* (**fig. 8**) by Šibenik sculptor Grga Antunac was first executed in bronze in 1959, but a marble version of the sculpture was purchased for Villa Zagorje and installed in the interior.<sup>80</sup> It is a life-size relief depicting the artist's daughter and first grandson. The relief represents an intimate and contemplative moment with harmoniously treated sculptural elements, a relatively closed form and fine finishing of the marble surface. Considering the profile of consultants for artistic furnishings of the villa, the choice of Antunac's work is logical. Antunac enrolled in the sculpture department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in 1926, and during the next two years attended Ivan Meštrović's specialized course. In the interwar period, he collaborated with Frano Kršinić and Antun Augustinčić on the

<sup>79</sup> The bust was removed during the term of office of President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović (2015–2020), which caused a public debate.

<sup>80</sup> The sculpture was certainly placed in Villa Zagorje before 1972, since it appears in the photo documentation of the Museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. Also, in the catalogue of the Grga Antunac exhibition (Zadar National Museum) published in 1974, it was stated that the marble sculpture had already been purchased for Villa Zagorje. See: Vesna Barbić, *Grga Antunac. Skulpture, crteži. U čast 30. godišnjice oslobođenja Zadra* [Grga Antunac. Sculptures, Drawings. In Honor of the 30th Anniversary of the Liberation of Zadar] (Zadar: Galerija umjetnina Narodnog muzeja Zadar, 1974), s. p.



**Fig. 9.** Boris Kalin, *Morning*, 1943, marble, Villa Zagorje, Zagreb; photograph, Museum of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.

322 creation of Meštrović's monument *Gratitude to France* (1930).<sup>81</sup> In addition to being a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb since 1946, Antunac collaborated with Augustinčić several times in the prewar and postwar periods, so it is not surprising that this sculptor's work was also among the purchased art.<sup>82</sup> The topic is not ideologically defined, but shares the contemplative sentiment with numerous artworks in Tito's different residences.

During the second half of the 1960s, the work *Morning* (1943, **fig. 9**) created by Slovenian sculptor Boris Kalin, another prominent and established sculptor, was installed in the villa's park. The sculptural group consists of two female nudes, skillfully and smoothly modelled, which in a somewhat classicizing, idealized and poetic treatment present not only realistic anatomy, but represent an allegory of Morning. Kalin was also a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, where he worked with Kršinić, and attended Ivan Meštrović's specialized course (until 1929). From 1945, he taught at the newly founded Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts, headed his own master class (from 1947) and was a member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (from 1953).<sup>83</sup>

All of the mentioned works thus far were not the only ones that were commissioned, bought or donated for Villa Zagorje. Archival photographic material from the 1960s and 1970s testifies to the fact that there was a far larger number of works whose attribution and dating demands further research. From the photos, we learn that a bronze cast of Ivan Meštrović's sculpture

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Martin Jevnikar, "Boris Kalin," in *Primorski slovenski biografski leksikon*, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1013530/>

*Sketch for Job's Son* from 1970 was placed on the first floor.<sup>84</sup> In 1975, Dušan Džamonja donated his model for the sculpture *Monument to the Revolution of the People of Moslavina*. Several other sculptures, including Vanja Radauš's *The Builder* (1962), Kosta Angela Radovani's *Dunja XVI* (1974) and Vladimir Gašparić-Gapa's work *A Resting Warrior* (1980–1985), were installed in the park during the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition to paintings and sculptures, the commissioned art for the villa's interior also included works of applied art whose selection was made with the participation of the commissioners. In 1967, the Directorate of the State Administration's Joint Departments commissioned 20 copper bowls with matching plates that would serve to hold flower arrangements from Gorica-based artist Josip Pukanić.<sup>85</sup> The dimensions of the bowls were defined by the architect Nada Marić-Vitić, an expert advisor to the commissioners, who had a final say in their selection.<sup>86</sup> Pukanić built his career in the interwar period by producing objects from precious metals, and in the postwar period he made art objects for the interiors of numerous public institutions.

The selected artists and artworks were significant on several levels. The character and purpose of the building directly influenced the choice of artists, artworks and their subject matter. The President of the Parliament, Ivan (Stevo) Krajačić, and the consultants Miroslav Krleža, Antun Augustinčić and Frano Kršinić played an important role in the selection of works. The choice of artists was certainly conditioned by their artistic and sociopolitical status, or more precisely, selection was made of those artists who had gained experience in numerous state commissions and who, in the mid-1960s, were prominent lecturers at art academies, headed their own master classes and served as members of various associations. In addition, all those selected were "approved" artists, that is, their art was proved to have enjoyed Tito's attention, which clearly shows that the decisions of both the commissioners and the consultants were made to conform to Tito's taste. The topics of the artworks were also proposed and selected according to the same principle. In addition to aesthetic quality, it was important for the artworks either to fit into the ideological theme used for building the national narrative or to satisfy the president's taste. It is interesting to note that in the mid-1960s, abstract works were not envisioned to be placed in the villa's interior (they arrived as gifts somewhat later). Since abstraction had already been widely acknowledged in the mid-1960s it seems surprising that it was excluded, but it should be remembered that Tito's animosity towards abstraction was a publicly known

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84 The cast resembles *Sketch III* (1935–1937). Duško Kečkemet, *Umjetnost Ivana Meštrovića* [The Art of Ivan Meštrović] (Split: Filozofski fakultet, 2017), 319.

85 Direkcija zajedničkih službi [Directorate of the State Administration's Joint Departments], Ugovor [Contract], January 1967, Box 279, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

86 Ibid.

fact, especially after 1963.<sup>87</sup> Although abstraction would correspond to Richter's notion of synthesis, it seems that the commissioners and the taste of the villa's occupant were decisive for reaching the decisions. Finally, it is interesting that in addition to Croatian artists, one Bosnian painter and one Slovenian sculptor, both educated in Zagreb, were part of the selected group of artists, a fact that reflects the idea of the brotherhood of Yugoslav nations.

## VILLA ZAGORJE: AFTERMATH

The construction and the interior design of Villa Zagorje, the Zagreb residence of Josip Broz Tito, represents the complex relations between art and the state in the 1960s. From the first designs created by architect Drago Ibler to the final design by Kazimir Ostrogović and Vjenceslav Richter, i.e. the Centar 51 Architectural Studio, the project of the villa demonstrates efforts to construct it as a high-modernist building in Zagreb's Pantovčak district, which, in addition to a high architectural quality, would to be the home of equally excellent contemporary artworks. At the same time, the architects agreed on numerous compromises in order to satisfy the needs of the Parliamentary Executive Council of the Socialist Republic of Croatia as the building's commissioners and Josip Broz Tito as its occupant. The concessions of the designers and the influence of the state were particularly visible in the design and furnishings of the interior – from the selection of furniture that tended to be more conservative in style to the suggestions of artists and the topics of their artworks. A key role in the selection of artwork was played by the President of the Parliament of the SRC, Ivo (Stevo) Krajačić, writer Miroslav Krleža, and sculptors Antun Augustinčić and Frano Kršinić. Through consultations, they chose which works would be best for the furnishing of the villa. In addition to creating their own art for the building, they selected the works of Krsto Hegedušić, Ismet Mujezinović, Miljenko Stančić, Želimir Janeš, and the art of their associates Grga Antunac and Boris Kalin, all of whom were established artists. Their works depicted figurative scenes that supported the construction of a history of the Yugoslav people and visually enhanced the political image of a relatively new state. They also spoke of the personal history and mythology of the President of the SFRY, and of the artistic achievements of their creators.

Villa Zagorje retained its function as the presidential residence until Tito's death in 1980, although the interior space and everything in it underwent significant changes in 1975.<sup>88</sup> According to archival data, in addition to various gifts given to President Tito by artists, statesmen and others, during the 1970s the interior of the building was furnished with works from the Modern Gallery

87 Patricia Počanić, "Narudžbe i otkupi umjetničkih djela za interijere javnih institucija u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih" [Commissions and Buyouts of Artwork for the Interiors of Public Institutions in Croatia during the 1950s and 1960s], *Peristil: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 62 (2019): 194.

88 Meštrić, Brdar Mustapić, "Vila Zagorje," 27.

in Zagreb.<sup>89</sup> The death of Josip Broz Tito marked the beginning of the building's conversion, with numerous proposals to use it, for example, for commercial purposes; to use it to house the "Art Collection of Ante and Wiltrud Topić Mimara;" or to turn it into a Museum of Contemporary Art and Sculpture Park.<sup>90</sup> Although the proposed cultural purposes were never realized, the space of the former Villa Zagorje still reflects the connection between art and the state. After the establishment of the independent Republic of Croatia, its political and residential function was restored, and since 1992 it has accommodated the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia.<sup>91</sup> In the period from the 1990s to the present, the artistic furnishings and furniture in the building have served an important cultural, ideological and representational role, just as did at the time of their execution, and have therefore aroused public interest and, occasionally, criticism of the villa's residents. Because of this, since 1992, different administrations have invited curators to artistically conceptualize the interior, which demonstrates that Villa Zagorje has from its very inception been used as a space for artistic interventions for the purpose of national representation.

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89 See: Posudbeni ugovor između Moderne galerije, Zagreb i Izvršnog vijeće sabora SRH – Republički protokol, Zagreb [Loan Agreement between the Modern Gallery, Zagreb, and the Parliamentary Executive Council of the SRC – Republic Protocol, Zagreb], July 11, 1979, Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH. Posudbeni ugovor između Moderne galerije, Zagreb i Izvršnog vijeće sabora SRH – Republički protokol, Zagreb [Loan Agreement between the Modern Gallery, Zagreb and the Parliamentary Executive Council of the SRC – Republic Protocol, Zagreb], July 2, 1980, Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH. Posudbeni ugovor između Moderne galerije, Zagreb i Izvršnog vijeće sabora SRH – Republički protokol, Zagreb [Loan Agreement between the Modern Gallery, Zagreb and the Parliamentary Executive Council of the SRC – Republic Protocol, Zagreb], June 9, 1981, Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH.

90 Dopis Nede Milunovića iz Republičkog protokola Predsjedniku Sabora SR Hrvatske Juri Biliću, 02-1599/1-1981. [Letter from Nedo Milunović from the Republic Protocol to the President of the Parliament of the SRC, 02-1599/1-1981], 1981, Box 282, HR-HDA-280 IVS SRH. Elena Cvetkova, "Umjetnine sele u 'Zagorje'?" [Artworks Moving to 'Zagorje'?], *Večernji list*, Zagreb, February 3, 1990, 13.

91 The office was moved to today's location because its previous location, Banski dvori, was bombed on October 7, 1991. During the 1990s, the building underwent another change, when in 1994 and 1995 the so-called Stone Hall was remodelled into the so-called People's Hall according to the design of Andrija Rusan, and the former dining room was converted into a library.





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## THE CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF SAINT- ALEXANDER'S CHURCH IN WARSAW: BUILDING A STATE IDENTITY

### Abstract

*In this article, I argue that the Church of Saint Alexander on Three Crosses Square in Warsaw should be interpreted as a monument representing state identity. First, it describes the construction of the church in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of the state-sponsored transformation of the capital during the period of Congress Poland, 1815–1831. The building was established and funded by the state. The original design of this building turned out to be unsuitable for its function as a parish church and for this reason the church was remodelled. This happened against the background of the Russification of Warsaw. After the World War II, the church was rebuilt by the socialist state as part of the reconstruction of the capital of the Polish People's Republic. It will be argued that the reconstruction to its early 19<sup>th</sup> century appearance was politically motivated.*

### INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Poland (Królestwo Polskie) was established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The government of Congress Poland, as this state was colloquially known, anticipated a reform of the state, from a predominantly agrarian economy and feudal country into a modern society based on industry and capitalism.<sup>1</sup> These reforms of the economy, of administration and of society also changed the role of the capital and ultimately its appearance.<sup>2</sup> This was a transformation from an aristocratic city with residences of the nobility towards a modern capital. New buildings for administrative purposes such as ministries, a national bank and mint, and other public buildings such as the Grand Theatre were created.<sup>3</sup> New spaces for public life were shaped mostly within the existing urban framework reminiscent in a way of a Forum Romanum. The conviction that the appearance of monumental buildings and public space could be beneficial for public life was one of the lasting legacies

1 Robert F. Leslie, "Politics and Economics in Congress Poland 1815–1864," *Past & Present*, no. 8 (1955): 43–63.

2 Marcus van der Meulen, "The Appearance of Public Building(s) in Constitutional Congress Poland, 1815–1831," in *The Governance of Style. Public Buildings in Central Europe, 1780–1920*, eds. Maximilian Hartmuth, Richard Kurdiovsky, Julia Rüdinger, and Georg Vasold (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag Wien, 2023), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.7767/9783205217541.55>.

3 *Ibid.*



**Fig. 1.** The Church of Saint Alexander in Three Crosses Square in Warsaw. Photograph by Marcus van der Meulen, September 2021.

of the architectural theory of the Enlightenment.<sup>4</sup> In these new public spaces, public buildings and monuments were erected, for example Thorvaldsen’s Copernicus Monument in front of Corazzi’s Society of Friends of Science Building (Pałac Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk).<sup>5</sup> The transformation from aristocratic residential city to modern capital saw the arrival of state patronage in Poland.<sup>6</sup> The state and government took initiative for the construction of public buildings and public space, of which Bank Square (Plac Bankowy) can be regarded its greatest achievement.<sup>7</sup>

## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TRANSFORMATIONS

One of the new public spaces was Alexander Square, since 1919 called Three Crosses Square (Plac Trzech Krzyży, **fig. 1**),<sup>8</sup> created at the intersection of New World (Nowy Świat), Ujazdów Avenue (Aleje Ujazdowskie) and Mokotów Street (Ulica Mokotowska) at the southern entrance of the city. The state intended to erect a monument in this new square commemorating the fact that the monarch, Alexander Romanov, King of Poland as well as Emperor of Russia, had granted Congress Poland a very liberal constitution.<sup>9</sup> In a letter to the viceroy (Namiestnik) of Poland, Józef Zajączek, published in the *Warsaw Gazette* (*Gazeta Warszawska*) in 1816, the Minister of the Interior, Tadeusz Mostowski,

4 Barry Bergdoll, *European Architecture 1750–1890* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 45.

5 Van der Meulen, “The Appearance of Public Building.”

6 Stanisław Lorentz and Andrzej Rottermund, *Neoclassicism in Poland* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1984), 44.

7 Van der Meulen, “The Appearance of Public Building.”

8 Jerzy S. Majewski, “Od rozdroża Złotych Krzyży...,” *Stolica*, no. 4, April, 2017, 10–17.

9 Rett R. Ludwikowski, *Constitution-Making in the Region of Former Soviet Dominance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 12–13.

**Fig. 2.** The Triumphal Arch designed by Jakub Kubicki erected in 1809, view towards New World Street. Engraving by Carl August Richter after drawing by Zygmunt Vogel. Public domain.



pleaded for the erection of a triumphal arch in the location where the monarch would enter the city.<sup>10</sup> In this letter Mostowski recalled the constitution and the government granted by the monarch. The initial intention was to replace a temporarily conceived arch (**fig. 2**) built at the southern entrance with a permanent structure.<sup>11</sup> This arch had been erected in 1809.<sup>12</sup> Designed by Jakub Kubicki (1758–1833) it commemorated the “glorious return of the national army” from the Battle of Raszyn, which had prevented the capture of the Duchy of Warsaw by the Austrians in that year.<sup>13</sup> Funds for the construction of the arch were collected through the taxation of state employees.<sup>14</sup> A square was laid out and instead of a triumphal arch a functional building, a long-awaited parish church, was erected. Plans to erect a church in the Ujazdów district dated back to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and evolved into Kubicki’s never-completed monumental project for the Temple of Supreme or Divine Providence (Świątyni Najwyższej Opatrzności), intended to commemorate

10 Mikołaj Getka-Kenig, “Rządowe inwentarze pomnikowe ku czci Aleksandra i ideologii ‘zmartwychwstania’ polskiego w latach 1815–1830” [Government Monument Inventories in Honour of Alexander and the Ideology of Polish ‘Resurrection’ in the Years 1815–1830], *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, no. 4 (2016): 695–732.

11 Piotr Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów. Sztuka rosyjska w Warszawie 1815–1915* [Under the Sceptre of the Romanovs. Russian Art in Warsaw 1815–1915] (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1991), 143.

12 Stanisław Łoza, *Architekci i budowniczy w Polsce* [Architects and Builders in Poland] (Warszawa: Budownictwo i Architektura, 1954), 163.

13 Jarosław Czuby, *The Duchy of Warsaw, 1807–1815: A Napoleonic Outpost in Central Europe*, trans. Ursula Phillips (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 63–77.

14 Andrzej Majdowski, “Przekształcenia przestrzenne kościoła p.w. św. Aleksandra w Warszawie” [Spatial Transformations of the Church St. Alexander in Warsaw], *Ochrona Zabytków*, no. 1 (1994): 22–35.



the Constitution of May 3, 1791.<sup>15</sup> The idea of building a church instead of an arch is attributed to the monarch himself, although there is only mention of a suggestion made by the monarch in a letter addressed to an unnamed president of the senate.<sup>16</sup>

In May 1818, the Polish administrative council issued a decree authorizing the use of the money raised for the arch's construction to fund the construction of a church.<sup>17</sup> However, the building's evolution reveals that its role as a parish church was of less importance. The design of the building was awarded to the architect Chrystian Piotr Aigner (1756–1841), *éminence grise* of Polish architecture at the time.<sup>18</sup> Aigner had been architect to some of the most prominent aristocrats of the period, including the influential Czartoryski family, and had been appointed chair of architecture at the recently established School of Construction and Surveying at the University of Warsaw in 1817.<sup>19</sup> According to Majdowski Aigner was awarded the honour of designing the commemorative church as a royal favour.<sup>20</sup> Aigner designed a centrally-planned building with a dome and two similar porticoes with columns and pediment. The final design by Aigner resembles a design for the Ujazdów church project by Kubicki made in 1785–1786.<sup>21</sup> Aigner's pantheon (**fig. 3**) can be considered a replacement for the intended but never executed Temple of Divine Providence.<sup>22</sup>

On June 15, 1818, Minister of Revenues and Treasury Jan Weglinski laid the foundation stone for the pantheon.<sup>23</sup> The ceremony, described as manifestly governmental,<sup>24</sup> was attended by members of the administration and the clergy.<sup>25</sup> An article in the *Warsaw Gazette* about the ceremony referred to the church as “a monument.”<sup>26</sup> The interior of the building was to be adorned with “sculptures and busts to immortalize great men of the nation.”<sup>27</sup> Wooden buildings to the north of the church were demolished.<sup>28</sup> This created a public

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15 Marcus van der Meulen, “One Ideology, Two Visions. Ecclesiastical Buildings and State Identity in the Socialist Capital during the Post-War Rebuilding Decades 1945–1975, East Berlin and Warsaw,” in *State Reconstruction and Art in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. Irena Kossowska, Marcin Lachowski and Agnieszka Chmielewska (New York: Routledge, 2023), 268–277. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003265818-28>.

16 *Magazyn Powszechny* [Common Magazine], November 29, 1834, 337.

17 Protocol from the Administrative Council, file ref. 6 sec. 201, May 26, 1818.

18 Tadeusz Stefan Jaroszewski, *Chrystian Piotr Aigner, architekt warszawskiego klasycyzmu* [Chrystian Piotr Aigner, Architect of Warsawian Classicism] (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970), 6.

19 Van der Meulen, “The Appearance of Public Building.”

20 Andrzej Majdowski, “Importy włoskie w architekturze dziewiętnastowiecznych kościołów warszawskich” [Italian Imports in the Architecture of Nineteenth-Century Warsaw Churches], *Nasza Przeszłość: studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce*, no. 79 (1993): 249–278.

21 Warsaw, Ujazdów, Ujazdów Church – project by Jakub Kubicki, Print Cabinet of the University of Warsaw, accessed January 6, 2022, <http://egr.buw.uw.edu.pl/node/35559>.

22 Van der Meulen. “One Ideology, Two Visions. Ecclesiastical Buildings and State Identity.”

23 Majdowski, “Przekształcenia przestrzenne kościoła,” 22–35.

24 Getka-Kenig, “Rządowe inwentarze pomnikowe,” 695–732.

25 Majdowski, “Przekształcenia przestrzenne kościoła,” 22–35.

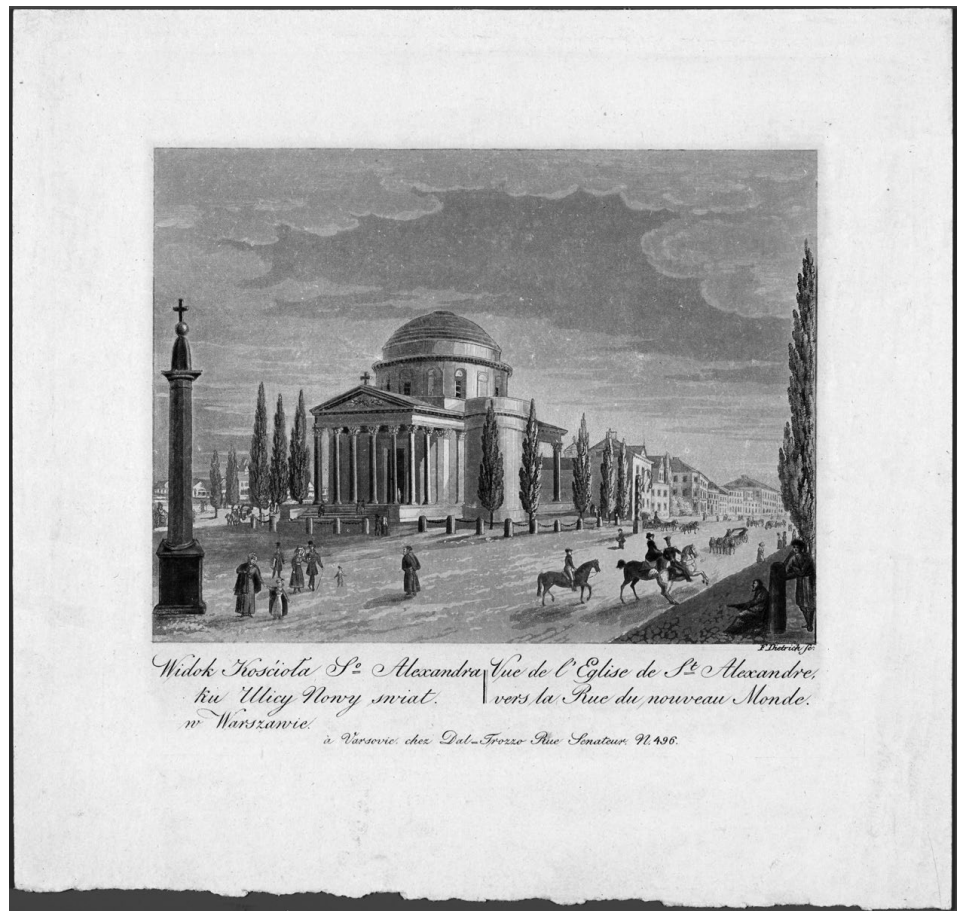
26 *Gazeta Warszawska*, no. 49, June 20, 1818.

27 *Gazeta Warszawska*, no. 80, October 5, 1819.

28 Ibid.



**Fig. 3.** The Church of Saint Alexander in Warsaw, view towards New World Street, 1827–1829. Engraving by Antoni dal Trozzi after drawing by Fryderyk Krzysztof Dietrich. Public domain.



square with the Neoclassical pantheon-shaped church as its foremost building. The building was established as an ideal construction, an anchor point in the maze of a chaotic city, embodying the Neoclassical ideal of the ordered city. The building itself was a cost-effective design, with a round shape that, as Durand pointed out, is the cheapest solution for a building.<sup>29</sup> Decoration on the exterior was kept to a minimum. Aigner created two equal facades eliminating the traditional church typology: the appearance of the building was the same as seen from New World or from Ujazdów Avenue.

The construction of the building lasted eight years, and on June 18, 1826, the church was inaugurated by archbishop Wojciech Skarszewski, the Primate of Poland.<sup>30</sup> The building is sacred architecture, but not strictly Catholic. The interior on a circular floor plan is quite small and completely covered by a dome. In Aigner's original design, the main altar is no more than a niche. As mentioned above, the intention was to adorn the interior with busts and statues of great men, yet due to a lack of funds these were never realised.<sup>31</sup> The only known depiction of the interior before its remodelling in a Neo-Renaissance

<sup>29</sup> For more information, see Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, *Précis des leçons d'architecture données à l'École Polytechnique* [Details of the Architecture Lessons Given at the Polytechnic School] (Paris: Bernard, 1802–1809).

<sup>30</sup> The Parish of Saint Alexander in Warsaw, accessed January 6, 2022, <http://www.swaleksander.pl/>.

<sup>31</sup> Getka-Kenig, "Rządowe inwentarze pomnikowe," 695–732.



**Fig. 4.** The Church of Saint Alexander in Alexander Square after transformation by Józef Pius Dziekoński, view towards New World Street, 1910–1926. Photographer unknown. Public domain.

style shows a Neoclassical space without any obvious focus on a main altar.<sup>32</sup> The building is not very suitable as a parish church, as it is too small and does not conform to the customs for the celebration of the liturgy, and this became a reason to remodel the church in the coming decades.

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The Russian authorities used military force to suppress the Polish Uprising of 1830, which was put down in 1831.<sup>33</sup> In the coming decades the Kingdom of Poland was gradually integrated into the Russian Empire. In this process, Warsaw is altered from the Polish capital into a Russian provincial town. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a transformation of the built landscape by remodelling some existing buildings and construction of others representing tsarist authority.<sup>34</sup> The Russification of the urban landscape was particularly intense in Warsaw, with over forty Russian Orthodox churches constructed and an iconographic program in both architecture and decoration that often had a political meaning.<sup>35</sup> This was a symbolic manifestation of Russian authority as architecture had become a tool to shape the urban landscape. During this period, the parish of Saint Alexander endured its plans to convert the building into a comprehensive parish church by adding a nave and bell towers. Several designs were made and, ultimately, the designs by Józef Pius Dziekoński (1844–1927) were realized (**fig. 4**).<sup>36</sup> The Neoclassical pantheon by Aigner disappeared under a Neo-Renaissance veil during the remodelling between 1886 and 1895.

32 Undated and anonymous painting in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, see: <https://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/pl/katalog/508201>.

33 Piotr S. Wandycz, *The lands of partitioned Poland, 1795–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 106.

34 Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów*, 6.

35 Ibid.

36 Majdowski, “Przekształcenia przestrzenne kościoła,” 22–35.

## 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY INTERVENTIONS

After World War I ended in 1918, Poland reclaimed its independence, making Warsaw the capital of a free and independent Polish state once more. The Russian provincial city of Warsaw disappeared during the interwar period, and a modern capital began to emerge. A process of de-Russification began which was in effect part of the construction of a new state identity. Initially some buildings were remodelled, while later religious buildings associated with Tsarist rule were demolished. The demolition of the Russian Orthodox cathedral of Alexander Nevsky (**fig. 5**) in central Warsaw was described by Mikołaj Tołwiński, professor of architecture, as “a civil obligation.”<sup>37</sup> Buildings of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were generally seen as evidence of a continual degradation of the Polish identity of the urban landscape.<sup>38</sup> During the interwar period, the need to reconstruct the nation according to a national style was felt by prominent architects such as Stefan Szyller (1857–1933) and Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz (1883–1948).<sup>39</sup> Reconstruction should be understood here as blurring the differences in public architecture caused by the Partitions of Poland and replacing them with a common Polish *landscape*. Architecture was perceived as crucial in unifying the fragmented combination of building traditions due to the partitions.<sup>40</sup> However, there was no unequivocal answer to the question posed by Szyller: “Do we have a Polish Architecture?”<sup>41</sup> Any



**Fig. 5.** The Cathedral of Alexander Nevsky in Warsaw, around 1920. Photographer unknown. Public domain.

37 Mikołaj Tołwiński, *O pomnikach i cerkwiach prawosławnych* [About Monuments and Orthodox Churches] (Warszawa: Księgarnia Jerzego Dunin-Borkowskiego 1919), 5–6.

38 Peter Martyn, “Emergent Metropolis and Fluctuating State Borders: Architectural Identity and the Obliteration of Warsaw in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” in *Borders in Art: Revisiting Kunstgeographie*, ed. Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius (Warsaw: Institute of Art, 2000), 139–149.

39 Anna Tejszerska, “National Style in the Reconstruction of Poland After World War I – Theory and Practice,” trans. Agnieszka Tarabula, in *Reconstructions and Modernizations of Historic Towns in Europe in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Iwona Barańska and Makary Górzyński (Kalisz: Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 2016), 143–171.

40 Tadeusz Barucki, *Architektura Polski* [Polish Architecture] (Warsaw: Arkady, 1985), 108–109.

41 “Czy mamy polską architekturę?” [Do We Have a Polish Architecture?], Lecture held in 1913 by Stefan Szyller at the Warsaw Circle of Architects.

architectural language that predated the partitions of Poland was acceptable to represent Polishness.<sup>42</sup> Several styles were described as Polish, even as functionalism became the dominant architectural language for public buildings in the later interwar period. Regarding its capital status, Warsaw was perceived as lacking metropolitan allure. This culminated in 1934 in a conference entitled Greater Warsaw as the Capital of Poland, where several architects and planners discussed the remodelling and further development of the capital.<sup>43</sup>

The possibility of realizing plans to remodel or reconstruct Warsaw and make it truly the capital of the Polish nation was made conceivable by the destructions of World War II. An underground urbanist committee that later became the bureau for reconstruction was active in Warsaw during the conflict. This committee, which included Bohdan Pniewski and Jan Zachwatowicz from the Warsaw Technical University (Politechnika Warszawska), made an analysis of the city, and according to Zachwatowicz in 1984, concluded that classicism of the late and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries had been the dominating tendency in shaping Warsaw.<sup>44</sup> This marked a clear break with the trend towards a national style for the reconstruction of the nation during the interwar period.

Warsaw was rebuilt after the war as the capital of the Polish People's Republic (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa). The first designs for rebuilding the city were functionalist and inspired by Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congresses of Modern Architecture; CIAM).<sup>45</sup> The designs for rebuilding the city were observed by delegations of experts from the Soviet Union. In relation to the designs, Viktor Veniaminovich Baburov and Sergey Yegorovich Chernyshev note that a functionalist city is capitalist, and that a truly democratic city has public spaces around public buildings where citizens can gather.<sup>46</sup> The experts from Moscow advocated to create squares and rebuilding heritage. The reconstruction of built heritage seemed to interest Moscow very much.<sup>47</sup> Rebuilding built heritage, especially when it had been destroyed by the fascist invader, was already presented in the Soviet Union as an act of patriotism by Igor' Grabar'.<sup>48</sup> This aspect in the reconstruction of Warsaw was propagated in the publications of, for example, Adolf Ciborowski.<sup>49</sup>

42 Andrzej K. Olszewski, "Problemy architektury" [Architectural Problems], in *Polskie życia artystyczne w latach 1915–1939*, ed. Aleksander Wojciechowski (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1974), 493–499.

43 Tadeusz Tołwiński, "Wielka Warszawa, Jako Stolica Państwa" [Great Warsaw as the State Capital], *Architektura i Budownictwo 1934*, no. 5 (1934): 154–162.

44 Jan Zachwatowicz, "Komisja Rzecznawców Urbanistycznych przy Zarządzie Miejskim Warszawy w latach 1939–1944" [The Commission of Urban Experts at the City Council of Warsaw in 1939–1944], *Rocznik Warszawski*, no. 17 (1984): 245–307.

45 Grzegorz Piątek, *Najlepsze miasto świata. Warszawa w odbudowie 1944–1949* [The Best City in the World. Warsaw under Reconstruction 1944–1949] (Warszawa: W.A.B., 2020), 181–183.

46 Jan Gorski, *Warszawa stolica Polski Ludowej* [Warsaw, Capital of the Polish People's Republic] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970), 371.

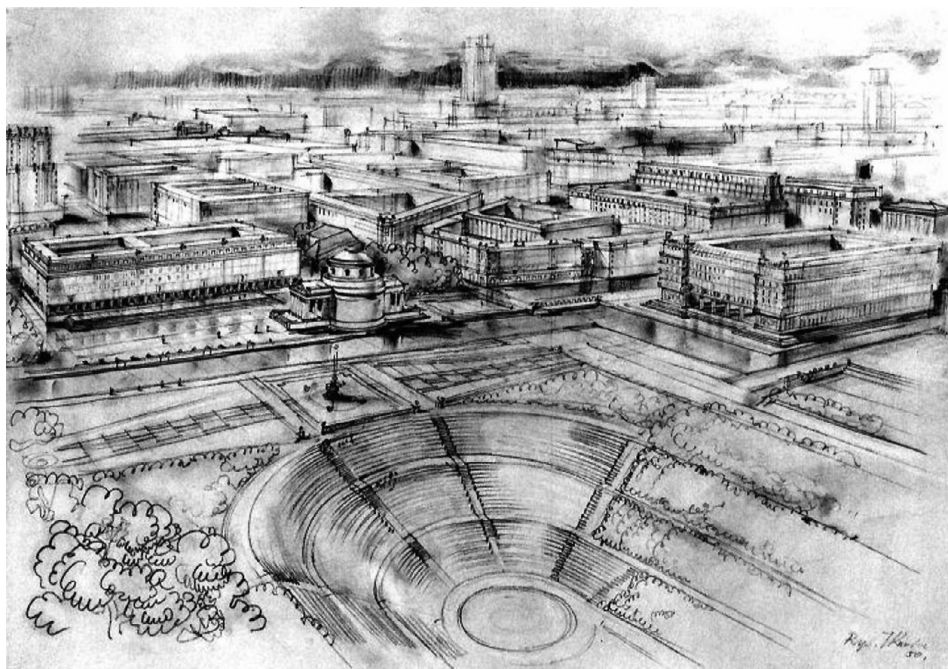
47 Marek Barański, "Opinie o odbudowie starego miasta w środowiskach zagranicznych" [Opinions on the Reconstruction of the Old Town in Foreign Circles], *Kronika Warszawy*, no. 5 (2000): 71–80.

48 Grabar' Igor', Восстановление памятников культуры [Restoration of Cultural Monuments], *Советское искусство*, November 28, 1944, 2.

49 See for example Adolf Ciborowski, *Warsaw: A City Destroyed and Rebuilt* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1969).



**Fig. 6.** Sketch of the Three Crosses Square as shown in the publication *The Six Year Plan for Rebuilding the Capital*, around 1950. Sketch by Jan Knothe. Public domain.



In 1947, a first design for rebuilding Saint Alexander's Church was made by Szyszko-Bohusz. This design to renovate the church to its pre-war state, however, was rejected by the Office for Rebuilding the Capital (Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy), the BOS.<sup>50</sup> According to the BOS, the construction of the new Ministry of Economic Reconstruction (Państwowej Komisji Planowania Gospodarczego, PKPG) created new urban conditions, and the design of the church had to be adapted accordingly.<sup>51</sup>

In 1949 a new masterplan for rebuilding the capital was presented: the Six Year Plan for Rebuilding the Capital, promoted by Boleslaw Bierut, *de facto* leader of the Polish People's Republic.<sup>52</sup> Later published as a political pamphlet, this masterplan also included the reconstruction of Three Crosses Square. A sketch of the new square (**fig. 6**) shows a public meeting room, recalling the recommendations by Baburov and Chernyshev, connecting several public buildings. Just outside of the sketch, but part of the overall urban plan, is the National Museum. There is the House of the Party (Dom Partii), the seat of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, to the right and to the left the building of the Ministry of Economic Reconstruction, both under construction when the Six Year Plan was presented. Central in the sketch room is a roman pantheon, the original appearance of Saint Alexander's Church before later remodelling.

50 Jerzy S. Majewski, "Kosciol sw. Aleksandra – rocznica odbudowy" [Church of St. Alexander – Anniversary of the Reconstruction], *Wyborcza*, accessed January 6, 2022,

<https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,34880,1250391.html?disableRedirects=true>.

51 Majewski, "Kosciol sw. Aleksandra."

52 For more information, see Boleslaw Bierut, *Szescioletni plan odbudowy warszawy* [The Six-Year Plan for the Reconstruction of Warsaw] (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1950).



The notes from the archives of Józef Sigalin (1909–1983), head architect of the reconstruction of the capital, note that the guiding principle in the reconstruction was the reconstruction of “a historical sequence” from Castle Square to the Belweder Palace on Ujazdów Avenue.<sup>53</sup> The construction of new public buildings such as the House of the Party on this historical sequence or succession of buildings and public space is *nie narusza, ale wzegoca*, not a violation but enrichment of the reconstruction.<sup>54</sup> Rebuilding the succession of buildings and public space is clearly not to be interpreted as a replication of the pre-war situation, but an accumulation of historic buildings and public space, adapted if necessary, such as Corazzi’s Society of Friends of Science,<sup>55</sup> and enhanced with new buildings representing the ruling political party, such as the Home of the Party and Ministry of Economic Reconstruction.

The only church that Sigalin mentions in the sequence of public space and historical buildings is Saint Alexander’s.<sup>56</sup> A competition was organized for its rebuilding. The winning submission aimed at reconstructing the pantheon by Aigner. The Primate’s Office for Rebuilding Churches (Rada Prymasowska Odbudowy Kościołów), the bureau of the Archdiocese of Warsaw that directed and helped finance the rebuilding of churches, objected to this design.<sup>57</sup> It correctly noted that the building would have much less space for parishioners, and was not suitable for the celebration of Mass. The state continued its plans, however it did allow a design competition for a modern church nave which was won by Szyszko-Bohusz, yet was never executed.<sup>58</sup> The church’s function as a place of worship was unimportant in the plans for reconstruction. The reconstruction of the church was officially approved on May 1, 1949.<sup>59</sup> On April 3, 1950, the authorities approved budgets for the construction of four churches, including Saint Alexander’s.<sup>60</sup> Although demolition of the free-standing bell tower was initially postponed in 1951,<sup>61</sup> it was ultimately destroyed despite citizen protests.<sup>62</sup> The rebuilding project was led by Stanisław Marzyński and

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53 Józef Sigalin, *Warszawa 1944–1980 z archiwum architekta*, tom 1 [Warsaw 1944–1980 from the Architect’s Archive, vol. 1] (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986), 337–339.

54 Sigalin, *Warszawa 1944–1980*, Vol. 1, 337–339.

55 Maciej Olenski, “Reconstruction or Creation? The Phenomenon of ‘Replication’ in the Reconstruction of Historic Warsaw Buildings in the Light of the Conservation Doctrines of the Athens Charter,” in *Reconstructions and Modernizations of Historic Towns in Europe in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Iwona Barańska and Makary Górzynski (Kalisz: Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 2016), 479–491.

56 Sigalin, *Warszawa 1944–1980*, Vol. 1, 337–339.

57 Jerzy S. Majewski, *Czekając na odbudowę. Warszawa 1945–1950 w obiektywie Karola Percherskiego* [Waiting for Reconstruction, Warsaw 1945–1950 through the Lens of Karol Percherski] (Warsaw: Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, 2016), 175.

58 Majewski, “Kosciol sw. Aleksandra.”

59 Józef Sigalin, *Warszawa 1944–1980*, z archiwum architekta [Warsaw 1944–1980, from the Architect’s Archive] Vol. 2, (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986): 105.

60 Sigalin, *Warszawa 1944–1980*, Vol. 2, 404.

61 *Ibid.*, 411–412.

62 Piotr Majewski, *Ideologia i konserwacja. Architektura zabytkowa w Polsce w czasach socrealizmu* [Ideology and Conservation, Historic Architecture in Poland in the Times of Socialist Realism] (Warszawa: Trio, 2009), 96–98.

**Fig. 7.** Three Crosses Square in Warsaw with on the left the Ministry of Economic Reconstruction under construction and on the right the Church of Saint Alexander still in ruins, 1948–1949. Photograph by Leonard Jabrzemski. Public domain.



realized between 1949 and 1952.<sup>63</sup> Aigner's pantheon was reconstructed with some modifications so that the building would better complement the Ministry of Economic Rebuilding (**fig. 7**).<sup>64</sup> The church was consecrated on September 21, 1952, by Archbishop Stefan Wyszyński.<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Saint Alexander's Church is a public building dating back to constitutional Congress Poland, destroyed during World War II and rebuilt as part of the masterplan of reconstruction of the capital of the Polish People's Republic. The first construction was erected by the state as a monument to the resurrection of a sovereign Polish state. The pantheon by Aigner was part of a transformation of the capital. It is unclear whether the architectural language of Aigner's pantheon was a conscious choice for the founders or the result of the prevailing architectural method. It can be argued that Neoclassicism was the result of economic building methods of the time.<sup>66</sup> The pantheon represents not only the period of Congress Poland, but more generally an alleged state Neoclassicism initiated by Stanislas Poniatowski, a reading of Neoclassicism in Poland that found its cumulation in a publication by Lorentz and Rottermund.<sup>67</sup> The church was reconstructed to its neoclassical design by Aigner as part of the reconstruction of a sequence of buildings and public space. Rebuilding the built heritage destroyed by the Nazi invader was perceived as an act of

63 Majewski, "Od rozdroża Złotych Krzyży...", 10–17.

64 Majewski, "Kosciol sw. Aleksandra."

65 The Archdiocese of Warsaw, accessed January 6, 2022, <https://archwwa.pl/parafie/warszawa-sw-aleksandra/#historia>.

66 Van der Meulen, "The Appearance of Public Building."

67 See Stanisław Lorentz and Andrzej Rottermund, *Neoclassicism in Poland* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1984).

patriotism. Aigner's pantheon became a built monument in a succession of public buildings and historical monuments as envisioned by the socialist state. Continuity was emphasized against a possible disruption of rebuilding the city. The socialist state thus aimed to present itself as the natural successor to previous sovereign Polish governments. The church's function as a place of worship was secondary, as it had little relevance in the masterplan and overall design of the state square, where, above all, the church became a monument to statehood.

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## THE GALLERY OF RADE GERBA: A HISTORICAL ANACHRONISM IN THE TWILIGHT OF THE AUSTRO- HUNGARIAN MONARCHY\*

**Key words:** Radovan  
(Raimund, Rade) Gerba,  
heraldry, coats of arms,  
Austro-Hungarian  
Monarchy, propaganda,  
image-making

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### Abstract

*The Gallery of Coats of Arms of the Commanders of the Croatian-Slavonian Military Frontier and Commanders of General Military Command in Zagreb was established in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on the order of Lieutenant Marshal Radovan (Raimund, Rade) Gerba. Coats of arms were exhibited with related portraits in the premises of the General Military Command in Zagreb, and were handed over to the National Museum in Zagreb (today the Croatian History Museum) after the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Made for memorial purposes, the Gallery is associated with the way that the Habsburg state cultivated and represented certain norms, values and behaviour, in this case by bringing military dignitaries into prominence, based on a solid heraldic heritage. It also illustrates the social and political significance of military nobility and institutions in the time of the crisis of the Monarchy, especially during the period of the settlement of the Eastern Question and on the eve of the outbreak of World War I.*

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### INTRODUCTION – WHO WAS RADE GERBA?

The Gallery of Coats of Arms of Lieutenant Marshal Radovan (Raimund, Rade) Gerba is kept in the holdings of Croatian History Museum. It consists of 131 coats of arms and portraits (although not in the same number) of the commanders of the Croatian-Slavonian Military Frontier from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century and the commanders of General-Commando zu Agram (the General Military Command in Zagreb) until 1918. These are coats of arms and portraits of carefully chosen historical figures relevant to Croatia's political and military past, especially those who held the functions of *bans*, high-ranking officers of the Austro-Hungarian army and bearers of the Commander's Cross of the Military Order of Maria Theresa (**fig. 1**).

In order to begin an analysis of the Gallery, it is important to refer to the biography of Radovan (Raimund, Rade) Gerba (1849–1918). As the son of a Military Frontier Captain, Gerba's education and profession were predetermined. He graduated from the Military Cadet School in Rijeka, and in 1868 he became a lieutenant at the Engineering Academy of the 71<sup>st</sup> Infantry

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Regiment in Klosterbruck near Znojmo. After holding a teaching position at the Infantry Cadet School in Brno, in 1874 he was assigned to the Reserve Command of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Veliki Bečkerek (*Großbetschkerek*). After schooling in 1875/1876 at the War School in Vienna, he was promoted to First Lieutenant, and in 1877 he was assigned to the General Staff at the Military Command in Bratislava (*Pozsony/Pressburg*). The following year, he was transferred to the 71<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade, with which he participated in the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 and Sandžak in 1879. He was appointed as Captain of the Main Military Headquarters in 1879 and assigned first to the command in Sarajevo. Then, in 1880, he was transferred to the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Company Division in Graz and, following this, in 1882 to the General Command in Prague. It is worth mentioning that from 1886 to 1890 he worked in the military history department of the Vienna War Archives, after which he published military history books on Eugene of Savoy. He also wrote about military events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Montenegro, and was active in Austrian and Croatian periodicals.

In 1888, he was promoted to the rank of Major, and in 1890 to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and appointed Chief of the General Staff of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Sarajevo. In late 1891, he was assigned to the 97<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, in 1893 he was promoted to Colonel, and in 1894 he was appointed commander of the 97<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. In 1899 he became the commander of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Home Guard Infantry Brigade in Litoměřice, and at the end of the year he was promoted to General.

Crucial for this paper is the fact that Gerba was appointed Commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Croatian-Slavonian Home Guard District in Zagreb in 1903, and, in the following year, promoted to Lieutenant Marshal. His military career reached its peak in 1908 when he was appointed as royal secret adviser and Commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> Military Corps, as well as the commanding General of General-Commando zu Agram (the General Military Command in Zagreb). He became commander of infantry in 1909 and owner (*Inhaber*) of the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in 1910. In 1912 he was relieved of his command, and he retired in 1913. He was awarded with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Leopold in 1906, the Grand Cross of the Order of Franz Josef in 1908 and the Order of the Iron Crown of the 1<sup>st</sup> class in 1913.<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 1. Radvan (Raimund, Rade) Gerba, photolithography after a photo by Atelier Mosinger, Zagreb, published by the Photographic Institute R. Mosinger d.d., Zagreb, around 1910, inv. no. HPM/PMH-4534, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.

<sup>1</sup> “Grba, Radvan (Gerba; Rade, Raimund)”, Hrvatski biografski leksikon [Croatian Biographical Lexicon] (2002), accessed on March 15, 2022, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=7483>.



## ANALYSIS OF THE GALLERY

From documentation in the Croatian History Museum and Gerba's biography, we can conclude that the creation of the Gallery was closely related with Gerba's arrival in Zagreb, and more precisely with his promotion to Lieutenant Marshal in 1904. Coats of arms and portraits are registered in the documentation as museum items whose order was initiated by Lieutenant Marshal Rade Gerba.<sup>2</sup> Gerba's arrival was directly connected with the creation of the Gallery with which he decorated the premises of the General Command in Zagreb (today Klovičevi dvori Gallery on Jesuit Square in Zagreb). According to the handover records of the National Museum from 1918, portraits and coats of arms were "(...) hung on the walls of the hallway and some rooms."<sup>3</sup>

The coats of arms are painted on 131 oval iron sheets, cut and bent like a



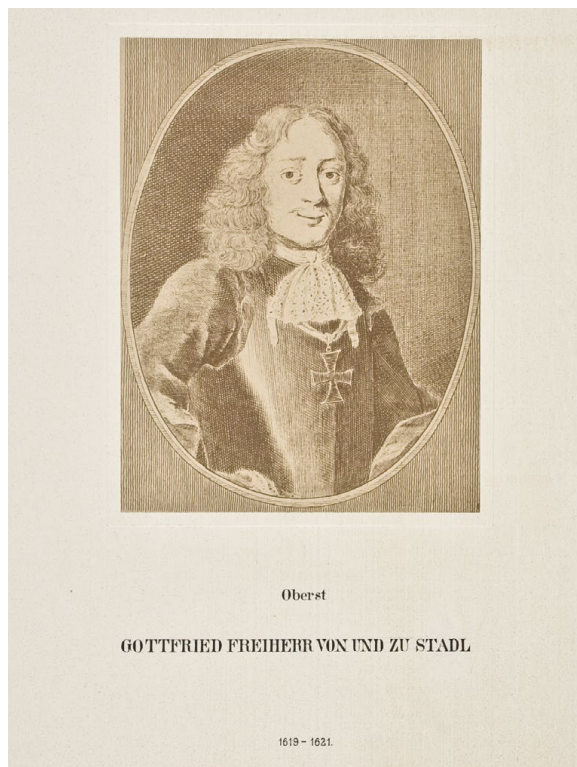
**Fig. 2.** Coat of Arms of General Josip Jelačić Count von Bužim, Ban of Croatia etc., Vienna or Zagreb, around 1904, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22712, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.

**Fig. 3.** Count Josip Jelačić von Bužim painted by Franz Schrotzberg, lithographed by Eduard Kaiser, printed in k.k. Hof und Staatsdruckerei, Vienna, 1850, inv. no. HPM/PMH-4638, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.



**Fig. 4.** Coat of Arms of Colonel Gottfried Baron von Stadl, Vienna or Zagreb, around 1904, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22729, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.

**Fig. 5.** Baron Gottfried von Stadl, photoreproduction of an engraving by an unknown artist published in Leipzig 1721–1726, unidentified photographer, Vienna or Zagreb, around 1900, inv. no. HPM/PMH-4492, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.



<sup>2</sup> Vojno zapovjedništvo u Zagrebu [Military Command in Zagreb], November 8, 1918, no. 68/918. Old scripts from the National Museum, Documentation and Information Department, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb (hereafter cited as CHM Documentation); inventory books and catalogues (see Footnote no. 14).

Also see the following article: Dubravka Peić Čaldarović, "Grbovi hrvatskog plemstva – činjenice kulturnog nasljeđa i čimbenici identiteta" [Coats of Arms of Croatian Nobility – Facts of Cultural Heritage and Identity], in *Povijesni prilozi*, no. 31 (2006): 87–100. In the article, Čaldarević names the Gallery as the Collection of Rade Gerba.

<sup>3</sup> „Zapisnik o preuzeću [Handover record], November 8, 1918, bo. 68/918. CHM Documentation. All translations are by the author.

shield in equal dimensions (61 x 46 centimetres). All are painted on a gilded base trimmed with a thin black border. Each of them is surrounded by a text in stencilled, black letters that contains the following data: the bearer's name with predicate and military rank above the coat of arms, and the years of active command service under the coat of arms. There are slight inconsistencies in the writing of names, nobility predicates and the use of punctuation marks (**fig. 2, fig. 3, fig. 4, fig. 5**).

Such painted coats of arms are examples of excellent professional work, made in accordance with the rules of the Viennese Heraldic Office and the historicist style of the time. The coats of arms are not signed, but were probably painted by specialized heraldic artists whose identities remain to be researched. It is important to mention that at that time Austrian artist Ernst Krahl was active in the Heraldic Office as the coats of arms censor (*Wappencensor*).<sup>4</sup> He painted and signed all granted coats of arms in the period from 1892 to 1918. In this respect, the Grants of Arms from the Collection of Heraldry and Sphragistics of the Croatian History Museum signed by Krahl are a valuable comparative source for the study of Gerba's painted coats of arms.<sup>5</sup> Coats of arms are identical, from the lettering font, decorative frames and ornaments to their colors, and they reflect the historicist style, which was the "trademark" style of the Monarchy for a long period of time.<sup>6</sup>

342 Since the production of coats of arms continued during the World War I, i.e. until 1918, it is evident that some iron sheets are of lower quality, as well as some coats of arms that are not quality artworks due to their inferior drawing, modeling, color quality and deviation from heraldry rules. These were possibly executed during the war period by local craft workshops or perhaps even by a person within the Military Command. As for the portraits of commanders, they are mainly lithographs from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century and reproductions of graphics from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Together with coats of arms, they form a meaningful and representative ensemble.

For the creation of the Gallery, it was necessary to secure financial resources; Gerba, as a high-ranking officer and secret royal adviser, probably succeeded in this. Also, Gerba's connections with the military history department of the Vienna War Archives, where he worked from 1886 to 1890, were crucial

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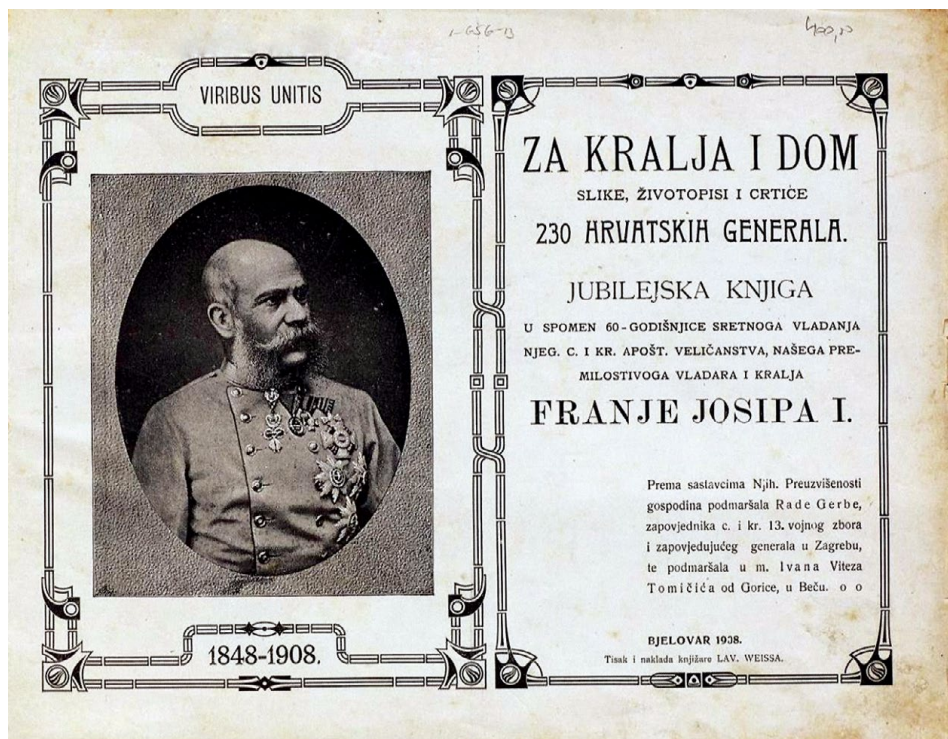
4 Hanns Jäger-Sunstenau, "Die Wappenzensoren in den Hofkanzleien in Wien 1707–1918" [Coats of Arms Censors in the Court Chancellery in Vienna 1707–1918], in *Genealogica & Heraldica: XVI<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences 1984*, ed. Tom C. Bergroth (Helsinki: Finnish National Committee for Genealogy and Heraldry, 1986), 362–363.

5 *Grant of Arms of the Family Weingärtner of Velika Mlaka*, Wien, 1897, HPM/PMH-33143; *Grant of Arms of the Family Petras of Novigrad*, Vienna, 1904, HPM/PMH-32754; *Grant of Arms of the Family Rukavina of Klanačko polje*, Vienna, 1914, HPM/PMH-2077, Heraldry and Sphragistics Collection, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.

6 Matea Brstilo Rešetar, "The Identity of the Military Nobility in Croatia from the Austro-Hungarian Compromise to the Break-Up of the Monarchy," in *Genealogica et Heraldica: Identität in Genealogie und Heraldik. XXIX. Internationaler Kongress der genealogischen und heraldischen Wissenschaften*, ed. Rolf E. Sutter (Stuttgart: PRO HERALDICA, 2012), 140–153.



**Fig. 6.** Rade Gerba, Ivan Tomičić, *Za kralja i dom: slike, životopisi i crtice 230 hrvatskih generala...* [For the King and the Home: Pictures, Biographies and Cartoons of 230 Croatian generals...] (Bjelovar: Tisak i naklada knjižare LAV. WEISSA, 1908), cover page. Digitalna knjižnica Point d.o.o., Varaždin, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://library.foi.hr/lib/knjiga.php?B=1&item=X01654>.



during his work on the creation of coats of arms and collecting of portraits.<sup>7</sup> Although Gerba was retired in 1913, work on the Gallery continued and lasted until 1918, that is, until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as is evident from the years of service of commanders of the General Military Command written on the coats of arms.<sup>8</sup> Gerba died on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

Another work by Gerba testifies to the structure and representativeness of the gallery. This work was connected to the the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reign of Emperor Franz Josef. For this occasion, Rade Gerba and Ivan Tomičić published a book titled *Za kralja i dom: slike, životopisi i crtice 230 hrvatskih generala* (For the King and the Homeland: Pictures, Biographies and Illustrations of 230 Croatian Generals), which was printed and prepared in Vienna.<sup>9</sup> An analysis of this anniversary book gives us clearer insight into

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<sup>7</sup> Gerba's active work on collecting data and portraits for Gallery can be seen from correspondence which is kept at the Kriegsarchiv Wien (Vienna War Archives). Correspondence refers to the period from 1910 to 1917 between Gerba and the institution regarding the acquisition of 15 portraits of the bearers of the Military Order of Maria Theresa, Korrespondenz Gerba Raimund (Correspondence of Raimund Gerba), September 19, 1910–1917, Signature AT-OeStA/KA BA MMThO III D, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna. The collection of the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (Museum of Military History in Vienna) today includes: the Portrait of General Raimund Gerba (1849–1918), heliogravure, k. u.k. Militärgeogr. Institute (Military Geographical Institute), Vienna, undated, signature: 9643/2013, Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna and Portrait of general Raimund Gerba, oil on canvas, unknown painter, signature: 2583/2016, Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna.

<sup>8</sup> Last coat of arms refers to „FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT JOSEF SEIPKA EDLER VON AUENSTAETT. // 1915-1918”, HPM/PMH-22741, Croatian History Museum (see Appendix no. 34).

<sup>9</sup> Rade Gerba and Ivan Tomičić, *Za kralja i dom: slike, životopisi i crtice 230 hrvatskih generala / prema sastavcima Njih. Preuzvišenosti gospodina podmaršala Rade Gerbe, zapovjednika c. i kr. 13. vojnog zbora i zapovjedujućeg generala u Zagrebu, te podmaršala u m. Ivana Viteza Tomičića od Gorice, u Beču* [For the King and the Homeland: Pictures, Biographies and Illustrations of 230 Croatian Generals / According to Their Compositions. His Excellency Mr. Lieutenant Marshal Rade Gerba, Imperial and Royal Commander, 13<sup>th</sup> Military Corps and Commanding General in Zagreb, and Lieutenant Marshal in Peace Ivan Tomičić, Knight of Gorica, in Vienna (Bjelovar: Tisak i naklada knjižare LAV. WEISSA, 1908). Digitalna knjižnica Point d.o.o., Varaždin, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://library.foi.hr/lib/knjiga.php?B=1&item=X01654>.

the concept and purpose of the Gallery. As the subtitle suggests, the book provides 230 biographies of generals and the same number of portraits, printed on 23 plates with following data: name, military rank, nobility predicate (if present) and years of service. Work on the gallery and the book took place simultaneously, and the influence of one on the other cannot be ignored considering the amount of data that Gerba collected (**fig. 6**).

## INTERPRETATION – HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND MUSEOLOGICAL VALORIZATION OF THE GALLERY

The anniversary book and the Gallery are not isolated examples of propaganda activities on the part of the Habsburg Empire aimed at creating an image of power and state identity. The founding of the Gallery can be also associated with the cultivation of military tradition, which aspired to point to certain norms of valuation and behaviour by promoting military dignitaries based on a solid heraldic heritage (i.e., through their identification using heraldic tradition).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Gerba's selection of the coats of arms of the commanders of the Croatian-Slavonian Military Frontier for the premises of the General Military Command in Zagreb was not accidental. The selection was based on the importance of the Croatian-Slavonian Military Frontier as a centuries-old "institution" that played a key role both in the education and the creation of high-ranking military personnel, as well as in the very history of the Croatian Lands.<sup>11</sup>

The gallery also testifies to the spirit and worldview of high-ranking officers such as Gerba, as well as the perspective of the military in general, which was one of the last cohesive forces of the supranational and conservative state in the all-encompassing crisis that had beset the Monarchy.<sup>12</sup> In the period from

10 Gerba's activity was not an isolated example of the creation of heraldic galleries or collections within military institutions. On the territory of Croatia, one can mention the coat of arms of Austrian Lands from the Military School in Kamenica or the portraits and graphics from Regiments which are also handed over to the National Museum in 1918 after the break-up of the Monarchy. *Old Scripts from the National Museum*, 1918, CHM Documentation.

11 The Military Frontier (*Militärgränze*) was a special territorial unit that, in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, was detached from the territory of the Croatian state as it existed in the Middle Ages. It was organised and structured as a military defence system for the sake of defending the Kingdom of Croatia and the Habsburg lands against the Ottomans. From the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, when the Kingdom of Croatia began to be ruled by the Habsburgs, the military government and command of the Frontier were taken over by the Austrian archdukes, who allotted titles of nobility and coats of arms to the military staff of the Frontier according to their services in the wars against the Ottomans. The concept and appearance of the military nobility and their coats of arms are a specific topic in Croatian historiography. The Military Frontier existed until 1881, when it was abolished and incorporated into the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia. See more in: Matea Brstilo Rešetar, "Heraldičko nazivlje na temu ratovanja s Osmanlijama" [Heraldic Symbols on the Coats of Arms of the Military Nobility as Vehicles for Memories of Struggles against the Ottomans], in *Povijesni prilozi*, no. 38 (2010): 71–96.

12 A helpful study of the process of granting titles of nobility in Hungary can be found in: Hanns Jäger Sunstenau, "Sozialgeschichtliche Statistik der Nobilitierungen in Ungarn 1700–1918" [Social-historical Statistics of Ennoblement in Hungary 1700–1918], in *ADLER – Zeitschrift für Genealogie und Heraldik*, 14. (XXVIII.) Band, 3. Heft, 2. Teil (1986–1988): 578–583. The statistics for the period of 1867–1918 evidently show a continuous increase in the share of military nobility in comparison to the share of the status of nobility granted to other professions (bureaucrats, notaries, lawyers, judges, doctors and teachers). From 1903 to 1918, the numbers significantly exceed the previous figures. This mostly refers to bearers of titles of nobility, while baronetcy and countship appear more frequently in the Austrian part of the Monarchy. The increase in the num-

### Z a p i s n i k

o preuzetu nekih portreta poklonjenih po vojnom zapovjedništvu u Zagrebu zemaljskoj vladi, odjelu za bogoštovlje i nastavu, sastavljen dne 8. studenoga 1918 .

Vojno zapovjedništvo u Zagrebu javilo je hrv. slav. dalm. zemaljskoj vladi, odjelu za bogoštovlje i nastavu, da je voljno istom zemaljsko-vladnom odjelu pokloniti sve ~~portrete~~ portrete nekadašnjih vojnih zapovjednika u Hrvatskoj i vitezova reda Marije Terezije, što ih je bio sakupio i poklonio tome vojnom zapovjedništvu pokojni zborni zapovjednik zagrebački general infant terije Rade Gerba.

Zemaljskovladni odjel za bogoštovlje i nastavu primajući se zahvalnošću ovaj dar odlučuje , da se slike preuzmu i pohrane u arheološko-historičkom odjelu hrvatskoga narodnoga muzeja.

Kao izaslanik zemaljske vlade prisustvovao je preuzimanju vladin savjetnik Peter Knoll, a u ime arheološko - historičkoga odjela hrvatskoga narodnoga muzeja preuzeo ih je čuvar u istom muzejskom odjelu dr. Viktor Hoffiller.

Pronadjeno je u svem 130 / stotinu i trideset/ komada uokvirenih portreta te četiri uokvirena popisa istih. Dva su okvira bila prazna , t. j. slike su već bile prije iz njih izvadjene. Nad 94 slike visjeli su grbovi naslikani na ovalnim limenim pločama, koji su pripadali naslikanim osobama. Od mnogih naslikanih osoba nisu se našli grbovi, a kod 36 grbova, koji su se našli, manjkali su pripadajući portreti, jer su ili već prije bili po nekom odneseni ili ih pokojni darovatelj uopće nije mogao pribaviti.

Štogod se je našlo, to se je sve prenijelo u narodni muzej, te je prema tome u svem preuzeto:

130 portreta,

4 uokvirena popisa portreta

94 grba naslikanih osoba i

36 grbova bez pripadajućih portreta.

O preuzetim predmetima sastavljen je priviti popis, a vojnom zapovjed-

the Austro-Hungarian Settlement in 1867 to the collapse of the Monarchy, the military, its potential and its activities became increasingly important for the maintenance and preservation of the state. In relation to the historical context of the creation of the Gallery, it is also worth mentioning that after the introduction of the dualist system, an increase in the number of members of the military nobility resulted from the reorganization of the army, motivated by the foreign policy activities of Austria-Hungary, i.e. its engagement in attempts to resolve the Eastern Question in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was occupied by the Monarchy in 1878, and subsequently annexed in 1908. The political significance of military institutions in the time of the preservation of the Monarchy, especially after 1878 and on the eve of the outbreak of World War I, is also evident from the idea of the establishing the Gallery.

Coats of arms with the related portraits were handed over to the National Museum in Zagreb after the break-up of the Monarchy. This donation was received on behalf of the National Museum on November 8, 1918, by the museum director Dr. Viktor Hoffiler through the Department of Religion and Education of the Land Government, following the consent of Dr. Mate Drinković, military commissioner of the National Council of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs at that time. According to

the handover record, "Whatever was found was transferred to the National Museum, and therefore the following items were taken over: 130 portraits, framed lists of portraits, 94 coats of arms of painted persons and 36 coats of arms without accompanying portraits. A short list has been compiled of the items taken over (....)."<sup>13</sup> Today, the Gallery, which was donated to the National Museum, forms the bulk of the Heraldic and Sphragistics collection of the Croatian History Museum, as one of its successors. (fig. 7).

ber of members of the military nobility in the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia is also visible from Military Schematismus and the armorials of Ivan Bojničić, *Der Adel von Kroatien und Slavonien* [The Nobility of Croatia and Slavonia], Nürnberg: Bauer & Raspe, 1899, and Antun Viktor Duišin, *Zbornik plemstva u Hrvatskoj, Slavoniji, Dalmaciji, Bosni-Hercegovini, Dubrovniku, Kotoru i Vojvodini* [Nobility in Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dubrovnik, Kotor and Vojvodina, Zagreb: self-published, 1938.

13 See footnote 3, above.



The fact that the coats of arms were displayed on the walls together with portraits visualizing their bearers makes this context necessary for their museological presentation. As museum items, they testify to conscious, planned action – the production of carefully selected coats of arms and communication through heraldic tradition, symbols and their meaning, which, although anachronistic, is highly representative. It should be noted that after the break-up of Austria-Hungary in 1918, with the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the practice of granting titles and their use were abolished; after a short time, only the coats of arms of cities and districts remained in official use. Therefore, the Gallery has historical, artistic and social value crucial for the Croatian national tradition, its culture and identity within the broader European cultural tradition, and deserves permanent protection.

Today, coats of arms and portraits are continuously professionally processed, catalogued, published, and exhibited at thematic historical exhibitions of the Croatian History Museum.<sup>14</sup> Since 2010, the coats of arms undergone thorough restoration.<sup>15</sup>

## TO CONCLUDE

The establishment of the Gallery of Rade Gerba was closely related to Gerba's arrival in Zagreb, and more precisely with his promotion to Lieutenant Marshal in 1904. Work on the Gallery, which included collecting portraits and painting coats of arms, lasted until collapse of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918. This essay has tried to establish a framework for understanding the formation of a high-ranking officer cadre of the Monarchy – both, their professionalization in relation to military activity and in relation to the normative-value context. In the case of Rade Gerba, one can also talk about individual action and engagement, which also supports the claim that the Gallery was connected to the way that the Habsburg state cultivated and represented certain norms, values and behaviour, in this case by promoting military dignitaries based on a solid heraldic heritage. Today, the era of the gallery's creation appears as a historical anachronism due to the ongoing processes of modernization and national integration at the time. Nonetheless, as this essay illustrates, the social and political significance of military institutions remained high throughout the time of the preservation of the Monarchy, especially during the period of the settlement of the Eastern Question and on the eve of the outbreak of World War I. Finally, as part of the holdings of the Croatian History Museum, the Gallery testifies to strong and valuable connections with the European heraldic and cultural tradition.

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14 The coats of arms from the Gallery are catalogued and published in the Museum catalogue: Vlasta Brajković, *Grbovi, grbovnice i rodoslovlja* [Coats of Arms, Grants of Arms and Genealogies] (Zagreb: Croatian History Museum, 1993), 61–110. The portraits are found in: Marina Bregovac Pisk, *Portreti u Zbirci grafika Hrvatskog povijesnog muzeja* [Portraits in the Print Collection of the Croatian History Museum] (Zagreb: Croatian History Museum, 1993).

15 Over time, some coats of arms were badly retouched and the shields were mechanically damaged, due to which the paint cracked in places and resulted in “illegibility” of the heraldic symbols. In 2010, the Croatian History Museum started the process of systematic restoration of all 131 coats of arms, which includes necessary cleaning and removal of dust and corrosion, metal conservation and protection of the original image, removal of bad retouching and partial reconstruction of coats of arms and texts (where necessary for the clarity of blazons and inscriptions).

## APPENDIX

Coats of arms arranged by their inventory numbers in the Croatian History Museum (names written as they appeared on the shields):

1. BAN. NIKOLAUS GRAF ZRINY // 1543–1556, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22708.
2. BANUS NIKOLAUS IX FRANKOPAN GRAF VON TRŽAC // 1616–1662, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22709.
3. OBERST WOLF CHRISTOF FRANGEPANI GRAF ZU TRŽAC // 1619, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22710.
4. FELDMARSCHALL GUIDOBALD GRAF VON STARHEMBERG // 1698–1734, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22711.
5. FELDZEUGMAISTER JOSEF GRAF JELAČIĆ DE BUŽIM BANUS VON CROATIEN ETC. // 1848–18 // „ŠTO BOG DADE I SREĆA JUNAČKA.”, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22712.
6. FELDMARSCHALLEUTENANT JOSEF FREIHERR VON REICHER // 1889–1891, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22713.
7. OBRIST ANDREAS FREIHERR VON AUERSPERG // 1589–1593, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22714.
8. FELDZEUGMEISTER SIEGMUND FRIEDRICH GRAF GAISMEK // 1749–1753, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22715.
9. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT MAXIMILIAN FREIHERR VON PETRASEK // 1721–1724, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22716.
10. FELDMARSCHALL AENEAS GRAF CAPRARA // 1683–1701, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22717.
11. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTENANT JOHANN GRAF CORONINI CRONBERGER // 1859–1860, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22718.
12. FELDMARSCHALLEUTENANT WENZEL GRAF COLLOREDO-WALDSEE // 1784–1786, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22719.
13. FELDMARSCHAL-LIEUTENANT JOSEF FREIHERR VON ŠOKČEVIĆ, BANUS VON CROATIEN ETC. // 1860–1867, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22720.
14. FELDMARSCHAL-LIEUTENANT DEMETER FREIHERR RADOSSEVICH VON RADOS // 1831–1832, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22721.
15. GENERAL DER CAVALLERIE ALEX FÜRST DIETRICHSTEIN ZU NICOLSBURG GRAF VON MENS DORF-POUILLY // 1869–1870, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22722.
16. FELDZEUGMEISTER PHILIP LEVIN VON BEEK // 1763–1768, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22723.
17. FELDZEUGMEISTER JOSEF ANTON GRAF MITTROWSKY // 1786–1790., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22724.

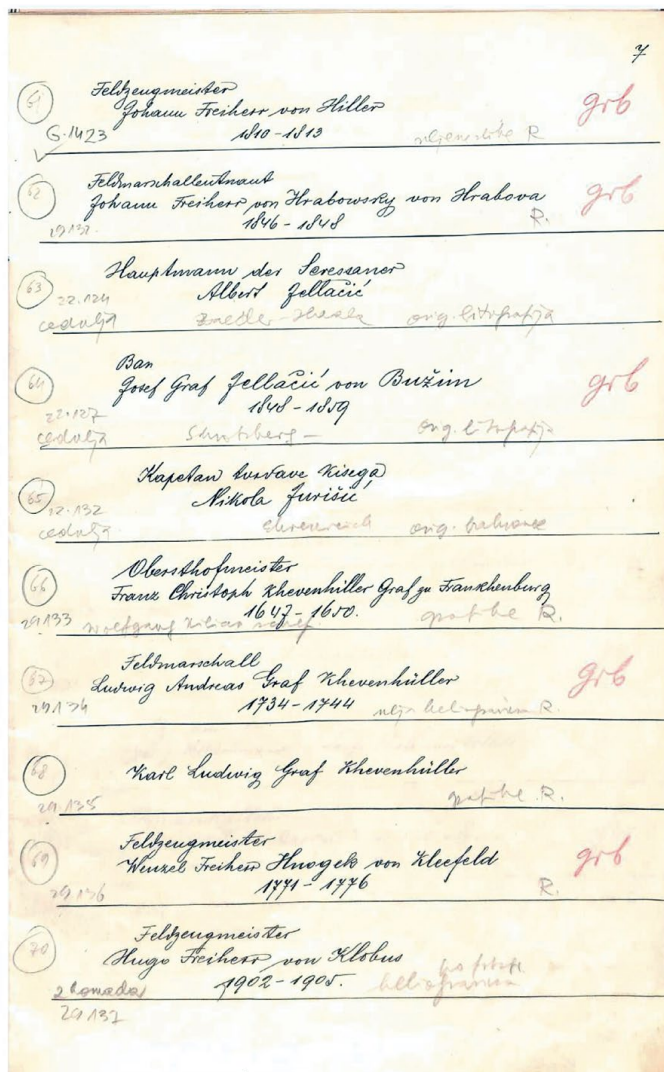


Fig. 8. List of coats of arms and portraits from Military Command in Zagreb, Referent no.: 68/918, page 11, 1918, Old scripts from National Museum, Documentation and Information Department, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb, 11.

18. OBRISTLEUTNANT ANDREAS FREIHERR VON AUERSPERG // 1581–1582, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22725.
19. GENERAL DER KAVALLERIE HEINRICH LXIV FÜRST REUSS. KÖSTRITZ. // 1844–1846, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22726.
20. GENERAL FELDWACHTMEISTER, JOHANN WILHELM FRH. VON PFEFFERSHOFEN. // 1735–1738, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22727.
21. FELDMARSCHALL JOHANN GRAF PALFFY VON ERDÖD, BANUS. // 1704–1731, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22728.
22. OBERST GOTTFRIED FREIHERR VON UND ZU STADL. // 1619–1621, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22729.
23. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT, ASCANIO MARCHESE GUADAGNI. // 1738–1749, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22730.
24. EHRNREICH GRAF VON U. Z. TRAUTTMANSDORFF. // 1660–1667, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22731.
25. FELDZEUGMEISTER GEORG WILHELM FREIHERR LÖFFELHOLZ V. COLBERG. // 1713–1717, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22732.

26. BANUS FRANZ FRANKOPAN GRAF VON SLUNJ // 1567–1572, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22733.
27. FELDMARSCHALL MAX LUDWIG GRAF BREUNNER // 1705–1716, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22734.
28. FELDZEUGMEISTER IGNATZ GRAF GYULAY VON MAROS-NEMETH UND NADASKA BANUS VON CROATIEN ETC. // 1806–1817, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22735
29. GENERAL-FELD-WACHTMEISTER JOHANN WILHELM FREIHERR VON KUSCHLAN. // 1696–17(04)., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22736.
30. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTENANT JOHANN FREIHERR HRABOVSKY VON HRABOVA // 1848, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22737.
31. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT CARL GRAF KÖNIGSEGG. // 1728–1731, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22738.
32. OBERST RUDOLF FREIHERR VON PAAR AUF HARTBERG. // 1622–1626, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22739.
33. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTENANT FRANZ XAVER VON PAULICH. // 1797–1799, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22740.
34. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT JOSEF SEIPKA EDLER VON AUENSTAETT. // 1915–1918, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22741.
35. BAN THOMAS GRAF ERDÖDY // 1607–1613, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22742, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22742.
36. FELDZEUGMEISTER LAVAL GRAF NUGENT // 1840–1842 // TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22743.
37. FELDZEUGMEISTER JOSEPH FREIHERR DE VINS. // 1788–1790, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22744.
38. OBERST HANS WILHELM FREIHERR VON GALLER. // 1650, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22745.
39. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT EUGEN VON SCHEURE. // 1914–1915, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22746.
40. GENERAL-FELD-WACHTMEISTER EUGEN FREIHERR VON SCHERZER. // 1746–1755., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22747.
41. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT, DEMETER FREIHERR VON RADOSSEVICH VON RADOS. // 1832–1834, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22748.
42. BAN GENERAL DER CAVALLERIE JOHANNES GRAF ERDÖDY // 1790–1806, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22749.
43. BAN FELDMARSCHALL JOSEPH GRAF ESTERHAZY DE GALANTHA // 1739–1742, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22750.
44. FELDZEUGMEISTER JOSEPH FREIHERR DE VINS. // 1783–1786., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22786.

45. BAN, GEORG GRAF ZRINYI. // 1622–1626., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22787.
46. OBERST SIEGMUND FRIEDRICH GRAF V. U. Z. TRAUTTMANSDORF // 1603–1631, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22788.
47. BAN FELDMARSCHALL CARL JOSEPH FÜRST BATHYANYI // 1743–1756, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22789-.
48. FELDZEUGMEISTER ADAM FREIHERR ZU TRAUTTMANDORFF. // 1617–1618., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22790.
49. OBERST FERDINAND ERNST GRAF V. U. Z. TRAUTTMANSDORF. // 1671–1682, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22791.
50. FRANZ GRAF NADASDY AUF FOGARAS, FELDMARSCHALL. BANUS. // 1756–1783. // SI DEUS PRO NOBIS QUIS CONTRA NOS, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22792.
51. OBRISTLEUTNANT, GEORG VON SAUER. // 1559–1560., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22793.
52. OBRISTLEUTNANT JOHANN FREIHERR VON AUERSPERG // 1575–1578, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22794.
53. FELDMARSCHALL CARL EUGEN HERZOG VON CRVY // 1689–1694, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22795.
54. OBRISTAMSTVERWALTER STEPHAN GRÄSSWEIN. // 1591–1594., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22796.
55. BANUS JOHANN III. GRAF DRASKOVICH VON TRAKOSTYAN // 1640–1646, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22797.
56. FRANZ GRAF NADASDY AUF FOGARAS FELDMARSCHALL. // 1783, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22798.
57. GENERALMAJOR, GEORG LUDWIG GRAF ZU SCHWARZENBERG. // 1631–1646., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22799 .
58. OBERST WOLF FREIHERR ZU EGGENBERG UND EHRENHAUSEN // 1612–1617, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22800.
59. BANUS THOMAS II. GRAF ERDÖDY VON MONYORÓKERÉK. 1557-1567, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22801.
60. BAN SIGMUND GRAF ERDÖDY // 1627–1639, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22802
61. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT FRANZ CARL GRAF VON AUERSPERG // 1694–1705, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22803.
62. V. BAN, LAZAR OREHOCZY. // 1670–1680, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22804
63. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTENANT FREIHERR VON VLASITS. // 1832–1840, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22805.
64. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT LUDWIG FREIHERR VON PULZ // 1881, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22806.



65. FELDZEUGMEISTER WENZEL GRAF KAUNITZ RIETBERG. // 1791–1797, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22807.
66. BANUS, BENEDIKT THUROCZY. // 1614-1616., Inv. no. HPM/PMH-22808
67. FELDZEUGMEISTER MARCUS FREIHERR VON CSOLLICH // 1834–1844, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22809.
68. GENERAL DER KAWALLERIE MAXIMILIAN GRAF AUERSPERG // 1842–1848, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22810.
69. FELDZEUGMEISTER, JOHANN FREIHERR VON HILLER. // 1810–1812, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22811.
70. BANUS PETER II. GRAF ERDÖDY ZU EBERAN // 1557–1567, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22812.
71. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT FELIX GRAF ORSINI UND ROSENBERG // 1905, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22813.
72. OBERST WEIGHARD FREIHERR VON AUERSPERG // 1579–1584, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22814.
73. GENERAL-FELD-WACHTMEISTER JOHANN SIEGMUND MAGUIRE. // 1749–1752, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22815.
74. OBRIST, HANS SIEGMUND FREIHERR ZU HERBERSTEIN. // 1594–1603, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22816.
75. GENERAL FELD-WACHTMEISTER CARL ERNST GRAF GALLER. // 1744–1746, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22817.
76. GENERALFELDWACHTMEISTER, NIKOLAUS GRAF ZRINYI. // 1646-1664, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22818–.
77. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTENANT WENZEL FREIHERR HNOGEK VON KLEEFELD. // 1771–1776, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22819.
78. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT JOHANN VON DRAŠKOVIĆ // 1732–1738, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22820.
79. FELDMARSCHALL, LEOPOLD GRAF HERBERSTEIN. // 1717–1728, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22821.
80. VINZENZ FREIHERR KNESEVICH VON ST. HELENA. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT. // 1810–1812, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22822.
81. BAN JOHANN GRAF DRAŠKOVIĆ // 1595–1607, Inv. no. HPM/PMH-22823.
82. FELDMARSCHALL WENZEL GRAF COLOREDO-WALDSEE // 1797, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22824.
83. OBRIST JOBST JOSEF GRAF VON THURN. // 1582–1589, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22825.

84. OBRISTAMSTVERWALTER, HANS VON GLOBITZ. // 1591, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22826.
85. GRB "BAN ADAM GRAF BATTHYANY // 1693–1703, Inv. no. HPM/PMH-22827.
86. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT ADOLF FREIHERR V. RHEMEN ZU BARENSFELD. // 1912–1914, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22828.
87. FELDZEUGMEISTER HUGO FREIHERR VON KLOBUS. // 1902–1905, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22829.
88. GENERAL-FELD-WACHTMEISTER JOSEF GRAF RABATTA. // 1710–1730, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22830.
89. OBERSTLEUTNANT KASPAR FRANGEPANI GRAF ZU TERŽAC // 1652, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22831.
90. OBERSTLEUTNANT HANS FERNBERGER VON AUER // 1574–1779, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22832.
91. OBERST JOHANN JACOB FREIHERR VON GALLER // 1646, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22833.
92. FELDMARSCHALL, LUDWIG ANDREAS GRAF KHEVENHÜLLER. // 1734–1744, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22834.
93. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT JOHANN FRANZ FREIHERR VON PREISS. // 1768–1771, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22835.
94. BANUS GEORG GRAF DRASKOVICH VON TRAKOSTYAN // 1567–1578, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22836.
95. GENERALFELDWACHTMEISTER FERDINAND ERNST GRAF V. U. Z. TRAUTTMANSDORF. // 1685–1688, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22837.
96. FELDMARSCHALL(EUTNANT) ... VON CSERNELHAZA // 1799–1807, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22838.
97. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT ANTON GRAF LOCATELLI. // 1729–1732, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22839.
98. FELDMARSCHALL WILHELM MARKGRAF VON BADEN // 1669–1671, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22840.
99. GENERAL DER CAVALLERIE HERMAN FREIHERR VON RAMBERG. // 1881–1889, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22841.
100. HANS JAKOB FREIHERR VON GALLER. // 1650–1660, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22842
101. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTENANT JOHANN FREIHERR VON HILLER. // 1807–1810, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22843.
102. OBERSTFELDHAUPTMANN, HANS UNGNAD FRH. VON WEISSENWOLF ZU SANEGG. // 1553–1556, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22844.

103. BANUS, CHRISTOF UNGNAD, FREIHERR ZU SUNEGG. // 1577–1584, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22845.
104. BAN NIKOLAUS GRAF ERDÖDY // 1680–1693, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22846.
105. OBERSTLEUTNANT HERBARD (VIII) FREIHERR VON AUERSPERG // 1568–1574, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22847.
106. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT PHILIPP ERASMUS FÜRST VON U. ZU LIECHTENSTEIN. // 1701, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22848.
107. OBERSLEUTNANT WOLF ENGELBERT FREIHERR VON AUERSPERG // 1589, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22849.
108. BAN, PETER GRAF ZRINYI. // 1665–1670, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22850.
109. OBERST GEORG FREIHERR VON LENKOVICH. // 1593–1601, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22851.
110. GENERAL DER CAVALLERIE FREIHERR VON MAUCHENHEIM GENANNT BECHTOLDSHEIM // -, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22852.
111. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT EDLER VON CHAVANNE // 1906–1907, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22853.
112. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT KARL GRAF AUERSPERG // 1905–1906, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22854.
113. GENERAL DER CAVALLERIE LUDWIG VON GABLENZ // 1867–1869, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22855.
114. FELDZEUGMEISTER IGNATZ GRAF GYULAY VON MAROS-NEMETH UND NADASKA, // 1812–1814, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22856.
115. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTENANT WENZEL GRAF VETTER VON LILIENBERG. // 1829–1831, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22857.
116. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT JOH. GEORG GRAF HERBERSTEIN. // 1744–1746, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22858.
117. FELDMARSCHALL-LIEUTNANT PAUL FREIH. VON RADIVOJEVICH. // 1814 – (?), inv. no. HPM/PMH-22859.
118. FELDZEUGMEISTER RITTER ... VON MONTE PASTELLO. // 1870–1877, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22860.
119. GENERAL FELD-WACHTMEISTER FRIEDRICH LUDWIG GRAF DOENHOF // ..., inv. no. HPM/PMH-22861.
120. OBERSTFELDHAUPTMANN, HANS FREIHERR VON LENKOVICH ZUM FREIENTHURM A.D. KULPA // = 1556–1566, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22862.
121. OBERST VEIT VON KISSL FREIHERR VON GONOBITZ. // 1601–1609, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22863.

122. OBERST MARQUART FREIHERR ZU EGKH UND HUNGERSBACH // 1618–1618, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22864.
123. BANUS KASPAR ALAPIĆ // 1574–1577, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22817.
124. FELDZEUGMEISTER, HANS JOSEF GRAF ZU HERBERSTEIN. // 1669–1689, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22866.
125. FELDMARSCHALL LUDWIG RADUIT GRAF DE SOUCHES. // 1671–1682, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22867.
126. FELDMARSCHALLEUTNANT ANTON FREIHERR MALOWETZ VON MALOWITZ UND KOŠOR. // 1905, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22868.
127. GENERAL FELDWACHTMEISTER HERBAD X. DIETRICH GRAF VON AUERSPERG // 1652–1669, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22869.
128. GENERAL FELDWACHTMEISTER FRANZ VON STUBENBERG. // 1732–1738, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22870.
129. FELDMARSCHALL JOSEPH FRIEDRICH PRINZ ZU SACHSEN HILDBURGSHAUSEN. // 1744–1749, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22871.
130. FELDZEUGMEISTER FRANZ FREIHERR PHILIPPOVICH VON PHILIPPSBERG // 1877–1881, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22872.
131. OBERHAUPTMANN, LUKAS ZÄCKHL ZU KEVENDT FREIHERR ZU FRIEDAU. // 1566–1568, inv. no. HPM/PMH-22873.

# Art

and

**the State**  
in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# Personifying States



**Jan Galeta, Tomáš Valeš**

HOMAGE TO A GREAT MAN: INTERWAR  
MEMORIALS TO PRESIDENT MASARYK IN  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

**Marina Bregovac Pisk**

FERDINAND V – THE FORGOTTEN RULER

**Jovana Milovanović**

*ADVENTUS* OF THE MONARCH SHAPED FOR  
ETERNITY: THE RELIEF OF KING PETER I  
ON THE CITY WALLS OF DUBROVNIK

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Vincenc Makovský

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## HOMAGE TO A GREAT MAN: INTERWAR MEMORIALS TO PRESIDENT MASARYK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA\*

### Abstract

*Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, the first Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk represents an example of how the “cult of personality” can be fostered in a democratic environment. For his depiction, a de facto new iconography was created, although it was not inventive in any substantive way, and in many cases, the monuments occupied a significant spot in the public space. There were efforts not only to erect a monument in Prague in front of the presidential residence at Prague Castle, but also in Brno, the second largest city. Both competitions were announced in 1937, two years after Masaryk’s resignation. At the time, Czechoslovakia was facing the international threat of Hitler’s Germany, amplified by the activity of the significant German minority living in the Bohemian and Moravian borderlands. This was another reason for perceiving the construction of monuments to Masaryk as an act of strengthening national pride and lauding the democratic regime. The case of the Brno monument is interesting mainly for two reasons. First, some contestants in the competition to design the monument proposed a relatively innovative iconography, while others used traditional concepts. Secondly, there was an effort to create an entirely new public space in an urban structure dedicated to celebrating the democratic state. For this reason, a location was chosen where a statue of Emperor Joseph II had originally stood. Therefore, it already had strong political connotations for the German inhabitants of the city, and thus from the Czech side, it was an attempt to imbue the site with new meaning and erase the original one.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918 as one of the successor states to the Habsburg Empire, and the interwar Republic still retains the aura of the only truly democratic state in Central Europe at that time. Although it proclaimed itself as the national state of Czechoslovaks, it was as multi-ethnic as Austria-Hungary itself, with German, Polish, Ruthenian, Magyar and Jewish minorities. The whole concept of the so-called “Czechoslovakian nation” consisting of Czechs and Slovaks was very fragile.<sup>1</sup> The similarities with the preceding monarchy could also be seen in the person of the state’s leader. The

\* English revised by Stuart Roberts.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia. The State That Failed* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press 2009), 20–86.

first President, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937), originally a university professor, was elected four times, so he held the post from 1918–1935. Masaryk was, on the one hand, the object of a “cult of personality” and, on the other hand, a visual propaganda device for the democratic republic.<sup>2</sup> His nickname among the people was “tatiček” (Little Father) and after his abdication in 1935, the official title “President Liberator” was granted to him by law. He commented on this part of his role, the veneration of his person, with the words: “... political life is also expressed in symbols sensually and ideologically. I have lived as privately as possible up to now, but now I have had to put up with the guards downstairs, the parades, the receptions and all the representation; what to do, I sometimes say, it goes with the business.”<sup>3</sup>

## HOW TO DEPICT A DEMOCRATIC LEADER?

The topic of Masaryk iconography is an exciting field.<sup>4</sup> One of the typical depictions of the President is in uniform-like clothing – jacket, trousers, cap, and riding boots – which he liked to wear not only when he went riding but literally as his everyday dress.<sup>5</sup> Masaryk wore it as informal dress, and he explained this choice only with regards to his comfort. Karel Čapek wrote: “He wears it the whole year round ... it is civilian, with some of the strictness of a uniform; or a work suit and sports dress in one. It is his fashion, a pattern with which he has grown into one.”<sup>6</sup> This uniform-like dress had military connotations, of course. He was caught wearing it in a photo, for example, during army manoeuvres in 1922 and on a ride with Prime Minister František Udržal in 1929.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the painter Jaroslav Riedl (an officer of the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia fighting against Austria-Hungary) depicted the President in his “uniform” on horseback as an army leader in a picture intended for military barracks, to replace the portrait of Emperor Franz Joseph I.<sup>8</sup> (fig. 1) The painter František Horník (a pupil of Vlaho Bukovac at the Prague Academy) also depicts Masaryk on horseback in uniform-like clothing. This picture became very popular as a postcard. The continuity of these portraits with the depiction of Emperor Franz Joseph I in the era of the monarchy seems clear, not only in form but also in function.<sup>9</sup> The same, of course,

2 On this topic see Pavel Kosatík, *Jiný T.G.M.* [The Different TGM] (Praha: Paseka, 2018), 342–345.

3 Karel Čapek, *Hovory s T. G. Masarykem* [Talks with T. G. Masaryk] (Praha: Fr. Borový, 1948), 110. If not stated otherwise, the translations of quotations are by the authors.

4 On the topic see Jaroslav Sedlář, “Podobizny T. G. Masaryka ve výtvarném umění” [Portraits of T. G. Masaryk in Fine Arts] I. and II., *Universitas*, no. 1 and 3 (1998): 30–38 and 23–33; Vít Vlnas, “Portréty T. G. M. od karikatury k ikoně” [Portraits of TGM: From Caricature to Icon], *Český časopis historický*, no. 4 (2018): 967–989.

5 See e.g. his photographs in Karel Čapek, *Masaryk ve fotografii momentky z posledních let* [Masaryk in Photography, Moments from the Last Years] (Praha: Orbis – Čin, 1936).

6 *Ibid.*, 6.

7 *Ibid.*, fig. 7 and 73.

8 See Ilona Krbcová, “Jaroslav Riedl, T. G. Masaryk, 1929”, *Vojenský historický ústav*, accessed July 27, 2021, <http://www.vhu.cz/jaroslav-riedl-t-g-masaryk-1929>.

9 See also Vlnas, “Portréty,” 983–984; for the representation of Francis Joseph I see Werner Telesko and Stefan Schmidl, *Der verklärte Herrscher. Leben, Tod und Nachleben Kaiser Franz Josefs I. in seinen Repräsentationen* (Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2016).



**Fig. 1.** Jaroslav Riedl, *T. G. Masaryk*, 1929, oil on canvas, Military History Institute Prague. Photograph by Military History Institute Prague.

applies to the President's depictions on stamps, banknotes, and in photographs intended for classrooms and offices.<sup>10</sup> Despite the popularity of this iconography in painting and photography in the inter-war period, it was never used for an official statue such as monument or memorial in public space. We can connect this with the statement of the jury of the monument competition in Brno in 1938, which states that it is:

... categorically against an equestrian statue of the President (...) an equestrian statue, based in today's designs on the late Roman period was always characteristic of a soldier or ruler and is alien to the Czech iconography (with a few exceptions). Against objections that the President Liberator appeared on horseback not only as commander-in-chief of our military forces but that the sport of horse riding was his particular hobby, the jury states that President T. G. Masaryk, who was freely recognized by the nation as the Liberator, fulfilled this ideal as the creator of the Czechoslovak state solely by his mental powers, personal wisdom and maturity.<sup>11</sup>

Masaryk was not a symbol of military power but a philosopher, professor, statesman and thinker – a man of peace. Jan Mukařovský, the Czech linguistic and aesthetic

theorist, demonstrated this, for example, in his remarks on Vincent Makovský's (1900–1966) bust of Masaryk. In the case of this sculpture, the contemporary viewer could see the President in his “triple form”: in the “physiognomy of a ruler, a man of fateful decisions and a shaper of history”; as “an old man, wise, calm, at peace with life, a man who had been through a great deal and was not broken by anything, who had survived and understood everything; it is also Masaryk the philosopher”; and, lastly, “as an ascetic, a man of the resistance and a conqueror.”<sup>12</sup>

So, what kind of iconography suits the statues and memorials of Masaryk well? The direction was indicated as early as 1919 by the first official portrait of President, a print by the prominent painter of the older generation Max Švabinský (**fig. 2**), and by the first official statue made by Jan Štursa in 1920–1921 for a hall in the Czechoslovak National Assembly in Prague. A statue made by Otto Gutfreund for a memorial to the President in Hradec Králové in 1925–

10 Milena Bartlová, Jindřich Vybíral et al., *Building a State. The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design / Budování státu. Repräsentace Československa v umění, architektuře a designu* (Praha: UMPRUM, 2015), 95, 97–100.

11 [jr.], “Untitled,” *Lidové noviny*, March 4, 1938, 3.

12 Jan Mukařovský, “Troji podoba T. G. Masaryka” [Tripl Form of T. G. Masaryk], *Lidové noviny*, February 27, 1938, 5.





**Fig. 2.** Maxmilián Švabinský, *T. G. Masaryk. The First President of The Republic of Czechoslovakia*, 1919, print on paper, private collection. Photograph by Radomír Debowski.

1926 was also influential. Each of these shows the President standing calm and focused, dressed in formal day wear (or cutaway, in Czech known as a *žaket*, which is phonetically derived from the French – *jaquette*).<sup>13</sup> This detail is essential. Between the wars, a *žaket* was taken to be formal dress for men in the highest positions, and Masaryk used it for ceremonial events, even during his installation in his post. Czechoslovak diplomat Prokop Maxa remembers Masaryk wearing a *žaket* at meetings with foreign ambassadors,<sup>14</sup> and Karel Čapek records the following event:

Just after the penultimate presidential election, Prime Minister Švehla telephoned Masaryk's secretary at the last minute to ask what attire the President was wearing for the ceremony because the Prime Minister wanted to dress the same way when he came for him. So, the secretary put the question to the President, and Masaryk answered: 'What attire? My chamberlain Hůza told me to take a *žaket*.'<sup>15</sup>

Švabinský's engraving and Štursa's and Gutfreund's statues are not then informal portraits of the President, but formal ones, depicting him as bearing the symbolic burden of his office. Of course, a figure of a politician standing in *contrapposto* was nothing new, and was used, for example, for Napoleon and Abraham Lincoln. These three depictions

forged the iconography commonly used for Masaryk memorials throughout the interwar era. Literally dozens of similar statues were erected in many towns and cities across Czechoslovakia, designed by various artists and of varying quality. Only in connection with Józef Piłsudski were a comparable number of monuments created in Central Europe; the latter was comparably perceived as the "father" of the Second Polish Republic.<sup>16</sup>

## PLANNING THE MONUMENT FOR PRAGUE

In 1937 there was a preliminary competition in Prague to find the right location for the President's memorial in the city and to settle on the urban setting of the area chosen.<sup>17</sup> From forty submitted designs, first prize was

13 Eva Uchalová, *Česká móda* [Czech Fashion] (Praha: Olympia, 1996), 105.; Ludmila Kybalová, *Od zlatých dvacátých po Diora* [From Golden Twenties to Dior] (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2009), 136, 198.

14 Prokop Maxa, "Ze vzpomínek" [From Memories], in *T.G.M. jak jsme ho viděli*, eds. Josef Hofmann and Oskar Odstrčil (Praha: Mikuta, 1948), 88.

15 Karel Čapek, "Drobnosti o velikém presidentovi" [Trifles about the Great President], *Lidové noviny*, September 19, 1937, 3.

16 Martin Kohlrausch, *Brokers of Modernity. East Central Europe and the Rise of Modernist Architects 1910–1950* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019), 235–236.; David A. Messenger, *War and Public Memory. Case Studies in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2020), 57.

17 On this topic see Zdeněk Hojda and Jiří Pokorný, *Pomníky a zapomínky* [Memorials and Forgettals] (Praha – Litomyšl: Paseka, 1996), 191–204.; Jiří Hlušička, "Sochař Vincenc Makovský" [Sculptor Vincenc Makovský], *Vincenc Makovský*, ed. Jaroslav Malina (Brno: CERM, 2002), 49–50.; Bruce R. Berglund, *Castle and Cathedral*



Fig. 3. Jaroslav Fragner and Vincenc Makovský, *Model of the Masaryk Memorial* from the second round of the competition, 1938, in: *Volné směry*, no. 1 (1938), 335.



awarded to the sculptor Vincenc Makovský and the architect Jaroslav Fragner (1898–1967). Makovský acquired experience in Antoine Bourdell's atelier in Paris, and Fragner was a prominent functionalist architect. They chose an unused plot near Prague Castle, next to the Royal Garden. As a critic in a newspaper said, their proposal was inspired by Jože Plečnik's monumental regulation of the Hradčany district.<sup>18</sup> The ambitious architectural and urbanistic solution assumed a new bridge from the Castle across the Stag moat, with a so-called House of the President – which was intended as a museum – and a large tribune for up to 200 politicians to speak during official celebrations. The whole area was not intended merely as a monument to one man but as an entirely new space dedicated to the veneration of the first President and a new main promenade for parades in the Czechoslovak capital.

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On the other hand, the design assumed the demolition of the early Baroque Riding Hall, which would be a serious intrusion into the original historical setting. Compared to more modest memorials, like Gutfreund's in Hradec Králové, the iconography also underwent changes because it had to be more complex. Makovský and Fragner proposed two groups of statues visually communicating with each other – the memorial to the President and an allegory of Masaryk's ideals. The first group consisted of eight figures of famous philosophers of the past carrying the prone figure of Masaryk with a gesture of blessing. However, Masaryk was still alive, and this form was considered inappropriate. The second group was an allegory consisting of an antique female figure and smaller ones on a pedestal. In 1938 a second competition was held for the plot that Fragner and Makovský chose in the first round.<sup>19</sup> They embellished the original proposal, (**fig. 3**) but the jury did not select a winner

in *Modern Prague. Longing for the Sacred in a Skeptical Age* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017), 308–324.

<sup>18</sup> “Pomník prezidentu Osvoboditeli” [Memorial to the President Liberator], *Lidové noviny*, May 9, 1937, 6.

<sup>19</sup> “Pražská soutěž na pomník T. G. Masaryka” [Prague Competition for T. G. Masaryk Memorial], *Volné směry*, no. 1 (1938), 324–339.

and only recommended that the National Assembly, the government, and the City of Prague reconsider the whole idea once more.<sup>20</sup> After that, the idea of the project was abandoned.

## PLANNING THE MONUMENT FOR BRNO

In Brno, a competition was also held in 1937. It must be said that in these years after Masaryk's death, Czechoslovakia was in a difficult political situation. In Germany, Adolf Hitler was in power from 1933; in Czechoslovakia, the Nazi *Sudetendeutsche Partei* led by Konrad Henlein was on the rise from 1935 – it was even one of the strongest political parties in the Czechoslovak parliament – and the coexistence of the Germans and Czechs in one state began to be problematic.<sup>21</sup> The government had to face the demands of the local Germans for autonomy, which would, of course, result in the unification of the borderlands of Czechoslovakia – inhabited mostly by Germans – with the Third Reich. This situation became a reality in September 1938 after the Munich agreement, when the representatives of France and Great Britain yielded to Hitler and granted him part of Czechoslovak territory, hoping thereby to avoid war.<sup>22</sup>

In this atmosphere, when the very existence of the Czechoslovak Republic was under threat, it made sense to design a large memorial to the ex-President Liberator in front of the Prague Castle to “boost” national pride and to show that the state had solid foundations and real heroes. The situation in Brno was similar. The competition was held in July 1937, then extended after Masaryk's death and evaluated in February 1938. The memorial was to have been “an artistic expression of national liberation.”<sup>23</sup> In some ways, the whole idea was close to that in Prague – to create a place of national pride and celebrations, planned not only as a memorial to the President but also as a monument to national Liberation with a statue of Masaryk. Only in Prague, one of the tasks of the competitors was to choose the best place for such memorial within the city's structure, requiring the cooperation of a sculptor and an architect.<sup>24</sup> As was stated in the press of the day: “Considering the nature and importance of the monument, it should be in the liveliest parts of the city, in a valuable place and as exposed as possible. Moreover, the site and the monument should allow participation of the public during festive occasions.”<sup>25</sup>

As the organizer of the competition, the City of Brno recommended six prominent possible locations within the broader city centre, but only three of

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20 [re], “Pomník presidenta Osvoboditele na hradě” [Memorial of President Liberator on the Castle], *Lidové noviny*, May 16, 1938, 3.

21 On topic, see, e.g., Heimann, *Czechoslovakia. The State That Failed*.

22 On the political situation of interwar Czechoslovakia see e.g. Jaroslav Pánek, Oldřich Tůma et al., *A history of the Czech Lands* (Praha: Karolinum, 2019), 437–480.

23 [--o--], “O pomník osvobození a prvního presidenta v Brně” [About a Memorial Liberation and the First President], *Lidové noviny*, June 19, 1937, 1.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

them were suitable. Furthermore, the selection of these three was certainly not random but rather a reflection of the specific historical connotations of each of them. The semantic pattern of this choice had deeper roots connected with questions related to the national movement and identity of the newly-founded Czechoslovakia.

The first possible location was on foothill below Špilberk Castle, within sight, so to speak, of one the most dreaded prisons of the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>26</sup> This site was in the middle of today's Husova Street, next to the Museum of Applied Arts, where an undeveloped plot was being considered as a place for a new administrative city building to expand the Brno City Hall. This building was planned in the form of a huge functionalist block and was to create new squares on both sides, while next to it a new court building was also planned.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the Masaryk monument would become an integral and symbolic part of this new Brno administrative quarter and an apparent ideological counterweight to Špilberk castle.<sup>28</sup> It can be seen on one of the competition designs which was awarded third prize, which was prepared by Brno painter František Kaláb and the architect Ladislav Rado, who was Bohuslav Fuchs's collaborator and later a student of Walter Gropius in the USA. They designed a cut into a hillside in the shape of a sector of a circle just opposite the entrance of the planned city administrative building. Here on a stone beam, carried by a group of allegorical figures, stands the statue of the President (surprisingly in his riding suit). A slim parabolic arch stretches over the whole structure as a paraphrase of a triumphal arch (**fig 4**).<sup>29</sup>

The second proposed site was a public space directly in front of the former Augustinian monastery, which had served since the late 18th century as the Governor's Palace of the Margraviate of Moravia. Coincidentally, in the early 19th century, this place had been chosen for a new fountain crowned by a sculptural allegory of the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>30</sup> So, it was evident that this site had strategic significance within the city, and this fact would play a role in its later selection for the new presidential monument. The competition

26 Jiří Vaněk, "Hrad Špilberk" [Špilberk Castle], ed. Jiří Kroupa, *Dějiny Brna 7. Uměleckohistorické památky. Historické jádro* [History of Brno 7. Artistic Monuments. Historic City Centre] (Brno: Brno City Archive, 2015), 117–192.

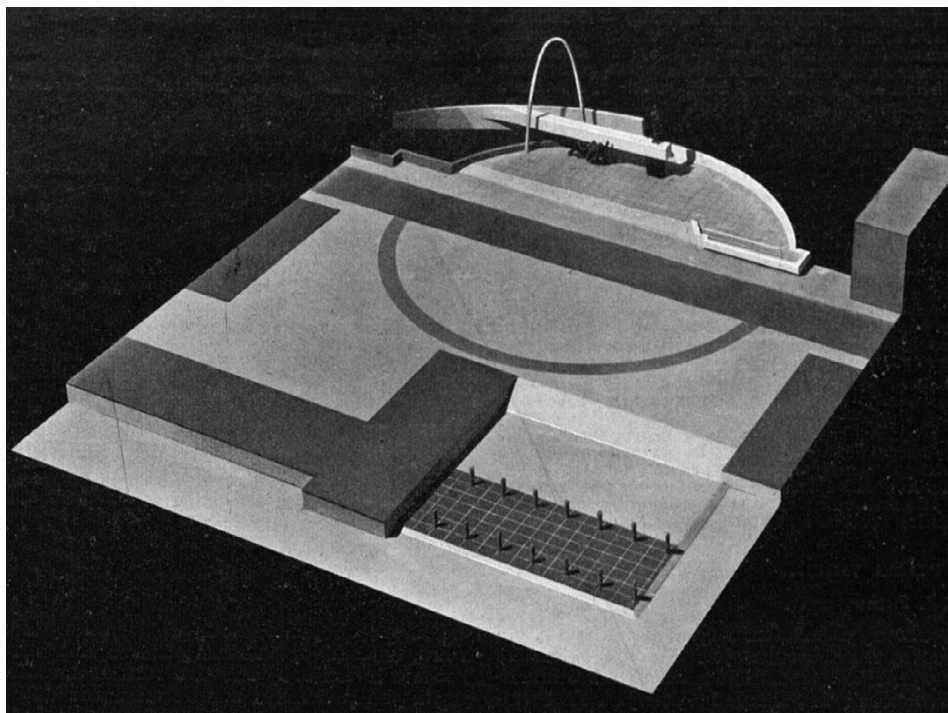
27 Lenka Kudělková, "Historie největší nerealizované stavby v meziválečném Brně" [History of the Largest Unrealized Building in Brno], *Bulletin Moravské galerie*, 52 (1994), 111–115.; Jan Galeta, "Urban Development Strategies in Brno and Moravská Ostrava / Komunální strategie výstavby Brna a Moravské Ostravy", ed. Jindřich Vybíral, *The Strength and Future of the Nation is National identity. Architecture and Czech Politics in the 19th Century / Síla i budoucnost jest národu národnost. Architektura a česká politika v 19. století* (Praha: UMPRUM, 2020), 314–374.

28 Compare the situation with plans for remodeling part of Warsaw around Na Rozdrożu Square for the Monument to Józef Piłsudski: Sylwia Paplińska et al., *Warsaw. The City Today. Plans for the Future* (Warszawa: Centrum Edukacyjno-Kulturalne Łowicka, 2000), 12.

29 [jr.], "Pomník presidenta osvoboditele v Brně" [Memorial of President Liberator in Brno], *Lidové noviny*, February 2, 1938, 2.; The pictures of the design were published in journal *Index. Leták kulturní informace*, no. 3 (1938): 25, 28.

30 Michaela Šeferisová Loudová and Jiří Kroupa, "Kláštery ve městě II. (severní část)" [Cloisters in the City II. (Northern Part)], ed. Jiří Kroupa, *Dějiny Brna 7* (Brno: Brno City Archive), 427.

**Fig. 4.** František Kaláb and Ladislav Rado, *Project for the Monument of National Liberation with a Statue of President Masaryk in Brno, 1937/1938*, in: *Index. Leták kulturní informace*, no. 3 (1938).



design for this location, made by an anonymous artist, was very conventional and conservative.<sup>31</sup> An equestrian statue of Masaryk dressed in his uniform-like suit was placed on a high pedestal. On the sides of the base were two sculptural groups representing the Liberation of the Nation. Three figures depicted Czechoslovak legionaries from Russia, France, and Italy and people in traditional folk costumes. Part of the monument design also consisted of two water basins, coats of arms, other reliefs and symbols, flowers, and even a living lime tree (**fig. 5**).

The same strategy of overlaying old meanings with new ones was apparently used on the last proposal to be considered, at the most provocative and attractive spot – the northern part of Lažanský square (today known as Moravian Square). This site was ultimately chosen by the organizers of the competition. From 1891 onward, a grand architectural monument and emblem of German-speaking inhabitants of Brno stood there – the German National House (Deutsches Haus). It was designed by architects from Berlin in the northern brick neo-Renaissance style and furnished with works of art depicting the famous past of the Moravian Germans back to the Middle Ages and antiquity. Thus the whole building was a manifesto of German supremacy and national pride. It served as a cultural and political centre for Germans in Brno and the whole of Moravia, with its large social hall, café, restaurant, library and the rooms of many clubs and associations.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, a

31 Plans for a Monument, Heslo: Pravda vítězí [Codename: Truth Prevails], December 21, 1937, Fonds Sbirka kresby a grafiky (B 30499 – B3502), Moravian Gallery, Brno.

32 For more about the German House, see the recent study (with references to older literature): Jan Galeta, “National Houses in Moravia and Austrian Silesia before 1914. Architecture and Fine Art as an Opportunity for the Manifestation of National Allegiance,” *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica*, no. 2 (2020): 103–124.





**Fig. 5.** Unknown Artist, *Motto: Truth Prevails*, 1937/1938, drawing on paper, Moravian Gallery in Brno, inv. no. B3502. Photograph by Jan Galeta.

monument by sculptor Anton Břenek dedicated to the Austrian Emperor Joseph II had been erected in front of the building in 1892. It dominated the vista of the boulevard connecting Lažanský and the main city square. However, the monument to the Emperor, who was perceived as a protector of the Germans within the Austrian Monarchy, was torn down by Czech nationalists and former legionaries on the night of 28 September 1919, that is, on the feast of the Czech patron saint, Wenceslas, and just one month before the first anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>33</sup> (fig. 6)

Thus, this location in front of the German House embodied the fundament of the defeated Habsburg Monarchy and memories of German Brno. Importantly, for both main groups of city residents, this sensitive spot became the logical space for creating a new monument commemorating the first Czechoslovak President and the state he represented, especially in the 1930s. The winning proposal was made – as in Prague – by Fragner and Makovský (although they

were awarded only second prize, while first prize was not awarded at all) and again had the character of a sacral space, comprising not only a statue but a memorial area suitable for celebration in the presence of representatives



**Fig. 6.** Anton Břenek, Joseph II Memorial in front of the Deutsches Haus in Brno, 1892, ca. 1895, postcard, private collection.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Pavla Cénková, “Pomník císaře Josefa II. v Brně” [Memorial to Emperor Joseph II in Brno], *Brno v minulosti a dnes*, no. 28 (2015): 263–312.



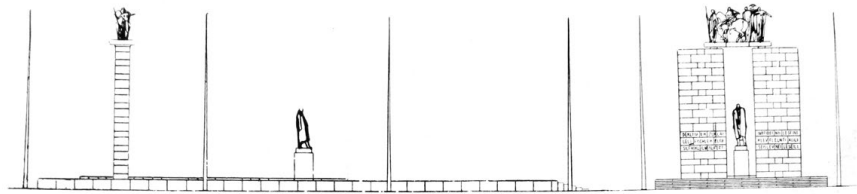
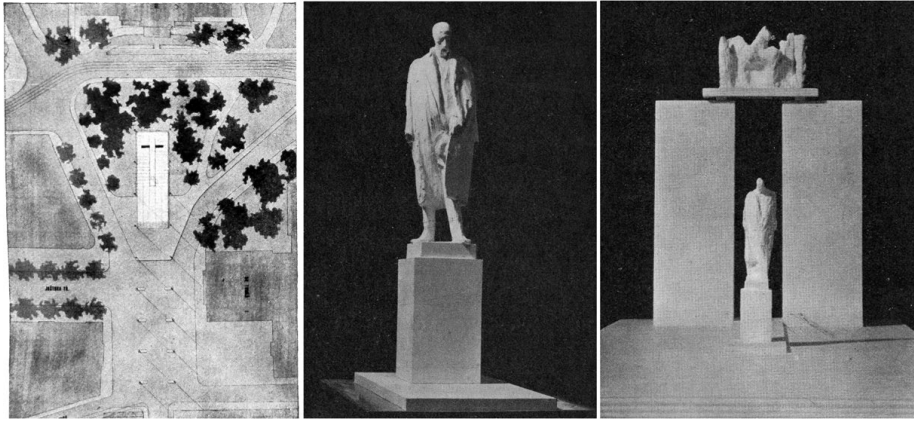


Fig. 7. Jaroslav Fragner and Vincenc Makovský, *Project for the Monument of National Liberation with a Statue of President Masaryk in Brno, 1937/1938*, in: *Stavitel* (1937–1938), 99.



of the state.<sup>34</sup> Masaryk's statue in a coat was to stand alone. The jury report stated: "It is a tall figure of the President Liberator, characteristically erect but with his head bowed and thoughtful."<sup>35</sup> Behind the figure of Masaryk, the authors proposed two stone pillars with inscriptions serving as a pedestal for an allegorical sculptural group symbolizing the National Liberation. This bronze sculpture was to be gilded "so that the dark mass of the monument to the President Liberator will have a special bright, one might say shining, background that will perfectly balance the inappropriate architecture of the German House."<sup>36</sup> (fig. 7)

It is clear not only from this quote, but from the whole layout of the winning design, that the primary purpose of the structure was to cover the façade of the Deutsches Haus so as to conceal architecture perceived by Czechs as alien, and to block out the view of the German community centre, literally erasing the building from the image of the city.<sup>37</sup> Instead of just legitimizing the newly created state, the whole idea of the monument came with a brand-new set of meanings for a place that had its own history, intending to use the device known from antiquity as *damnatio memoriae* to efface the memory of the monument to Joseph II and visually suppress the German presence in Brno. This exciting but

34 Designs and photos published as "Ideová soutěž na pomník Národního Osvobození s pomníkem T. G. Masaryka v Brně" [Preliminary Competition for Memorial of National Liberations and Memorial of T. G. Masaryk in Brno], *Stavitel*, unnumbered, (1937–1938), 99.; Rudolf Spazier, *Brno zítřka* [Brno of Tomorrow] (Brno: město Brno, 1939), 128–129.

35 [jr.], "Pomník presidenta", 2.

36 [jr.], "Brněnský pomník presidenta Osvoboditele" [Brno Memorial of President Liberator], *Lidové noviny*, May 11 (1938), 4.

37 Deutsches Haus was heavily damaged in April 1945 during the bombardment of the city and the fight between the German and Soviet armies. In August 1945, the remains of the building were demolished by the Czechoslovak authorities as a symbolic proclamation that German rule over the city was gone forever. Also, the German population was almost completely expelled from Brno (and the whole of Czechoslovakia) in 1945–1946.

overconfident attempt was an apparent reaction to the growing confidence of local Germans, boosted by the Nazi regime in Germany.

## CONCLUSION

Masaryk's memorials were not just the vehicles for commemoration of the first President of Czechoslovakia – they became a form of state representation. However, the aforementioned cases show that these designs depended partially on traditional depictions of rulers. As Peter Burke has concisely pointed out: “We should look at royal statues or ‘state portraits’ not as illusionistic images of individuals as they appeared at the time but as theatre, as public representations of an idealized self.”<sup>38</sup>

The notion of Masaryk's monuments as national symbols became more critical with the onset of the Second World War, of course. Unfortunately, due to Germany's occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia in 1939, these large and costly monuments in Brno and Prague were never erected. After the war, in the short-lived so-called Third Republic (1945–1948), the question of Masaryk memorials was once more on the table. In 1946 the City of Brno proposed that Frágner and Makovský prepare a new Monument of Liberation, now to be called “the first Liberation” because the main new question was how and where to build a monument to the Red Army, the new liberators of Czechoslovakia.<sup>39</sup> Even in 1948, when Vincenc Makovský was awarded a state prize, his Monument to Masaryk was intended to be erected on the so-called Academical Square in Brno in front of the Faculty of Law.<sup>40</sup> However, at the same time, he also worked on the Red Army monument; after the Communist *coup d'état* in 1948, only the latter was implemented (in 1955) because any depiction of President Masaryk became taboo.

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38 Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing. The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 68.

39 [O.M.], “Budovatelské starosti města Brna” [Building worries of the City of Brno], *Rovnost*, March 10, 1946, 4.

40 [Jbs.], “Sochař Vincenc Makovský poctěn státní cenou” [The sculptor Vincenc Makovský honoured by State Prize], *Rovnost*, October 30, 1948, 5.



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 Wiehl, Giovanni Simonetti

## FERDINAND V – THE FORGOTTEN RULER\*

### Abstract

*Portraits of Ferdinand V Habsburg (1793–1875), the eldest son of Francis II (I) and predecessor of Francis Joseph I, preserved in Croatian collections are not nearly as numerous as one would expect. Portraits of 19<sup>th</sup> century Habsburg rulers have not up to the present been systematically researched as to their authors and places of origin, although most of them were catalogued, published, and exhibited. The main aim of this text is to present the few preserved portraits of an almost forgotten, feeble-minded ruler who did not leave a particularly strong impression on his contemporaries, but whose portraits are, nevertheless, interesting both from an artistic as well as a documentary point of view.*

<https://www.doi.org/10.17234/9789533792170.26>

### INTRODUCTION

For centuries, portraits of rulers were compulsory in various official institutions such as government offices, county seats, assembly halls, town halls, military commands, schools and bishoprics, as well as in noblemen's collections, so it is not surprising that 19<sup>th</sup> century portraits of Habsburg rulers in present-day museum and gallery collections in Croatia are fairly numerous, particularly those of Francis II (I)<sup>1</sup> and Francis Joseph I. By contrast, portraits of Ferdinand V Habsburg (1793–1875), the eldest son and heir of Francis II (I) and predecessor of Francis Joseph I, are not as numerous in this part of the former Austrian Empire, but nevertheless valuable from an artistic as well as a documentary point of view.

### THE NEW EMPEROR

Born in Vienna on April 19, 1793, Ferdinand was the eldest son of Francis II (I) (1768–1835)<sup>2</sup> and his second wife, Maria Theresa of Naples and Sicily (1772–1807). His parents were related to each other several times over, a fact which might explain the feeble health and mental retardation of their eldest son. He

\* This work has been partly supported by the Croatian Science Foundation under the project IP-2018-01-9364 *Art and the State in Croatia from the Enlightenment to the Present*.

1 Emperor Francis II (I) Habsburg is also known as Francis I, in particular in Croatian literature. See Hrvatska enciklopedija, accessed on March 15, 2022, <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=20489>. Sources in English name him Francis II (I). See Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Francis II". Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed on February 26, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francis-II-Holy-Roman-emperor>. Therefore in this text he is named Francis II (I).

2 Francis II (I) was son of Archduke Leopold (later Leopold II) and Spanish princess Maria Louise, Holy Roman Emperor, Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, and Bohemia.



**Fig. 1.** Franz Wolf after Johann Nepomuk Höchle, *The Imperial Family at Laxenburg in 1807, 1835*, coloured lithograph, *Die Welt der Habsburger*, accessed on May 1, 2021, <https://www.habsburger.net/en/media/franz-wolf-after-johann-nepomuk-hoechle-imperial-family-laxenburg-lithograph-1835>.

had nine sisters<sup>3</sup> and three brothers,<sup>4</sup> most of whom died as infants. The large family is depicted on a print dating from 1835, showing Francis II (I) with his second wife and children in 1807, by the lake in Schloss Laxenburg (**fig. 1**).

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Although obviously feeble-minded, as the first-born son, Ferdinand was eventually confirmed as his father's successor at the insistence of Duke Metternich. He made his first public appearance as the successor to the throne at the age of 25. During his father's lifetime, in 1830, he was crowned king of Hungary. The following year saw his marriage to Maria Anna of Piedmont-Sardinia (1803–1884) from the House of Savoy, who was his distant relation.<sup>5</sup> The marriage was childless. Francis II (I) died in 1835, and Ferdinand acceded to the throne (**fig. 2**).

During Ferdinand's reign the real power was in the hands of the of the Geheime Staatskonferenz (Privy State Conference), consisting of Ferdinand's uncle Archduke Ludwig (president), Ferdinand's brother Archduke Franz Karl, State Chancellor Metternich and State and Conference Minister Kolowrat-Liebsteinsky, with the new emperor simply complying with all decisions made by the members of the Conference, in accord with his father's wishes:

Do not disturb the foundations of the edifice of state; rule and change nothing; stand fast upon the fundamental principles by the constant observation of which I have steered the Monarchy,

3 Ludovica Elisabeth (1790–1791), Maria Louise (1791–1847), Maria Karolina (1794–1795), Karolina Ludovica (1795–1797), Maria Leopoldina (1797–1826), Maria Klementina (1798–1881), Maria Karolina Ferdinanda (1801–1832), Maria Anna (1804–1858) and Amalia Therese (1807–1807).

4 Josef (1799–1807) and Johann Nepomuk (1805–1809). Franz Karl (1802–1878) was the only surviving brother, father of the future emperor Francis Joseph I.

5 Maria Anna was daughter of Vittorio Emanuele I, King of Sardinia, and Archduchess Maria Teresa of Austria-Este, granddaughter of Empress Maria Theresia.





Fig. 2. Josef Kriehuber, *Ferdinand V*, after 1835, steel engraving, inv. no. HPM/PMH 4858, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.



Fig. 3. Johann Nepomuk Ender, *Austrian Ruling Family next to the Portrait of Emperor Francis I*, around 1836, lithograph, inv. no. DT 1524, Trakošćan Castle Museum.

not only through the storms of difficult times (...) Honour acquired rights; (...) Vest in Prince Metternich, my truest servant and friend, the trust that I have devoted to him over such a long succession of years. Do not come to any decisions about public affairs or people without having listened to his opinion on them.<sup>6</sup>

In Croatia, one of the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen, that period, usually called “the Metternich Era”, was marked by almost constant confrontations with Hungarians due to their rising nationalism reflected in attempts at Magyarization. Croatia saw an awakening of national language and awareness of national history, shaped by the Illyrian movement, which was prohibited by the Viennese court in 1843. During the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1849, Croats under the leadership of newly appointed *Ban* (viceroy) Josip Jelačić fought Hungarian and Viennese revolutionaries. In December of that year, Ferdinand V abdicated in favour of his nephew Francis Joseph I, thereby starting a new period in the history of the multi-national empire, and Croatia as a part of it.

A print from Trakošćan Castle Museum by Johann Nepomuk Ender, from 1836, shows the royal family in front of the portrait of the late Emperor.<sup>7</sup> Ferdinand V and his wife are in a prominent position to the right (fig. 3).

6 Quoted from Emperor Francis’s advice to his son and heir, *Die Welt der Habsburger*, accessed on June 6, 2021, <https://www.habsburger.net/en/chapter/good-emperor-franz-and-his-hatchet-man>.

7 The portrait shown on print resembles Friedrich von Amerling’s portrait signed and dated in 1832, today in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, accessed on January 10, 2022, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/5575/?offset=0&lv=list>. Some years later, after 1835, Johann Nepomuk Ender portrayed the new emperor, Ferdinand V, in a similar posture. That portrait is in Belvedere Museum collection, inv. no. 868, Belvedere, accessed on March 10, 2022, <https://sammlung.belvedere.at/objects/6634/kaiser-ferdinand-i-im-kronungsornat>.

The period following the new ruler's ascension to the throne saw numerous prints glorifying the royal family, such as the one by Johann Stadler printed in Vienna in 1836, showing the Austrian *Kaiserhaus* from Rudolph II to Ferdinand V, with the new emperor and his wife shown in the foreground, together with most of their predecessors. The main incentive for such prints was to show the continuity of the Habsburg ruling house, notwithstanding the feeble-mindedness of the new emperor (**fig. 4**).<sup>8</sup>

## PORTRAITS OF EMPEROR FERDINAND IN CROATIA (an overview)

As was already mentioned, during his father's lifetime Ferdinand was crowned king of Hungary (1830). His next coronation took place one year after his ascension to the Austrian throne: Ferdinand was crowned king of Bohemia in 1836, and king of Lombardy two years later, in 1838. A portrait bust of young Ferdinand by an unknown author, possibly Johann Mohr, was created in Kaiserliche Porzellanmanufaktur Wien (Royal Porcelain Manufacture, Vienna) around 1832.<sup>9</sup> Today held in the collection of Hrvatski povijesni muzej (the Croatian History Museum), this is probably one of the earliest portraits of the future emperor in Croatia, and one of the rare busts preserved of him. Modelled in the Neo-classical style, it shows Ferdinand as a Roman emperor. Done in biscuit (*bisque*) – porcelain, it was obviously intended as a pair to the bust of his father, Emperor Francis II (also in the collection of the Croatian History Museum), which was also produced in the Royal Porcelain Manufacture.<sup>10</sup> As the bust has an inscription declaring the new emperor as “FERDINAND V”, it was obviously intended for the eastern part of the empire, where Ferdinand was styled “V”, and not “I” as in Austria. It can be safely assumed that both busts were displayed in an official institution, possibly the Croatian Parliament (**fig. 5, fig. 6**).<sup>11</sup>

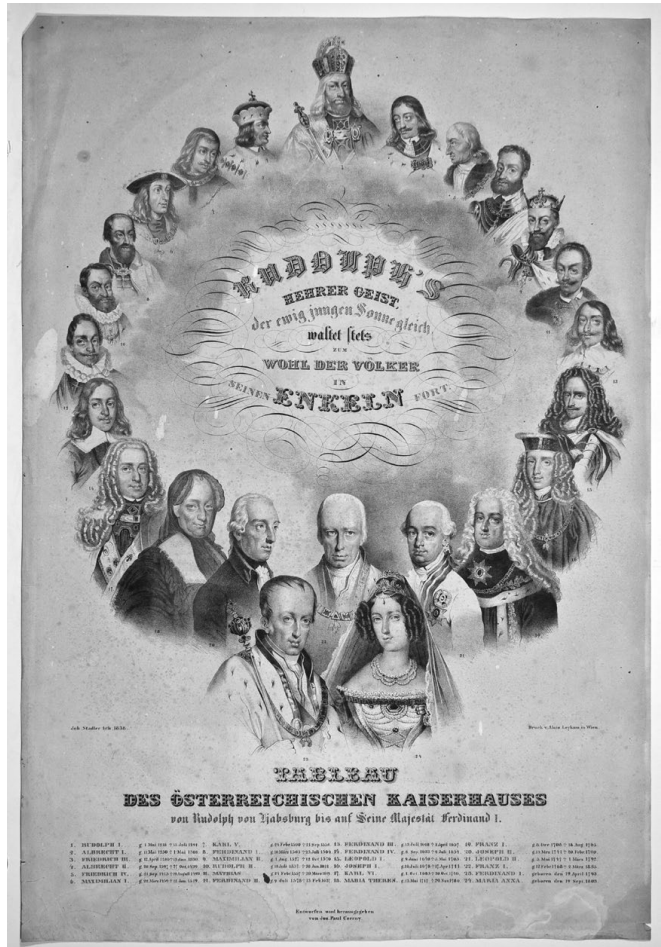


Fig. 4. Johann Stadler, *Tableau des Österreichischen Kaiserhauses* (Tableau of the Austrian Imperial House), 1836, lithograph, inv. no. HPM/PMH 4275, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.

8 In the tumultuous year of 1848, when 18-year-old Francis Joseph I ascended the throne, numerous prints were produced showing the young ruler and his predecessors, as well as representatives of different nations constituting the vast empire.

9 See also the text by Gabriele Böhm-Nevole, “Die Inszenierung der vier österreichischen Kaiser im langen 19. Jahrhundert in der Porträtbüste,” *RIHA Journal*, no. 0262, July 10, 2021, accessed on April 2, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.11588/riha.2021.1.81890>. The author mentions that a (very similar) bust of Ferdinand V, dated 1836, was auctioned in *Dorotheum* on June 20, 2016, lot no. 31, accessed on April 2, 2022, <https://www.dorotheum.com/de/1/1706740>.

10 The bust of Emperor Francis has the inscription “PATER PATRIAE”, indicating that it was possibly made after the emperor's demise.

11 Both busts were published by Marina Bregovac Pisk, “Vladarska poprjsja u Zbirci skulptura Hrvatskog povijesnog muzeja” (Busts of Rulers in the Sculpture Collection of the Croatia History Museum), *Analiz Galerije Antuna Augustinčića*, no. 38-39 (2019): 231.



**Fig. 5.** Unsigned sculptor, possibly Johann Mohr, *Ferdinand V*, around 1832, biscuit porcelain, inv. no. HPM/PMH 21664, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.



**Fig. 6.** Unsigned sculptor, possibly Johann Mohr, *Francis I*, around 1832 (?), biscuit porcelain, inv. no. HPM/PMH 21665, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.



Probably the earliest dated portraits of the new ruler and his wife in Croatia are preserved at the archbishop's palace in Zagreb. They were commissioned by the Zagreb bishop Juraj Haulik de Várallya (1788–1869),<sup>12</sup> and painted in 1838 by the Slovenian artist Mihael Stroy (1803–1871). Stroy had arrived in Zagreb in 1830 and worked in Croatia until 1842, when he moved on to Ljubljana. Schooled at the Academy in Vienna (one of his professors was Johann Peter Krafft),<sup>13</sup> he is mentioned in Zagreb newspapers for the first time in November 1830 as a painter of portraits and historical scenes. During his stay in Zagreb, he painted predominantly portraits, most of which represent the height of Biedermeier portraiture in Croatia (**fig. 7**).



**Fig. 7.** Mihael Stroy, *Ferdinand I*, 1838, oil on canvas, Archbishop's Palace, Zagreb.

During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Croatian nobility traditionally commissioned and bought paintings in Vienna and Budapest, as they had

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that the bishops (later archbishops) of Zagreb were traditionally patrons of the arts, so for instance bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovac of Rakitovec (1752–1827) was a secret patron of the theatre, and bishop Aleksandar Alagović (1760–1837) a patron of music. From 1840 to 1842 and 1845 to 1848, Archbishop Haulik also carried out the duties of the Croatian viceroy (*Ban*).

<sup>13</sup> As Krafft's pupil, Stroy had copied his teacher's famous painting *Nikola Zrinski's Charge from Sziget*, commissioned from Krafft for the National Museum in Budapest.



**Fig. 8.** Philipp von Stubenrauch, *Austrian Imperial Mantle*, 1830, red and white velvet, golden embroidery, ermine, white silk, inv. no. Schatzkammer, WS XIV 117, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, accessed May 3, 2021, [www.khm.at/de/object/e087cd01b3/](http://www.khm.at/de/object/e087cd01b3/).

374 invariably done centuries before. On the other hand, well-to-do citizens mostly depended upon mostly unknown travelling artists, with miniature portraits experiencing their peak of popularity before the invention of photography. The arrival of Mihael Stroy in Croatia in 1830 brought changes – commissions came from members of noble families as well as notable persons.

The large portrait of the new ruler painted by Stroy for the Archbishop's palace shows him as an officer of the Hungarian cavalry, wearing the red uniform, holding the Hungarian royal sceptre in his right hand.<sup>14</sup> As for decorations, around his neck there is the Order of the Golden Fleece, and he wears the sash of the *Maria-Theresien Orden*, with green silk showing beneath it (which can possibly be connected to the Order of St. Stephen).<sup>15</sup> His mantle slightly resembles that of St. Ladislaus, held in the Treasury of Zagreb Cathedral,<sup>16</sup> as well as the Hungarian coronation mantle of St Stephen. A gilded table to the left holds a blue velvet cushion decorated with golden embroidery. The Austrian imperial crown is placed on it; below it is the Hungarian crown of St. Stephen and the imperial orb. Stroy might have painted the emperor's portrait after a print possibly by Josef Kriehuber, dated in or around 1830, which is

14 Showing the emperor in a military uniform is more in line with the tradition of the Croatian viceroys (*Ban*), who were portrayed in (Hungarian) military uniforms until the beginning of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

15 The Order of St. Stephen of Hungary, named after the most famous Hungarian king, was founded in 1764 by Maria Theresia, with one of its aims being strengthening the bonds between Austria and Hungary.

16 One of the oldest and most valuable exhibits in the Zagreb Cathedral Treasury.

Fig. 9. Mihael Stroy, *Empress Maria Anna*, 1838, oil on canvas, Archbishop's Palace, Zagreb.



remarkably similar in posture and garments.<sup>17</sup>

In 1830, Emperor Francis had commissioned Philipp von Stubenrauch (1784–1848),<sup>18</sup> a painter, engraver, costume designer and lithograph artist, to design a mantle of the Austrian imperial regalia, intended for the coronation of his son and heir Ferdinand as king of Hungary in that year. Stubenrauch had designed a mantle made of red velvet and decorated with golden embroidery – certainly not the one worn by Ferdinand V on Stroy's portrait in the Archbishop's Palace in Zagreb (fig. 8).

Ferdinand's wife, empress Maria Anna, is shown in a white flouncing wide-sleeved dress decorated with golden embroidery and pearl; behind her to the left the Austrian imperial crown. Both figures are placed in an interior separated from a balcony behind them by a rich drapery, in the emperor's case even decorated with a decorative fringe, a typically baroque element regularly occurring in portraits of high-ranking nobility and rulers long into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as is evident in the portraits of the Empress Maria Theresia from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Croatian *Ban* Ignjat Gyulai from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 9).<sup>19</sup>

Almost ten years later, in 1846, Stroy painted another portrait of Ferdinand V, today held in the Ljubljana Municipal Museum. Smaller in dimensions, it is more in line with his usual high-quality portraits than the portrait in Zagreb from 1838, which shows a certain clumsiness in its disproportion. Ferdinand V is depicted wearing the robes of the Order of the Golden Fleece. A decorative fringe appears in this portrait as well, and the cushion of greenish-blue velvet decorated with golden embroidery on which the Austrian imperial crown rests is very similar to that which appears in the portrait of the emperor Stroy had painted in Zagreb earlier.<sup>20</sup>

17 Josef Kriehuber (?), *Emperor Ferdinand V*, ca. 1830, WIKIART Visual Art Encyclopaedia, accessed May 2, 2021, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/josef-kriehuber/ferdinand-i-of-austria>.

18 Stubenrauch had in 1815 designed robes of the Order of the Iron Crown. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, Bd. 13 (Lfg. 62, 2010), S. 437f., *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon*, accessed on May 2, 2021, <http://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl?frames=yes>.

19 The large imposing portrait of Croatian *Ban* Ignjat Gyulai was painted by Johann Peter Krafft in 1830–1831, and is preserved in the collection of the Croatian History Museum, Zagreb, inv. no. HPM 96649.

20 A portrait in the Varaždin City Museum by the painter Löwitt from 1844, published as that of Ferdinand V in robes of the Order of the Golden Fleece, later turned out to represent his brother, Archduke Franz Karl, father of





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**Fig. 10.** Unsigned author, *Emperor Ferdinand V*, ca. 1831–1835, oil on canvas, Archbishop's Palace, Zagreb

The Archbishop's palace in Zagreb was redecorated by the architect Herman Bollé (1845–1926) at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>21</sup> and portraits of rulers (Maria Theresia, Joseph II, Francis II and Ferdinand V)<sup>22</sup> and former bishops and archbishops found their place in the Festive Hall of the palace situated on the second floor. Somewhere along the line, portraits of Francis II and Ferdinand V switched places in their respective frames. The author of the portraits remains at present unknown; a thorough examination of them in the future might shed some light upon the authorship.<sup>23</sup> The two portraits were done by a none-too-skilled artist or artists, showing a certain clumsiness of posture (**fig. 10**).

The newly crowned king of Hungary is shown wearing the robes of the grand master of the Hungarian Order of St. Stephen, (designed by von Stubenrauch in 1813),<sup>24</sup> with the Hungarian crown and a map on the table to the left. Emperor Francis, on the other hand, is shown wearing the robes of the grand master of the Order of the Golden Fleece, with the Austrian *Hauskrone* to his left, the Bohemian crown behind it to

the right, and another crown (possibly Hungarian) to the left, and a sword in front of the crowns (**fig. 11**).

The Diocesan Museum of the Archdiocese of Zagreb holds another portrait of Ferdinand V (I), by A. Graff (not to be confused with well-known portrait painter Anton Graff who died in 1813), painted more skilfully than the one in the Festive Hall (**fig. 12**). The author might very well have painted the portrait after a portrait by Eduard Edlinger, dating from 1843, in the Belvedere Museum collection in Vienna.<sup>25</sup> The new emperor is shown seated, wearing a

the future emperor Francis Joseph I. See *Varaždin pod krunom Habsburgovaca* [Varaždin under the Habsburg Crown] (Varaždin: Varaždin City Museum, 2015), 165–167. According to Werner Telesko, in Austria Ferdinand V was mostly depicted in the robes of the Order of the Golden Fleece. See Werner Telesko, *Geschichtsraum Österreich. Die Habsburger und ihre Geschichte in der bildenden Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), 195.

21 See Dragan Damjanović, “Obnova kompleksa zagrebačkog nadbiskupskog dvora 1879.–1882. godine” [Reconstruction of the Archiepiscopal Residence of Zagreb 1879–1882], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 35 (2011): 195–206, accessed June 1, 2021, <https://hrcaak.srce.hr/95898>.

22 According to Dragutin Hirc, there was also a portrait of Leopold II. See Dragutin Hirc, *Stari Zagreb – Kaptol i Donji Grad* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2008), 249.

23 The Archbishop's palace in Zagreb was together with the Zagreb Cathedral heavily damaged in the earthquake which hit Zagreb on March 22, 2020. All the valuables from the palace have been evacuated to a safe storage, rendering them inaccessible in the foreseeable future.

24 Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, accessed on June 1, 2021, <https://www.khm.at/de/objektdb/detail/500295/?lv=detail>.

25 Eduard Edlinger, *Emperor Ferdinand V*, 1843. inv. no. 5954, Belvedere Museum, Vienna, Belvedere, accessed on May 10, 2021, <https://sammlung.belvedere.at/objects/4704/kaiser-ferdinand-i>.



**Fig. 11.** Unsigned author, *Emperor Francis I*, first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, oil on canvas, Archbishop's Palace, Zagreb.



**Fig. 12.** A. Graff, *Emperor Ferdinand V*, ca. 1840, oil on canvas, Diocesan Museum of Archdiocese of Zagreb.

white upper coat, the sash of the Military Order of Maria Theresia across his chest, the Order of the Golden Fleece around his neck, and four breast stars of various orders on the left side of his chest.

Ferdinand V was also portrayed between 1840 and 1845 by an unsigned author, probably František Wiehl (1814–1871), a Bohemian painter schooled at the Vienna Academy. In the spring of 1840 Wiehl had painted Ferdinand V for the Vienna City Hall, thereby affirming himself as one of the portraitists of the emperor.<sup>26</sup> In autumn of that year he arrived in Zagreb presenting himself as portrait painter, staying in Croatia until possibly 1846 or 1847. During that time he painted numerous high-quality portraits of members of prominent families.<sup>27</sup> This portrait of Ferdinand V was in all probability painted for the seat of the Zagreb County in the Upper Town. It corresponds in posture and size with the portrait of his father Francis II (I),<sup>28</sup> painted around 1810 by an unknown artist and also intended in all probability for an official place such as the Parliament or the County House.

26 See *Der Adler*, April 23, 1840, 779, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ANNO Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=adl&-datum=18400423&seite=3&zoom=33>.

27 Portraits in Muzej grada Zagreba (Zagreb City Museum), Dijecezanski muzej Zagrebačke nadbiskupije (Diocesan Museum of Archdiocese of Zagreb), Hrvatski povijesni muzej (Croatian History Museum), Gradski muzej Senj (Senj Municipal Museum), Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (Military History Museum) in Vienna, Pomorski i povijesni muzej Hrvatskog primorja (Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral) in Rijeka, and private collections.

28 Unknown painter, maybe J.B. Lampi the Younger, *Portrait of Francis I*, ca. 1810, oil on canvas, inv. no. HPM/PMH 2656, Hrvatski povijesni muzej (the Croatian History Museum). First published by Marijana Schneider, *Portreti 1800-1870* (Zagreb: Povijesni muzej Hrvatske, 1973), 65.





Ferdinand is depicted wearing an Austrian (semi) military uniform consisting of white upper coat, wide golden belt and red trousers, the sash of the Military Order of Maria Theresa across his chest, showing beneath it a green sash (probably of the Order of St. Stephen), with the Order of the Golden Fleece around his neck, and four breast stars of various orders on the left side of his chest. His right hand reclines on a column base, while in his left he holds a sword handle.

This portrait shows a distinctive liveliness of features of the ruler, which could not be found in any of the other portraits in Croatia – mostly because they were done after various (naïve) prints. It is possible, of course, that Wiehl had also used prints, but since he came from Vienna where he did a portrait of Ferdinand for the City Hall (which was well received), that portrait was used by the artist as a visual example for the Zagreb portrait (**fig. 13**).

In 1841 Giovanni Simonetti (1817–1880), schooled from 1833 at the Venice academy, returned briefly to his hometown and received a commission from the City Municipality to paint a portrait of Ferdinand V, to be put up in the Council Hall.<sup>29</sup> The artist had obviously used prints as models for the portrait, which was apparently painted in a noticeably short time (**fig. 14**).<sup>30</sup>

**Fig. 13.** František Wiehl (?), *Emperor Ferdinand V*, 1840–1845, oil on canvas, inv. no. HPM/PMH 2654, Croatian History Museum, Zagreb.

**Fig. 14.** Giovanni Simonetti, *Emperor Ferdinand V*, 1841, oil on canvas, inv. no. PPMHP 107284, Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral, Rijeka.

29 Another artist, Francesco Colombo (1819–1843), also schooled in Venice, asked the Rijeka Municipality for permission to paint a portrait of the new emperor; instead, he was given a commission to paint his predecessor, Emperor Francis I. The excellent portrait showing the emperor in robes of the Golden Fleece, painted in 1841, is now in the collection of the Pomorski i povijesni muzej Hrvatskog primorja (Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral) in Rijeka, inv. no. PPMHP 107286, digitalni.ppmhp.hr, accessed on April 16, 2022, <https://digitalni.ppmhp.hr/?pr=iiif.v.a&id=22350>.

30 Boris Vizintin, *Ivan Simonetti* (Zagreb, 1965), 14, 33, 57.



Fig. 15. Unsigned author, *Emperor Ferdinand V*, around 1840, water-colour on paper, inv. no. P-710, Vukovar Municipal Museum.

Simonetti painted the emperor dressed in clothes similar to the Austrian coronation dress – a simple white overcoat, a dark red velvet cloak lined with ermine draped over his shoulders, and the sash of the Military Order of Maria Theresia across his chest, with two necklaces – of the Order of the Golden Fleece and the Hungarian Order of St Stephen – and the left side of his chest decorated with four breast stars.<sup>31</sup> In the background to the left is a table with two crowns, one of them probably the Austrian imperial crown. The second one is hidden by it, revealing only a cross on its top. A print showing Ferdinand V in the Austrian Emperor's robe by Heinrich Schlesinger dated after 1846 might very well have been used by Simonetti.<sup>32</sup>

The Vukovar Municipal Museum houses in its collection of miniatures a small portrait of Ferdinand V by an unknown but very skilled author, dated around 1840. The emperor is depicted in a white

military uniform, wearing the sash of the Military Order of Maria Theresia, the richly decorated Order of the Golden Fleece around his neck and four breast stars to the left of his chest. As the provenance of the miniature is not known, we can only assume that at one time it had belonged to one of the noble families in Slavonia, together with a miniature portrait of Francis II (I) in the same Museum, also by an unknown author (fig. 15).

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## CONCLUSION

In various collections in Croatia, portraits of Ferdinand V are not as common as portraits of his father Francis II (I) or those of his heir Francis Joseph I.<sup>33</sup> Some of these portraits, notably the large portrait in the Archbishop's Palace in Zagreb painted by Mihael Stroy, the foremost *Biedermeier* portraitist in Zagreb during the 1830s and the beginning of the 1840s, present an almost baroque continuation of representative portraits of rulers and high-ranking nobility. The excellent portrait by František Wiehl preserved in the collection of the Croatian History Museum presents a completely different painterly approach to Giovanni Simonetti's portrait of emperor Ferdinand in the Maritime and Historical Museum of Croatian Littoral, while a miniature in the Vukovar Municipal Museum shows the mark of a particularly good miniature painter. A

31 The upper star is unidentified, the lower left star is that of the Military Order of Maria Theresia, the star next to it is that of the Order of Leopold, and the last one beneath them is unidentified.

32 Reproduced in Telesko, *Geschichtsraum Österreich*, 195 (illustration 42).

33 For comparison, the Croatian History Museum in Zagreb has in its Collection of Paintings three portraits of Francis II (I) and eighteen of Francis Joseph I, compared to just one of Ferdinand V.

rare bust of Ferdinand V from the Croatian History Museum is a very valuable museum exhibit in this former part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Overall, we can conclude that during his rule, Ferdinand V was most certainly overshadowed by his councillors as well as his predecessor and successor, and remained often an invisible ruler, marked in Croatia by only a small number of preserved portraits.



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## ADVENTUS OF THE MONARCH SHAPED FOR ETERNITY: THE RELIEF OF KING PETER I ON THE CITY WALLS OF DUBROVNIK

**Keywords:** Ivan Meštrović,  
King Peter I Karađorđević,  
Dubrovnik, monument, the  
Kingdom of SCS, Interwar  
Period, *adventus*

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### Abstract

*After WWI, a new state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, was formed in the territories inhabited by South Slavs. The changing political landscape in the former Austro-Hungarian territories required a strong representative monumental culture, supposed to embody the new regime and reinforce the new Karađorđević dynasty in the minds of citizens. This was especially the case in all newly acquired territories, including the City of Dubrovnik. The citizens of Dubrovnik commissioned Meštrović to make a “monument to liberation”, so he carved a representative square-shaped relief of considerable size depicting King Peter I Karađorđević. The monument to deceased ruler was ceremoniously unveiled on December 1, 1924, at the western entrance to the City of Dubrovnik. He was portrayed following the Roman imperial tradition of royal triumph, according to the formal *Adventus Augusti* model. This monument was on the city walls until the outbreak of World War II, when NDH units and Italian troops occupied Dubrovnik and dismantled the relief in an act recognized as *damnatio memoriae*. However, analysis of preserved materials allows its contextualization within the monumental art of interwar Yugoslavia, the City of Dubrovnik, and the formal and ideological contributions of Ivan Meštrović.*

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### INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The installation of the equestrian relief of King Peter I Karađorđević at the entrance to the city of Dubrovnik in 1924 had a strong ideological and political background, while its formal execution was grounded in the European artistic and cultural tradition (**fig. 1**). The establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918, led by the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty, marked the realization of the goals of the ideologues of “national unity” for South Slavs, among whom the sculptor Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962) played an important role in the period before and during World War I.<sup>1</sup> The ideology of integral Yugoslavism, based on the myth of identical ethnic origin and most prominently reflected in the common language, provided significant symbolic and political support for the unification of the South Slavs. It was one of the main driving mechanisms in constructing a coherent Yugoslav identity based

<sup>1</sup> Norka Machiedo Mladinić, “Političko opredjeljenje i umjetnički rad mladog Meštrovića” [The Political Commitments and Artistic Work of Young Meštrović], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 1 (2009): 143–170.

on the vision of tribal unity over confessional and historical divisions.<sup>2</sup> Meštrović expressed his belief in Yugoslav national and cultural unity by participating in Yugoslav art exhibitions in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and organizing the Pavilion of the Kingdom of Serbia in Rome in 1911,<sup>3</sup> in which his works inspired by the Kosovo myth were exhibited, culminating in the model of the Vidovdan Temple.<sup>4</sup>

The beginning of King Peter I Karađorđević's reign in 1903 coincided with the culmination of Yugoslav ideology. The new king was expected to achieve one of the ultimate goals, not only of the Kingdom of Serbia but also of the other South Slavic peoples from the territories of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire – the liberation of the “enslaved brothers under foreign rule.”<sup>5</sup> The end of the Great War brought long-awaited liberation and unification of the South Slavs, which, on a level of symbolic politics, required an emphasis on the royal personality in order to institutionalize the dynasty as a paradigm for the new state community. In accordance with this, a cult of King Peter I Karađorđević was created based on the epithet “Liberator”, which was the reason for attributing military characteristics and victorious power to him, as well as the aura of a Messiah of ultimate national liberation. After King Peter I's death in 1921, the process of his heroization began, and building monuments throughout the Kingdom, especially in the newly annexed territories, was intended to send a message of the indivisibility and strength of the new state.<sup>6</sup> During this period, in 1922, an initiative was launched to erect a monument to King Peter I in Dubrovnik, which was unveiled on December 1, 1924, on the anniversary of the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.<sup>7</sup>



Fig. 1. Ivan Meštrović, *The Relief of King Peter I Karađorđević*, 1924, marble.

2 Aleksandar Ignjatović, *Jugoslovenstvo u arhitekturi* [Yugoslavism and Architecture] (Beograd: Građevinska knjiga 2007), 33–39.

3 See more in: Antonia Tomić, “The Echo of Ivan Meštrović’s Participation in the International Fine Art Exhibition Held in Rome in 1911 in His Homeland,” in this volume.

4 Marina Adamović, “Nacionalna umetnost na svetskoj izložbi u Rimu 1911. godine – umetnost i politika” [National Art at the 1911 Rome Exhibition – Art and Politics], *Balkanica*, no. 21 (1990): 277–301; Aleksandar Ignjatović, *Vidovdanski hram Ivana Meštrovića, stvaranje Jugoslavije i paradoksi nacionalizma* [Ivan Meštrović’s Vidovdan Temple, the Foundation of Yugoslavia and Paradoxes of Nationalism], in *Dan vreden veka: I-XII-1918*, eds. Radovan Cukić, Veselinka Kastratović Ristić and Marija Vasiljević (Beograd: Muzej Jugoslavije, 2018), 75–92.

5 Milorad Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije 1790–1918*, 1. tom [The Making of Yugoslavia 1790–1918, Vol. 1.] (Beograd: Prosveta, 1989).

6 Olga Manojlović Pinter, *Arheologija sećanja: Spomenici i identiteti u Srbiji 1918–1989* [Archaeology of Remembrance: Memorials and Identities in Serbia 1918–1989] (Beograd: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, Čigoja štampa, 2014), 263–264.

7 Ivan Viđen, “Ivan Meštrović i Dubrovnik” [Ivan Meštrović and Dubrovnik] (Bachelor’s thesis, University of Zagreb, 2009).

The specific circumstances and historical moment in which Ivan Meštrović intellectually formed himself in a way predetermined his subsequent political and artistic activity. The May Coup of 1903 and the accession of Peter Karađorđević to the Serbian throne led to a change in the political course and atmosphere throughout the Kingdom of Serbia. The political situation in the Dual Monarchy further intensified the dream of South Slavic unity, which was particularly nurtured among circles of pro-Yugoslav oriented youth, to which the young Meštrović belonged.<sup>8</sup> He began his collaboration with prominent political and cultural circles in the Kingdom of Serbia in 1904, and one of his first undertakings was to create a portrait of the *people's king*.<sup>9</sup> Meštrović's specific artistic poetics were largely determined by the "South Slavic national code", and the sculptor was labelled in public discourse as the "prophet of national art" and the "genius of the South Slavic race."<sup>10</sup>

The city of Dubrovnik, where the monument to the first king of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was placed in a public space, had its own *Yugoslav history* that to some extent determined the emergence and formulation of Meštrović's relief. Situated in the southern region of the Eastern Adriatic, Dubrovnik, thanks to its turbulent history but also rich cultural heritage, played an important role in the constitution of the Yugoslav idea before World War I.<sup>11</sup> In the years after the abolition of the Dubrovnik Republic, its cultural achievements were particularly emphasized. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Libertas* as the central symbol and ideal of the political legacy of the Republic positioned it as a model in the struggle for the freedom of the South Slavs. The most important representatives of Dubrovnik's intellectuals in that period, the Vojnović brothers, Ivo and Lujo, with whom Ivan Meštrović collaborated, as well as members of the Karađorđević family, played a major role in changing the perspective. The mythical status that Dubrovnik already possessed when it came into contact with the modern, integrationist ideology of Yugoslavism was based on the perception of Dubrovnik's history as a brilliant episode from the history of statehood of the South Slavs. The duration of the *independent state* of the Republic was represented as the opposite of the rest of the national entity, which lost its freedom under foreign rulers – however, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the roles were reversed. In the 1890s, the Vojnović brothers and other members

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8 Miloš Vojinović, *Političke ideje Mlade Bosne* [Political Ideas of Young Bosnia] (Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 2015), 116–119; Sandi Bulimbašić, *Društvo hrvatskih umetnika "Medulić" (1908.–1919.) umjetnost i politika* [The "Medulić" Society of Croatian Artists (1908–1919): Art and Politics] (Zagreb: Društvo povjesnicara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2016).

9 Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomena na političke ljude i događaje* [Reminiscences of Political People and Events] (Zagreb, Matica hrvatska, 1969), 7–10.

10 Danijela Vanušić, "Podizanje spomenika Pobjede na Terazijama" [The Erection of the Monument to Victory in Terazije], *Nasleđe*, IX (2008): 198–199.

11 Milan Ž. Živanović, *Dubrovnik u borbi za ujedinjenje (1908–1918)* [Dubrovnik in the struggle for unification 1908–1918] (Beograd: Istorijski institut 1962, first edition; Novi Sad: Prometej, 2018).

of intellectual circles hoped for the unification of the South Slavs under the leadership of the young Serbian or Montenegrin kingdom.<sup>12</sup>

The new ideological atmosphere, as well as the state borders within which the city of Dubrovnik found itself, initiated two complementary symbolic practices that accompanied the change of almost every regime – *de-commemoration* and *commemoration* – that is, the abolition of old and the establishment of new markers of identity and collective memory in the public sphere of the city.<sup>13</sup> A monument is by definition a cultural artifact that preserves the memory of a glorious person or event from the past that stimulates, initiates, and shapes institutionalized memory that acquires an integrative social function, primarily in the construction of a broader social and national identity. In addition, a monument is also a political document expressed through an artistic medium that introduces a symbolic dimension into the field of action of the monument itself.<sup>14</sup> They become a key to understanding the space and time in which they were created, and their visual manifestation points to the expression of the collective identity of the group that initiated the given monument artifact.<sup>15</sup> The disintegration of the young Yugoslav state began immediately after its establishment, especially due to the emergence of national questions on the part of the individual nations that made up the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which represented a continuous source of instability for the common state.<sup>16</sup> The new political situation in which the united South Slavic peoples found themselves, as well as the new ideological paradigm, would influence the specific shaping of public symbols that were supposed to contribute to the strengthening of the idea of an integral Yugoslav nation, but also to the legitimization of the new regime led by the Karađorđević dynasty.<sup>17</sup>

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12 Lovro Kunčević, *Mit o Dubrovniku: Diskursi o identitetu renesansnoga grada* [The Myth of Dubrovnik: Discourses on Identity of the Renaissance City] (Zagreb, Dubrovnik: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku, 2015), 207–211.

13 Srđan Radović, *Grad kao tekst* [City as Text] (Beograd: XX vek, 2013), 12–13.

14 In the past few decades, monuments have often been the subject of scientific consideration both abroad and locally: Thomas Nipperdey, “Nationalidee und Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert” [The Idea of the Nation and National Monuments in Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century], *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 206, no. 3 (1968): 529–585; Hans-Ernst Mittag, “Das Denkmal” [The Monument], in *Kunst: Die Geschichte ihrer Funktionen*, eds. Werner Busch and Peter Schmoosk (Berlin, Weinheim: Quadriga, Beltz, 1987), 457–489; Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory 1870 – 1990* (London: University of California Press, 2000); Igor Borozan, *Reprezentativna kultura i politička propaganda: Spomenik knezu Milošu u Negotinu* [Representative Culture and Political Propaganda: The Monument to Prince Milos in Negotin] (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet u Beogradu, 2006).

15 Aleida Assmann, *Duga senka prošlosti: Kultura sećanja i politika povesti* [The Long Shadow of the Past: the Culture of Memory and Politics of History] (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2011); Michal Sládeček, Jelena Vasiljević, Tamara Petrović Trifunović (comp.), *Kolektivno sećanje i politike pamćenja* [Collective Memory and Politics of Remembrance] (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 2015); Olga Manojlović Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja: Spomenici i identiteti u Srbiji 1918–1989* [The Archaeology of Memory: Monuments and Identity in Serbia, 1918–1989] (Beograd: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2014).

16 Ljubodrag Dimić, *Kulturna politika Kraljevine Jugoslavije I-III* [Cultural Politics in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia] (Beograd: Stubovi kulture, 1997), 329–395.

17 Ignjatović, *Jugoslovenstvo u arhitekturi*, 39–41.

## RESTORING DIGNITY TO DUBROVNIK: THE INITIATIVE TO RAISE A MONUMENT TO LIBERATION

After a period of over a century, the “Athens of Yugoslavia”<sup>18</sup> was once again liberated, a triumph that had to be clearly marked in the public space of the city. During the process of transforming Dubrovnik from an Austro-Hungarian to a Yugoslav city, there was an initiative to erect a monument to Liberation as part of a wider project that involved the arrangement of the passage between the outer and inner gates of Pile, the western entrance to the historic center of Dubrovnik, between 1922 and 1924.<sup>19</sup> At that time, Ivan Meštrović was in the city, working on the Račić family mausoleum at the cemetery in Cavtat. The chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Angels was executed in accordance with the expected attributes of the Roman Catholic dogma, but Meštrović did not miss the opportunity to reaffirm the idea of Yugoslav unity through his artistic and iconographic solution, which he was strongly committed to, just like the commissioners of the mausoleum.<sup>20</sup>

The presence of Meštrović in the city and his repeatedly confirmed Yugoslav sentiment undoubtedly influenced the *Committee for Raising of the Monument to the Liberation from Austrian Rule* to choose the established artist as their first and only choice. In the years before the war, the construction of a mythical narrative about Ivan Meštrović as the ideal national artist began, in whom the *genius of the Yugoslav race* was embodied, capable of producing works imbued with an authentic Yugoslav spirit.<sup>21</sup> The decision to engage the artist was made by the members of the Committee themselves, who were also admirers of Meštrović’s artistic and political stance.<sup>22</sup> When the distinguished painter Marko Murat contacted Meštrović and asked him to create the aforementioned monument, it was not yet precisely defined what form it should take. The decision to embody the abstract Dubrovnik ideal of *libertas* in the form of an equestrian statue of King Peter I Karađorđević was made later, during a public debate, at the proposal of the distinguished Dubrovnik citizen, the Catholic Serb Marquis Luka Bona.<sup>23</sup> At that point, it was still not decided whether the Monument to Liberation would be in a free-standing form or whether it would take some other shape. Considering the lack of finances available for

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18 Kunčević, *Mit o Dubrovniku: Diskursi o identitetu renesansnoga grada*, 215.

19 Viđen, *Ivan Meštrović i Dubrovnik*.

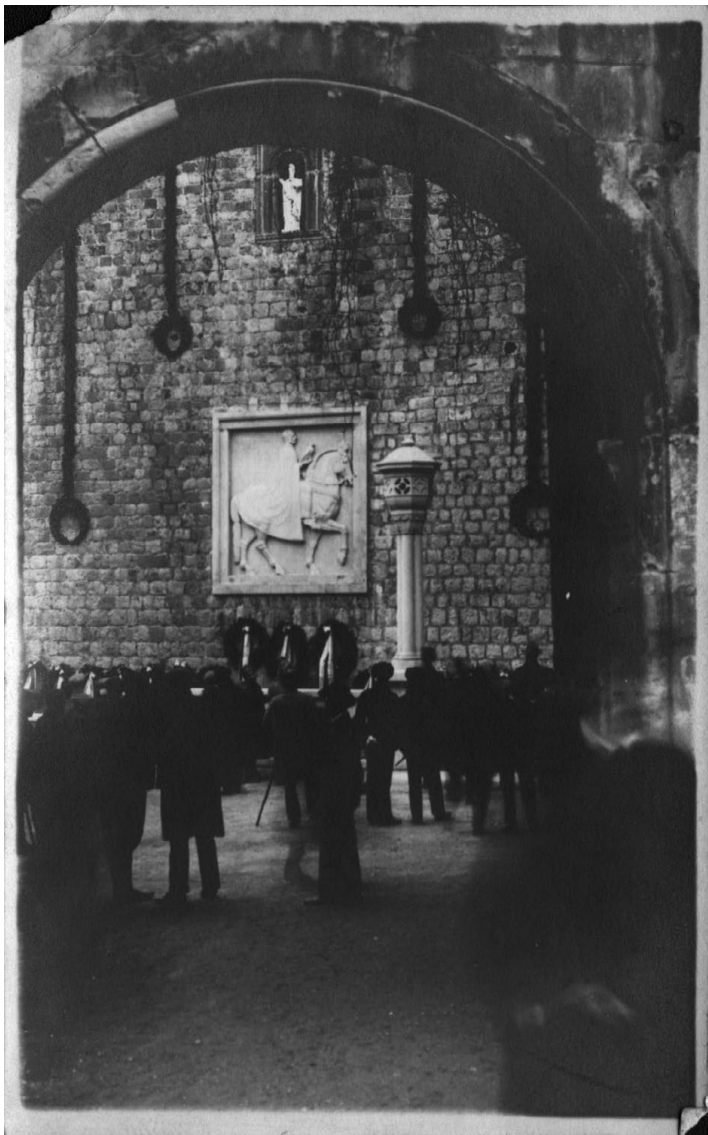
20 Dragica Hammer Tomić, *Jugoslavenstvo Ivana Meštrovića* [The Yugoslavism of Ivan Meštrović] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2011), 28–31; Ernest Katić, “Meštrovićev mauzolej u Cavtatu” [Meštrović’s Mausoleum in Cavtat], *Nova Evropa*, vol. VI, no. 7, November 1, 1922, 201–206.

21 Norka Machiedo Mladinić, “Političko opredjeljenje i umjetnički rad mladog Meštrovića” [The Political Commitments and Artistic Work of the Young Meštrović], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 1 (2009): 143–170.

22 Members of the committee were: Dubrovnik mayor Otmar Nonveiller, Stijepo Knežević (Vice President), Marko Murat, Ernest Katić (secretary), Melko Čingrija, Niko Gjivanović, Pero Banac (treasurer), Nino Bjelovučić, Frano Bizzarro, Arturo Saraca, Jerko Kovačević, Jovo Berdović, Mihailo Popara. Quoted in Viđen, *Ivan Meštrović i Dubrovnik*, 2–3.

23 *Ibid.*, 2.





**Fig. 2.** The Unveiling Ceremony, December 1, 1924, Dubrovnik, photograph, Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.

Committee for Raising the Monument to Liberation, to whom Ivan Meštrović gifted it, as the two were friends.<sup>29</sup>

the statue, Meštrović proposed carving “one large relief”, which would be placed at the city’s western gate.<sup>24</sup> All arrangements for the construction of the monument were completed in the middle of 1922. However, some complications postponed the demolition of the Austrian military building until June 1923. Over this entire period, as stated in his memoirs, Meštrović worked on carving the monument in his barracks in Lapad and finished it quickly.<sup>25</sup>

Since the monument has been out of the public eye for decades, one can reconstruct its original appearance based on preserved photographs from the opening ceremony<sup>26</sup> (**fig. 2**) and those taken before 1941.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the Ivan Meštrović Museums keep the artist’s sketches for the construction of the Monument to Liberation in Dubrovnik with the equestrian figure of King Peter I Karađorđević<sup>28</sup> (**fig. 3**, **fig. 4**). However, the most important resource for the reconstruction of the monument is the preserved plaster model, with dimensions of 110 x 115 cm (**fig. 5**). It is housed in the private collection of the Bulajić family in Zagreb, Croatia. It was made in 1922 in Dubrovnik; on its basis, Meštrović made a relief of much larger size, cut in stone, in 1923. This plaster model comes from the property of Ernest Katić, a member of the

24 Meštrović, *Uspomena na političke ljude i događaje*, 145–146.

25 *Ibid.*, 146.

26 The Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, Serbia, keep photographs taken at the unveiling of the monument in Dubrovnik. Unfortunately, they are not registered but were still given to us to write this paper, courtesy of Đurđa Borovnjak, an archivist responsible for the organization and archiving of photographs, whom we thank.

27 The monument to King Peter in Dubrovnik was often presented in various newspapers and magazines published in the Kingdom of SCS / Yugoslavia in the Interwar Period. We singled out some of them: *Ilustrovani zvanični Almanah – Šematizam Zetske Banovine* [Illustrated Official Almanac – Schematism of the Zeta Banovina] (Sarajevo: Državna štamparija, 1931); *Četvrta konferencija 77 distrikta Rotary International. Dubrovnik, 2. i 3. maj 1936* [Fourth Conference of the 77 Districts of Rotary International. Dubrovnik, May 2 and 3, 1936] (Dubrovnik: Jadran, 1936), 28.

28 Ivan Meštrović, *Skice za spomenik kralju Petru u Dubrovniku* [Sketches for the Monument to King Peter in Dubrovnik], inv. no. 529, inv. no. 530, inv. no. 556, Meštrović Gallery, Split.

29 The available documents in the collector’s possession state that the mentioned model was cast after the original model, and is considered the original among three or four of them.

**Fig. 3.** Ivan Meštrović, *Study for the Memorial Relief of King Peter I Karađorđević*, 1923, blue ink on paper, Meštrović Gallery, Split (GSM 529). Photograph by Zoran Alajbeg.



**Fig. 4.** Ivan Meštrović, *Study for the Memorial Relief of King Peter I Karađorđević*, 1923, blue ink on paper, Meštrović Gallery, Split (GSM 556). Photograph by Zoran Alajbeg.



**Fig. 5.** Ivan Meštrović, *Plaster Model of the Memorial Relief of King Peter I Karađorđević*, 1922, plaster, 110 × 115 cm, private collection.

## FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE MONUMENT

The equestrian image of King Peter, which people of Dubrovnik commissioned Ivan Meštrović to sculpt, relies on his portrayal a decade earlier on a bronze medal titled *Kosovo Avengers* (fig. 6).<sup>30</sup> However, one can

<sup>30</sup> Ivan Meštrović, *Kosovo Avengers* 1912–1913, bronze medal, National Museum of Serbia.



Fig. 6. Ivan Meštrović, *Kosovo Avengers*, 1913, bronze, National Museum in Belgrade.

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explain some of the formal variations between these two presentations due to the political situation within which Meštrović made these artworks. Amid patriotic fervour and victories in the Balkan Wars of 1912, Meštrović portrays King Peter I as a prototype of the King of Yugoslavia who embodied the abstract idea of uniting the South Slavic peoples. This medal shows King Peter I riding a horse, holding the reins firmly in his right hand and a falcon in his left. The King is represented in profile, dressed in a cloak, with a crown on his head. The physiognomy of his face corresponds to the usual presentation of King Peter's aquiline nose, typical of the Karađorđević dynasty. However, this was not just a genetic determinant but a characteristic identification of the ruler with a mighty bird, emblematically recognisable by its bent beak.<sup>31</sup> Apart from the nose, the artist emphasised the King's rustic facial boniness and moustache, which is why Dimitrije Mitrinović, a proponent of Meštrović's art, described him as "the People's King". Besides the face of the "Peasant King", the artist also emphasised his crown, very similar to the one with which Petar Karađorđević was crowned in 1904, designed by Mihailo Valtrović.<sup>32</sup>

31 Igor Borozan, *Слика и моћ: представа владара у српској визуелној култури 19. и почетком 20. Века* [Image and Power: Representation of the Rulers in Serbian Visual Culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century] (PhD diss., University of Belgrade, 2013), 41–42.

32 Mihailo Valtrović was an architect, archaeologist, and manager of the National Museum, a researcher of Serbian medieval antiquities, and a cultural worker in the Kingdom of Serbia. As one of the greatest authorities in the study of the Serbian past, he headed the Main Board for Organising the Coronation of King Peter I Karađorđević. Valtrović designed the royal insignia – the crown, the cloak, the sceptre, the orb and the cloak buckle. Ljiljana Mišković Prelević, "Vlatrovićevi nacrti za krunidbene predmete Petra I Karađorđevića" [Valtrović's Drafts for the Coronation Objects of Petar I Karađorđević], *Zbornik Muzeja primenjene umetnosti*, no. 24/25 (1980/1981): 119–126; Nenad Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882–1914)* [Church Art in the Kingdom of Serbia (1882–1914)] (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2007), 24–25.



Although Meštrović's Dubrovnik relief depicting King Peter is quite similar to the described medal, there are still some differences. One of the key differences between the medal and the relief is in the presentation of Valtrović's crown, made from Karađorđe's cannon from the First Serbian Uprising, an emblem associated with King Peter I and the coronation ceremony.<sup>33</sup> The relief has a somewhat modified representation of the crown, i.e., reduced to a typical representation of this crucial royal ceremonial object. In addition, the King's image on the relief differs from reality and the portrait on the medal. Here, the King's figure is shaped after the imaginary picture of the archetypal Yugoslav monarch, cloaked in markers of royal dignity that were meant to indicate the difference between King Peter as the King of Serbia and the King of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The king's distinctive ermine mantle from his coronation, rich in Serbian national symbols, was reduced to a generic representation of a ruler's vesture. The image of King Peter that Meštrović carved corresponded with the inscription on the relief THE FIRST YUGOSLAV KING. The inscription in the upper left corner of the relief, "PRVOM JUGOSLOVENSKOM KRALJU PETRU VELIKOM OSLOBODIOCU" (TO THE FIRST YUGOSLAV KING PETAR THE GREAT LIBERATOR), which, as the artist noted in his memoirs, was added only on his own initiative, without consultation with the Committee,<sup>34</sup> once again emphasizes the undoubted artistic and political personality of Meštrović. The sculptor consciously avoided the official name of the country – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes – despite opposition from local supporters of the National Radical Party, opting for the epithet "Yugoslav" which indicated national unity beyond individual ethnic divisions. Interestingly, the official name of the state would only change to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. The final decision for the inscription to remain came from the top, from Belgrade, which illustrates Meštrović's relationship with the political elite, especially with King Alexander, with whom he fostered a friendship.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout its existence, the Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia often experienced political instability caused by interethnic conflicts. In such an atmosphere, public sculpture, characterized by direct communication and the possibility of persuasion by propaganda, was an important tool in the hands of ruling bodies to visualize the abstract ideal of the Yugoslav community – "a simulacrum of the desired unity of nation and state."<sup>36</sup> This climate influenced the frequent use of the image of King Peter on horseback as a monument throughout the Yugoslav territory, and free-standing statues of King Peter on

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33 Nenad Makuljević, *Umetnost i nacionalna ideja u XIX veku: sistem evropske i sprske vizuelne kulture u službi nacije* [Art and the National Idea in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: The System of European and Serbian Visual Culture in the Service of Nation] (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike Beograd, 2006), 317.

34 Meštrović, *Uspomena na političke ljude i događaje*, 145–146.

35 Hammer Tomić, *Jugoslavenstvo Ivana Meštrovića*, 36–37.

36 Ignjatović, *Jugoslavenstvo u arhitekturi*, 192.

horseback could be found in Veliki Bečkerek (now Zrenjanin),<sup>37</sup> Pančevo,<sup>38</sup> Bijeljina,<sup>39</sup> Sarajevo,<sup>40</sup> Skopje,<sup>41</sup> and Ljubljana.<sup>42</sup> The equestrian form was derived from the iconographic model of the equestrian statue that dominated the European cultural space from ancient times. Its return to the public sphere in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century heralded the dominance of this sculptural form in public space throughout the continent in the coming centuries. The symbolic language of communication used by equestrian imagery in political discourse is based on the representation of dominance and power.<sup>43</sup> The image of the ruler on horseback, executed in a permanent medium, unequivocally indicated the king's immortal political body, as opposed to his mortal body, which could not overcome the inevitability of death.<sup>44</sup> Linking royal power to horses allowed the image of the ruler to be presented as a more upright, potent master not only of his own body but also of death itself, managing to overcome it, thanks to artistic intervention.<sup>45</sup> This iconographic model was shaped in the Roman imperial tradition, and its formal role models were artistic depictions of the emperor's solemn entry into the city – *Adventus Augusti*. The term *Adventus Augusti* refers to the ceremony held to celebrate the arrival of a ruler or a Roman emperor in a city, riding a white horse or in a quadriga. The ruler was recognised as having some divine prerogatives and welcomed as a saviour, benefactor, and master.<sup>46</sup> The *Adventus* was part of an older and more complex tradition of Roman triumph (*triumphus*) – a public ceremony in ancient Rome, religious at its core and organised in honour of a military commander who had been successful in war.<sup>47</sup>

The tradition of Roman triumph has been an unavoidable model for celebrating military success in European monarchies for centuries,<sup>48</sup> as

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37 Uglješa Rajčević, *Zatirano i zatrto: oskrnavljeni i uništeni srpski spomenici na tlu prethodne Jugoslavije* [Concealed and Obliterated: The Desecrated and Destroyed Serbian Monuments in Former Yugoslavia] (Novi Sad: Prometej, 2001), 50–52.

38 Ibid., 78–79.

39 Igor Borozan, “Politička ikonografija i skulptura u službi memorisanja narodnog kralja: Spomenik kralju Petru I Karađorđeviću u Bijeljini” [Political Iconography and a Sculpture Serving the Memory of the Folk King: Monument to King Petar I Karađorđević in Bijeljina], *Zbornik Matice za likovne umetnosti*, no. 45 (2017): 249–266.

40 Rajčević, *Zatirano i zatrto*, 219–220.

41 Ibid., 232–233.

42 Renata Komić Marn, “Men on Horseback: Role and Reception of the Equestrian Monument in Slovenia,” *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica*, vol. 18, no. 2, (2013): 75–94.

43 Ulrich Keller, “Reiterstandbild” [The Equestrian Statue], in *Handbuch der Politischen Ikonographie I–II*, eds. Uwe Fleckner, Martin Warnke and Hendrik Ziegler (München: Verlag Beck, 2011), 303–306.

44 Ernst Kantorowicz, *Dva kraljeva tela: studija o srednjovekovnoj političkoj teologiji*, trans. Ljiljana Nikolić [The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology] (Beograd: Fedon, 2012).

45 Peter Hammond Schwartz, “Equestrian Imagery in European and American Political Thought: Toward an Understanding of Symbols as Political Texts,” *The Western Political Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 4 (1988): 655–656.

46 Sabine MacCormack, “Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of *Adventus*,” *Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, vol. 21, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr., 1972), 721.

47 Yvonne Rickert, “Triumph,” in: *Handbuch der Politischen Ikonographie, I–II*, eds. Fleckner, Warnke and Ziegler, 456–464.

48 Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2009), 2.



evidenced by the monumental practice in Interwar Yugoslavia. The zero point in commemorating war victories was transposing a real or imagined image of power (of individuals or dynasties) into an equestrian statue or relief depiction.<sup>49</sup> Apart from the complex structure of the Roman triumph, which will not be discussed in this paper, the triumph itself implied the constitution of a new political reality. Relying on modern practices and using the ancient form, Meštrović, an educated and experienced sculptor familiar with European traditions at the time, decided to create the monument to “the first King of Yugoslavia” following the concept of military triumph after victories in World War I, but based on the *adventus* as well. The equestrian relief of King Peter I was placed at the entrance to the city, which corresponds to the essence of the *adventus* ceremony and the city’s new status, as Dubrovnik was liberated after more than a century under Habsburg rule. Although King Peter never visited Dubrovnik after the war (neither did his successor, King Alexander, before the unveiling of the monument), the relief that came out of Meštrović’s workshop was supposed to be a harbinger of a new reality introduced after 1918, when Dubrovnik became part of the Kingdom of SCS.

The relief, as one of the expressions of the sculptural medium that stands on the border between the two-dimensionality of pictorial representation and the three-dimensionality of the sculptural medium, was often used for the depiction of the ruler’s image, as we have seen in the interwar period, and for the depiction of the ruler’s figure. However, when it comes solely to formal execution, it is noticeable that Meštrović’s Dubrovnik monument to King Peter I to some extent succumbed to schematism. The relief image is characterized by the geometrization of form, the absence of personal authority that should emanate from the represented personality, but also the absence of artistic creativity that would overcome the political. As time passed and the ideology of integral Yugoslavism was transformed in ways that did not imply national unity, this was reflected in public art practices in which Meštrović still played an important role.

In 1935, another monument to King Peter I Karađorđević, also the work of Meštrović, was to be placed in the public space of Split, the central coastal city of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Known as the King’s Stone, the monument was designed as a double-figure relief depicting the equestrian figures of King Tomislav, the first king of Croatia, and King Peter I Karađorđević, the first king of Yugoslavia. It was never realised. Nevertheless, the plaster model of the monument is preserved in the Ivan Meštrović Gallery in Split, and its design is similar to the Dubrovnik relief. In the same period, Meštrović was commissioned to arrange the newly formed Square of King Peter I the Liberator in Zagreb (today the Square of the Victims of Fascism), where he planned to raise a free-standing monument to the first king of Yugoslavia. However, that

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 3–4.

idea was abandoned in favour of constructing a functional building dedicated to the memory of King Peter I.<sup>50</sup> Construction works of the House of Fine Arts of King Peter the Great Liberator were completed in 1938. Above the entrance was a relief depicting the ruler to whom the house was dedicated,<sup>51</sup> which testifies to the continuity of Meštrović's engagement in presenting the image of King Peter I Karađorđević in relief throughout the Interwar Period.

## THE UNVEILING AND THE REMOVAL OF THE MONUMENT

The unveiling ceremony of the Monument to Liberation on the walls of Dubrovnik was held on December 1, 1924, which also marked the anniversary of the unification of the South Slavs into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and was closely followed by the press.<sup>52</sup> The newspaper reporter of *Vreme* concludes his report with the following words: "Dubrovnik, famous for its patriotism, has not witnessed, for a long time, a more beautiful national ceremony, nor has it so spontaneously shown its fondness for unity, the King and the state."<sup>53</sup> Since the journalist did not specify which king he was talking about – King Alexander or his late father, King Peter I – the "eternal body of the monarchy" was summed up in a singular king. Thus, the verbal culture served as support in legitimising the current ruler through the authority of his predecessor.

392 The fragility of the system that authorized the placement of the relief of King Peter placed on the inner gates of Pile in Dubrovnik, as well as the role of monumental culture, which was supposed to act as a means of cohesion, was evidenced by the obliteration of the first King of Yugoslavia from public memory, known as *damnatio memoriae*.<sup>54</sup> At the outbreak of World War II in Yugoslavia, Italian and Ustasha<sup>55</sup> occupation troops entered into Dubrovnik and removed the relief from the city walls. In his book titled *Dubrovnik 1941*, Mato Jakšić states that the Ustasha would probably have ruined Meštrović's artwork

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50 The situation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (which became more unstable after the death of King Alexander I Karađorđević as time went on), unrealized monuments, and the nominal dedication of buildings to King Peter I in the territory of the future Banovina of Croatia testify to the successive dispersal of Yugoslavia and progressive distancing from the idea of integral Yugoslavism. An insight into the monumental dynastic culture of the period sheds light on the nature of that state and the role of public art within its framework. Ljubodrag Dimić, *Kulturna politika Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1918–1941*, vol. III, [Cultural Politics in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1918–1941 vol. III] (Beograd: Stubovi culture, 1997), 297–298.

51 Andrija Mutnjaković, "Meštrovićev Dom umjetnosti: građenje, razgrađivanje i obnavljanje" [Arts Hall by Ivan Meštrović: Construction, Deconstruction and Renewal], *Art Bulletin*, no. 61 (2011): 74–75.

52 [s. n.] "Spomenik Kralju Petru" [Monument to King Petar], *Politika*, no. 5966, year XXI, December 2, 1924; [s. n.] "Otkrivanje spomenika Kralju Petru u Dubrovniku i Starom Bečeju" [Unveiling of the Monument to King Petar in Dubrovnik and Stari Bečej], *Vreme*, December 2, 1924, year IV, no. 1062.

53 [s. n.], "Otkrivanje spomenika Kralju Petru."

54 Uwe Fleckner, "Damnatio memoriae," in *Handbuch der Politischen Ikonographie I–II*, eds. Fleckner, Warnke and Ziegler, 208–215.

55 The Ustasha (Ustaše) was a Croatia fascist and ultranationalist organization, active between 1929 and 1945, formally known as Ustasha – Croatian Revolutionary Movement. The Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*), a comprador state allied with the Nazis during World War II, was led by the Ustasha.

if the Italians had not intervened and ordered the relief to be carefully removed and professionally wrapped. They even boarded it onto a ship for Italy on two occasions, both of which were stopped at the last minute, so the relief remained in the city, though kept hidden from the public. Besides the destructive instinct that underlies this act, it testifies to the magical identity of the image and the ruler's charisma, which should have been abolished. Consequently, *damnatio memoriae* implied a break with the image and symbolic policy of the defeated regime.<sup>56</sup> The act of *damnatio memoriae* was not merely focused on the image of King Peter I, but the entire system that this image represented. Interventions in the semiotic public sphere directly affect collective memory, so dismantling the relief meant obliterating the overthrown dynasty from collective memory.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, the only authentically preserved monument of the Karađorđević dynasty from this period is located far beyond the borders of the former state, in the territory of the French Republic.<sup>58</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The erosion of faith in the unity of the South Slavs and disappointment in the fulfilment of the ideology of Yugoslavism in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was inevitably reflected in the monumental culture and the opus of Ivan Meštrović in the Interwar Period. The process reached its climax with the complete disappearance of dynastic monuments in the Adriatic area after 1941. The analysis of Ivan Meštrović's works depicting the image of the "first King of Yugoslavia" begins with the period when King Peter was at the head of "Piedmontese" Serbia. At first, as on the medal *Kosovo Avengers*, Meštrović portrayed King Peter as a prototype of the Yugoslav race, while he depicted the king in a more and more schematic and routine manner in his later works, including the Dubrovnik relief. The form invoked the idea of a mighty Yugoslav King, while the essence signalled the disintegration of the state, which began with its very formation. Having considered the political and social *milieu* before the raising of the Monument to Liberation, and then the entire process from the initiative to erect it to its removal, the justification for viewing monuments as "living organisms" is again clear.<sup>59</sup> By placing the relief of King Peter the Liberator on the walls that symbolize Dubrovnik and its history of Liberty, the supreme ideal of Dubrovnik's identity inscribed in the ruler's image was once again emphasized. The image of King Peter was constructed as that of a non-historical ruler in the spirit of Meštrović's early equestrian statues, which embodied the Yugoslav vision. The ancient monumental form of the equestrian

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56 Fleckner, "Damnatio memoriae."

57 Rajčević, *Zatirano i zatrto*.

58 Jovana Milovanović, "Omaž prijateljima: Spomenik kraljevima Petru I I Aleksandru Karađorđeviću u Parizu" [A Homage to Friends – the Monument of Kings Petar I and Aleksandar I Karađorđević in Paris], *Srpske studije*, no. 9 (2018): 254–280.

59 Borozan, *Reprezentativna kultura i politička propaganda*, 28.

statue was transformed into a relief that lacked the primordial vitality and fearlessness of Meštrović's early horsemen. The monument of King Peter in Dubrovnik can easily be seen as a paradigm of the state that it embodied – somewhere between desired power and real fragility.

# Art

and

**the State**

in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# Monumental Challenges



**Francesco Del Sole**

*MONSTRUM* AND IMPERIAL POWER: THE  
ARCHETYPE OF THE COLOSSUS

**Franci Lazarini**

THE ERECTION OF A ROYAL MONUMENT  
AS A CITY PLANNING OPPORTUNITY: THE  
MONUMENT TO KING ALEXANDER I AND  
PLEČNIK'S SOUTH SQUARE

**Zoltán Suba**

MONUMENTALISM: SCULPTURAL MEANS OF  
INTERWAR POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN  
HUNGARY

**Silva Kalčić**

TRAUMA AND IDENTITY: MEDIALISATION  
AND CONSTRUCT

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## **MONSTRUM AND IMPERIAL POWER: THE ARCHETYPE OF THE COLOSSUS**

### **Abstract**

*Monumental art contributes to the affirmation of the totalitarian regime. Starting from this basis, this essay investigates the processes through which the people, freed from the dictator, try to eliminate the traces left by him on the territory. First of all, the demolition of a monument, which has the value of destroying the memory linked to it. When the process of damnatio memoriae is not imposed, the value of a monument as a historical document can be reversed. It can be made to become an anti-monument itself; the site of memory ends up being a warning to promote a negative memory of what has been. In order to avoid destroying all traces of the defeated regime, another effective means of making the monument lose its value is to decontextualize it, to break its connection with the territory. This is the moment when architecture transforms from a politically-hegemonic medium to a means of criticizing political misdeeds. To better focus on the topics covered, attention will be paid to some particular contexts: North Korea, post-socialist western Europe and the memory strategies adopted after the attack on the World Trade Centre (USA).*

**Keywords:** dictatorship,  
public monument,  
memory, anti-monument,  
decontextualization

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The dictator translates his vision of the world into an architectural model, and shapes the territory with monuments that bear witness to his power.<sup>1</sup> The monument is usually a large-sized object; it belongs to public space, occupying a specific place; it is made of durable materials; it is intended to commemorate an event or a person important to the community in which it is placed. The word “monument” derives from the Latin *monere*, referring to the sense of remembering, pointing out, admonishing and exhorting. It is the fulcrum of a space that becomes a site of memory, positioned so as to be a direct source of history, voluntarily produced by society to transmit a message to posterity, according to a process of direct intentionality of memory.<sup>2</sup> The public monument must be analysed in relation to its environment, not only in its sculptural component, but also in the space built around it, through which it takes on its specific meaning.

Architecture, writes Sudjic, “feeds the ego in predisposed subjects. They become more and more dependent on it to the point that architecture becomes

<sup>1</sup> For more on this topic, see Reinhart Koselleck, “I monumenti: materia per una memoria collettiva?” [Monuments: Matter for a Collective Memory?], *Discipline filosofiche*, no. 13, issue 2 (2003): 9–33; Nicola Ruggieri, “Identità della struttura del monumento. Temi per un dibattito” [Identity of the Structure of the Monument. Themes for a Debate], *Territorio*, no. 85 (2018): 148–153.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* [Places of Memory] (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Georges Kantin and Gilles Manceron, *Les Echos de la mémoire* [Echoes of Memory] (Paris: Edition Le Monde, 1991).

an end in itself, attracting fanatics and inducing them to build more and more, on an ever larger scale.”<sup>3</sup> In a dictatorial regime where a convincing state choreography of ceremonies, greetings, protocols, uniforms and flags is becoming increasingly important for the construction of national identity, architecture is also fundamental.<sup>4</sup> It can be considered a veritable language with which messages are conveyed, a sort of military uniform, a powerful tool to signal loyalty and aspirations, to keep one’s supporters together and relegate one’s enemies to a corner. The public monument is therefore not limited to being ornamental; it is considered a symbol of an entire era, the wealth of a national community, and one of the most resilient fibers of totalitarian power. What characterises it from an architectural point of view is the philosophy of the great, made up of imposing projects, some defined as “megalomaniac architecture.”<sup>5</sup> This colossal character of architecture is accompanied by a perspective of equally immense duration. This quest for eternity is expressed above all in the choice of durable materials such as stone, especially marble or granite. In this way the greatness of the regime is projected to posterity, just as the empires of antiquity did, and the public gaze is always drawn to architectural enterprises. In Nazi Germany, Hitler and his architects came to design the buildings of the Third Reich also according to their future decay, following the so-called theory of ruins proposed by Speer himself. According to this “theory”, the dictatorial monument was to be erected not only in a stylistically classical style, but also with materials that would ensure its ruinous decay. Even centuries and millennia after their construction, the monuments of the Reich – in the form of ruin, not rubble – should have kept intact a sense of the greatness and austerity of the society that had built them.<sup>6</sup> When Hitler laid the foundation stone of his Kongresshalle, echoing Speer, he said that “even if the voice of National Socialism were to be reduced to silence, these vestiges will still arouse wonder.”<sup>7</sup> The monument must in essence become “miraculous”, it must aim at eternity despite its probable destruction due to time. As the dictator gains security, the most striking manifestation of his ego becomes the construction of a colossus in his own image and likeness, so that the figure of the leader becomes the only glue linking the glorious past to the mythical present. In this way the dictator tries to convince the citizens that their own leader is a true father of the homeland, capable, like the statue in the centre of a large square, of holding all the people close to him, looking to the future, from the top of a pedestal.

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3 Deyan Sudjic, *Architettura e potere. Come i ricchi e i potenti hanno dato forma al mondo* [Architecture and Power. How the Rich and Powerful Have Shaped the World] (Bari: Laterza, 2012), 24.

4 Gian Piero Piretto, *Memorie di pietra. I monumenti delle dittature* [Memories of Stone. Monuments of Dictatorships] (Milan: Cortina, 2014).

5 Ibid., 117–136.

6 See Jonathan Petropoulos, *Artists Under Hitler: Collaboration and Survival in Nazi Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2003).

7 Sudjic, *Architettura e potere*, 52–53.

The decision to erect a Colossus – whose archetype is the statue dedicated to Helios in Rhodes, so remote as to belong to the famous canon of the seven Wonders of the ancient world – is therefore a powerful evocation of the past, one of the most effective and “prodigious” ways of imposing one’s desire for magnificence on the world; on the other hand it is also one of the most effective means of reconnecting with the figurative history of this ancient archetype, which has never been forgotten despite its short life.<sup>8</sup> Reading the ancient sources that describe it, the Colossus of Rhodes is still a Wonder, despite its collapse. And this is precisely the aim that the dictator pursues in the creation of his myth: to remain impressed in collective memory despite his fall.

## THE MONUMENTALISATION OF THE TERRITORY

What seems to be a discourse linked to the dictatorships of the last century is more topical than ever.<sup>9</sup> Over time, in many states, institutions have arisen that have the task of planning the monumentalisation of the territory, the process through which a series of sites of memory worthy of transmitting the collective past is established, mostly linked to characters or events that have marked the community and through which the people can be reflected in an ideal that underscores the conviction of living in a society “on the road to a future of happiness and prosperity, based on cohesion, the independence of external aid and contributions, on the ancestral bond with the national territory.”<sup>10</sup> It is worth mentioning, in this regard, the Institute of Cultural Monuments founded in 1965 in Albania and the University of Fine Arts founded in the 1940s in North Korea, a place dedicated to researching the best way to combine the new principles of socialist realism with the traditional techniques and particular aesthetics of East-Asian art.<sup>11</sup> Mansudae Art Studio, the artistic centre of Pyongyang and thus the most important in North Korea, derives from this institution. Mansudae Art Studio occupies an area of 120 thousand square meters and employs about four thousand people, including about a thousand artists trained in the best art academies in the country. Its workforce attracts international collectors and is in great demand abroad by institutions, museums and governments who commission public works (statues, monuments, buildings) and buy them at prices that insiders consider relatively cheap.

The foundation of the North Korean nation is the celebration of the Idea Juche. This particular philosophical-political conception maintains that man

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8 Marcello Fagiolo, “Le Meraviglie e il meraviglioso” [Wonders and the Wonderful], *Psicon. Rivista internazionale di architettura*, no. 7, issue 3 (1976): 3–9; Francesco Del Sole, *Viaggio nella Meraviglia – descrivere, immaginare, ri-costruire* [Travel in the Wonder – Describe, Imagine, Re-build] (Galatina: Congedo, 2019); Peter Clayton, Martin Price, *Seven Wonders of the World* (Turin: Einaudi, 1989).

9 Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art* (London: Overlook Duckworth, 1990).

10 Piretto, *Memorie di pietra*, 210.

11 Alzo David West, “North Korean aesthetic theory: Aesthetics, beauty and man”, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, no. 47, issue 1 (2013): 104–110.



**Fig. 1.** Tower of the Idea Juche, Pyongyang, North Korea, 1982, Wikimedia Commons, accessed on October 4, 2021, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Juche\\_Tower\\_at\\_night?uselang=it#/media/File:Tower\\_of\\_Juche\\_Idea\\_-\\_panoramio.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Juche_Tower_at_night?uselang=it#/media/File:Tower_of_Juche_Idea_-_panoramio.jpg).

400 must be completely self-sufficient and the author of his own destiny. The monumental complex created to best express this political ideology is the Tower of the Idea Juche, which constitutes the physical centre of the entire urban layout of Pyongyang and the gravitational centre around which the entire nation revolves (**fig. 1**). It is currently the tallest stone tower in the world, with a red torch on top that, lit at night, has the task of conveying the message of the Juche to the rest of the planet. It was built with this very purpose in mind: to make the People's Republic of Korea a global example of resistance against the bipolar logic formed after World War II, a clear example of a political movement that managed to free itself from a foreign colonial occupier.

Since the 1970s, the Mansudae Art Studio has been working on the construction of large works commissioned by foreign countries, especially among African countries. While, on a political level, North Korea has on several occasions supported various African liberation movements fighting against colonialism, on a cultural level the Mansudae has offered nascent national governments a visual language in a socialist-realist style that has appealed to local leaders. It may seem strange that an African government tells its own story of freedom by borrowing North Korean visual language, which has become synonymous with repression elsewhere, especially in the liberal-capitalist West. The roots of this phenomenon are to be found in their mutual history of anti-imperialist struggle; this monumental style symbolically represents the victory of all those governments and movements that opposed colonialist logic, obtaining the possibility of creating an autonomous state.<sup>12</sup> Dozens of monuments and large architectural complexes created by the Mansudae Art Studio in Angola, Senegal, Namibia, Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo can be identified. This phenomenon of the monumentalisation

12 Ted Hyunhak Yoon, *Decoding Dictatorial Statues* (Milan: Onomatopoe editore, 2019), 194–203.



**Fig. 2.** Mansudae Art Studio, *Great Monument of Pyongyang*, Pyongyang, North Korea (1972–2011), Wikimedia Commons, accessed on October 4, 2021, [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande\\_monumento\\_Mansudae#/media/File:Mansudae-Monument-Bow-2014.jpg](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_monumento_Mansudae#/media/File:Mansudae-Monument-Bow-2014.jpg).



of territory does not seem to have subsided, so much so that the African Renaissance Monument near Dakar was only completed in 2010.

The most important Colossus of the Mansudae Art Studio remains the so-called Great Monument of Pyongyang, the glaring example of the sacredness with which sites of memory can be invested (**fig. 2**). It is a monumental complex of maximum devotion to the two North Korean leaders, Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il: two bronze simulacra, each twenty metres high, arranged one next to the other; one stretches an arm towards the future, while the other accompanies it with its gaze. The statue of Kim Jong-Il was added to that of Kim Il-Sung only in 2012, thus guaranteeing that the cult was directed to the father-son dyad as a sign of continuity over time. No less important is the space chosen and shaped to contain the monument. To reach it, it is necessary to climb a small hill, an ascending path that opens into a square. As you walk along it, you immediately realise that you are not looking at a simple monument. In fact, there is a precise ethical-behavioral code to follow during the visit. It is not possible to turn one's back on the two statues, and each visitor must place flowers at the foot of the statues as a sign of respect; the square itself is designed to allow those who intend to take photographs to retreat a few steps so that the shot catches both giants full-length, taking care not to cut off their heads or feet. The process of the monumentalisation of territory, as witnessed by this last example, makes the site of memory a real sacred place.

## THE HEADS ROLL

The monumental complex, although anchored to a memory of the past, also projects towards the future. This is the paradox of the *hypomnemata*, those places (or objects) born as devices to preserve memory outside of human



**Fig. 3.** Crowd gathered after knocking down the statue of Stalin during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Budapest, Hungary, 1956, Ti-press, accessed on October 4, 2021, <https://www.rsi.ch/rete-due/programmi/cultura/geronimo/Storia/Ungheria-60-anni-dopo-8043670.html>.

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consciousness. They constitute a material memory of things, offering them as a treasure accumulated for re-reading and subsequent meditation.<sup>13</sup> If, on the one hand, the monument is the most appropriate means to fix an ideal and make the nation recognize itself in it, on the other hand, it is precisely when society chooses to entrust a memory to an external support that it can be forgotten. This is the process of *damnatio memoriae*, known since Antiquity, which assures that any memory of the people affected by this fate is erased. With each overthrow of a dictatorial government, the first gesture that the rebels make is to behead and then demolish the statues, as well as destroying the monuments and crumbling the emblems and insignia of the defeated regime. This phenomenon has been defined by some historians as “revolutionary vandalism”.<sup>14</sup> The violence of these gestures makes one understand the strong symbolic power of dictatorial monuments, capable of igniting popular anger after the fall of the leader. Both at the moment of their construction and at the moment of their destruction, monuments are essential words in the cultural language of a community, the one that establishes and communicates to the world the principles that underlie its own hard-won identity, paying a high price for wars and rebellions. It is therefore not difficult to understand why the people of Budapest, during the Hungarian uprising in 1956, risked their lives to demolish the gigantic effigy of Stalin erected in the city centre (**fig. 3**). The

<sup>13</sup> James E. Young, “Memory, Counter-memory, and the End of the Monument”, *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 9 (1999): 1–10.

<sup>14</sup> The historians of the French Revolution, and before them already Abbot Grégoire, a member of the National Convention, called the phenomenon “revolutionary vandalism”. See Luciano Canfora, “Abattere statue: i vandali delle Rivoluzioni” [Tearing Down Statues: the Vandals of the Revolutions], *Corriere della Sera*, August 29, 2011, accessed December 11, 2023, [https://www.corriere.it/cultura/11\\_agosto\\_29/canfora-abbattere-statue-vandali-rivoluzioni\\_acac0db0-d22a-11e0-a205-8c1e98b416f7.shtml](https://www.corriere.it/cultura/11_agosto_29/canfora-abbattere-statue-vandali-rivoluzioni_acac0db0-d22a-11e0-a205-8c1e98b416f7.shtml).

demolition was a response to the dictator's idolatrous power, so that running to strike it under sniper fire had an exorcistic value against its enduring presence.

The pages of history are full of similar cases, with sometimes gruesome details, and transmit the same message every time: a community finally free from a regime has the primary need to free its territory from the symbols of a dictatorship. Among the many statues demolished, just to give a few examples that retrace the history of the last century, we can recall the big bronze head of Mussolini crushed between two presses in Bologna, by popular initiative, in the euphoria of July 25, 1943; the giant bronze statue of Enver Hoxha, dictator of communist Albania, demolished in the central square of Tirana by a huge crowd in 1991; the bronze statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad pulled down with the winch of an American tank in 2003; the equestrian statue of the dictator Francisco Franco in Santander at the end of 2008, and the recent cases in 2011 when, on the one hand in Syria, rebels in Damascus set fire to the statue of former President Assad, and on the other in Libya, rebels who entered Gaddafi's residence beheaded the statue of the Rais. In most cases, in tearing down the statues, the people attack the colossus to besmirch the image of the dictator, with a gesture as liberating as it is irrational, replicating the treatment given to enemy prisoners in wars.

An exemplary case, described in a fascinating way by Leonor Faber-Jonker, is the destruction in 1961 of the monument dedicated to Stalin in a street in Berlin.<sup>15</sup> As is very often the case in such circumstances, the government decided to eliminate the statue at night, without warning, almost as if to give the citizens the impression of living in a different space, no longer occupied by the shadows of the past. In this case, the order was precise: it was not only necessary to demolish the statue, each part had to be destroyed. The workers set to work, but one of them, a certain Gerhard Wolf, after having taken the statue to a warehouse with his colleagues to proceed with the destruction, decided to cut off an ear and take it away before completing the destruction of the monument, just as it was customary to do in battle with enemies, whose nose or ears were cut off (when their whole head was not torn off) to preserve a macabre war trophy. In that German worker the same desire for revenge as that of the soldiers could have been triggered and the removal of Stalin's ear had caused the dictator, who had the reputation of being a giant who "saw everything" and "heard everything", to finally disappear. As the author tells us, this heirloom had a long fortune, and a copy of it is still kept today in a small bar near the place where the statue of Stalin once stood.

## ANTI-MONUMENTALITY

When the process of *damnatio memoriae* is not imposed, the value of a monument as a document can be reversed. It can be made to become an anti-monument; the site of memory ends up in this case achieving a result



diametrically opposed to the purpose for which it was conceived, promoting a negative memory of what it was.<sup>16</sup> This is precisely the concept of anti-monumentality, a reversal of the same elements that characterise the dictatorial monument (language, marked verticality, eternity of the message), which enunciates, with the same expressive power as the original monumental complex, the trials of all those who have been oppressed by such regimes.

### ENVER-NEVER

Like figurative representations, inscribed monumental words have also taken on a profound meaning in the ethics of dictatorial regimes. In ten days, Sheme Filja, together with local villagers, painted the name “Enver” on the side of Mount Shpirag in Albania in 1968, in homage to the then communist dictator Enver Hoxha. The hundred metre-high letters still dominated the landscape above Berat, the oldest city in the country, when Hoxha died in 1985 and communism collapsed in 1990. In 1994, Albania’s first democratically elected government deployed the army to remove the name of Hoxha from the mountain. Shortly afterwards, Armando Lulaj, a young artist, exchanged the first two letters of the word, transforming the word “Enver” into “Never” (fig. 4). The simple exchange of the first two letters radically changed the sense and impact of the place, constituting a genuine anti-monument. Replacing a proper name with an adverb does not mean hiding it, but evoking it, while at the same time making us reflect on the injunction “Never again”, which appears as a refusal, a warning, and a denial of the tyrannical past, but also of an overly corrupt present.

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Fig. 4. Sheme Filja, “Enver” and “Never” painted on the Mount Shpirag, Albania, 1968–1997, Albania Travel: An Introduction to the Land of Eagles, accessed on October 4, 2021, <https://whywaittoseetheworld.com/albania-travel/>.

16 Piretto, *Memorie di pietra*, 17–33.

## ***PROJECTS FOR THE GROUND ZERO MEMORIAL, NEW YORK***

The Giant who fell on September 11, 2001, under attack by Islamic terrorists was not a dictator, but the entire nation of the United States of America.<sup>17</sup> The offensive, which immediately entered the history books, had as its objective the beating financial heart of American capitalism, the World Trade Center. As well as being among the most important economic centres in the world, the Twin Towers were the symbol of the era that had coined the term skyscraper, propelling that “war for supremacy in height” that began in the mid-nineteenth century and still lasts today. The so-called “towers of progress” therefore had a deeply symbolic meaning, representing the economic and technological miracle, the “great architectural icon of developing capitalism.”<sup>18</sup>

Immediately after the fall of the towers, many projects for the reconstruction of the site were spontaneously proposed by both young architects and large design studios. The result was an international competition of proposals, from which winning projects were chosen to build two fundamental elements in the Ground Zero area: the Tower and the Memorial. If, on the one hand, the idea of rising to the sky again with a new tower highlights all the strength of an America intent on recovering from a tragedy, on the other hand, the will of an entire nation to remember what happened emerges, giving a name to the victims and proposing a monument that is a warning to the whole world. Numerous designers took part in the competition for the Memorial, many of whom proposed a veritable anti-monument, an architectural project highlighting the catastrophe that had occurred, overturning the founding architectural value of the World Trade Center of the 1970s: verticality. One of these was the fascinating project by the Dutch architect Van der Erve, who proposed two twin wells in the same place as the demolished towers, 110 stories deep, mirror images of the previous building. The memorial, in this case, would be located at the base of these wells, where the visitor raises his eyes and admires the sky; we should also remember Nicholson’s project, with the site of the original towers occupied by labyrinths and a well 150 metres deep, inspired by the model of St. Patrick’s well in Orvieto. Even more symbolic was Mockbee’s choice to place a commemorative chapel 911 feet underground, a figure that recalls the date of the attacks. The representation of America in the wake of that tragic watershed, based on the bivalent spirit that combines the desire to rise again with the need for remembrance, was summed up in Solomon’s proposal, in which two steel and glass towers rise higher than the original ones, intimately connected to two memorials, under the foundations, which reach a depth of 110 floors, the same height as the collapsed towers.

The example of Ground Zero shows how anti-monumentality is a choice that goes far beyond the dictatorial sphere and affects every community that wants

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17 Suzanna Stephens, *Immaginare Ground Zero. Progetti e proposte per l’area del World Trade Center* [Imagining Ground Zero. Projects and Proposals for the World Trade Center Area] (Milan: Rizzoli, 2004).

18 Paolo Melis, “Architettura e revival del cristallo nella città contemporanea da Joseph Paxton a Kevin Roche” [Architecture and Crystal Revival in the Contemporary City from Joseph Paxton to Kevin Roche], *Psicon. Rivista internazionale di architettura*, no. 6, issue III (1976): 89.





**Fig. 5.** Fred Bernstein, *Twin Piers A 9/11 Memorial in New York Harbor*, 2006, from Suzanna Stephens, *Imagine Ground Zero (...)* (Milan, 2004), 254.

to imprint a memory in public space with momentum towards the future. This is precisely the message that can be grasped in the horizontal verticality of Fred Bernstein's proposed memorial, in which the towers, instead of projecting into the sky, soar into the ocean in the form of two piers of the same dimensions. The pier, a symbol of a departure and a new journey to be made, would have all the names of the victims of September 11 engraved on it (**fig. 5**).

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## DECONTEXTUALISATION

The life of a monument changes when the founding ideology that generated it falls. A powerful sign can quickly lose its meaning: "Without any real value whatsoever, the signifier will end up, if anything, in the repositories of the strange wrecks that came from a deceased system."<sup>19</sup> To avoid destroying any trace of the defeated regime, another effective means to make the monument lose its value is to decontextualise it, breaking its link with the territory, and thereby causing it to take on a completely different meaning. This is the moment when architecture shifts from a political medium to a means of criticising political shortcomings.

## GRŪTAS PARK IN LITHUANIA AND MEMENTO PARK IN BUDAPEST

Occupied by the Soviet Union, Lithuania was the perfect terrain for dense monumentalisation. The territory was sprinkled with Lenin and Stalin giants

<sup>19</sup> On the Memento Park see Michael Jakob, "Grutas", Doppiozero, September 8, 2019, accessed October 4, 2021, <https://www.doppiozero.com/rubriche/7055/201912/grutas>; Mária Markos, "A Szoborpark-kapuzat vastábláján Illyés Gyula Egy mondat a zsarnokságról című verse olvasható. A szobrok között a csönd dübörög; a fájdalom, a gyász, a tehetetlenség, a szégyen, a döbbenet, a düh és a dac" [On the iron plaque of the Szoborpark capstone is a poem by Gyula Illyés entitled A Sentence about Tyranny. Among the statues, silence thunders; pain, grief, helplessness, shame, dismay, anger and defiance], Orszagut, March 5, 2020, accessed July 14, 2022, <https://orszagut.com/kepzuveszet/memento-park-112>; Géza Boros, "Budapesti emlékmű-metamorfózisok 1989–2000" [Budapest Monument Metamorphoses 1989–2000], *A Budapest Negyed*, no. 32-33 (2001/2-3), accessed July 14, 2022, <https://www.epa.oszk.hu/00000/00003/00025/boros.html>.

to symbolise the material and symbolic occupation of the territory. Lithuanian independence, achieved on March 11, 1990, not only led to the dismantling of the Soviet monumental repertoire, but also raised the problem of rearranging the imposing objects of the past. The corpus, consisting of more than eighty monuments, was not destroyed, as some had hoped, but ended up in Grūtas, on display to visitors in the form of a large theme park (fig. 6). Designed and built by the entrepreneur Viliūmas Malinauskas, in addition to the sculptures scattered in a kind of memory forest, the park contains a restaurant, a playground, a small museum, a mini zoo and some metonymic elements of the Gulag system. It can be said that Grūtas Park oscillates between a private collection and the site of memory, becoming the opposite of a sanctuary for the Soviet regime.

A similar fate has befallen the Hungarian Soviet monuments. After the fall of the communist regime in 1989, in 1991 it was decided to place all of the removed statues in an open-air museum near Budapest, called Memento Park. The park is a monumental space that speaks of tyranny and, simultaneously, as a site where it is permissible to speak of tyranny, it is a monument to democracy. It contains 42 statues depicting various communist leaders. Opposite the entrance is a replica of Stalin's Boots created in 2006 by Ákos Eleőd on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, during which the colossal statue of the dictator in Budapest's municipal park was knocked down from its pedestal and only its boots remained. It is difficult not to think of the much older image of a colossus that collapsed from its pedestal: the Colossus of Rhodes that Antonio Tempesta has depicted in its fallen state, with only its feet remaining on the pedestal. As Jakob writes, "the contradictions that led to the creation of this theme park are the same as the history that produced them. And the fact that a Soviet atmosphere oppresses the visitor,



**Fig. 6.** Statues of Communist Dictators in Grutas Park, Grutas, Lithuania, Wikimedia Commons, accessed on October 4, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gr%C5%ABtas\\_Park#/media/File:Gr%C5%ABto\\_parkas\\_-\\_Lenin.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gr%C5%ABtas_Park#/media/File:Gr%C5%ABto_parkas_-_Lenin.JPG).





Fig. 7. Statues of Communist Dictators in Memento Park, Budapest, Hungary, Wikimedia Commons, accessed on October 4, 2021, [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento\\_Park#/media/File:Monument\\_R%C3%A9publique\\_des\\_Conseils\\_Budapest.jpg](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_Park#/media/File:Monument_R%C3%A9publique_des_Conseils_Budapest.jpg).

even if he has just shown his tongue to Lenin or laughed at Stalin, expresses the historical spirit of an era in which totalitarian terror was the master.”<sup>20</sup> The monumental statues of communist propaganda that once intimidated observers with their size are today only a testimony of past glory. Ironically, communism has become the thematic subject for a flourishing industry of kitsch souvenirs, bordering on and even defying good taste, which feed the very capitalism that communism had intended to fight. The ambitious idea of saving these relics from the process of *damnatio memoriae* was very effective: it is in their appearance here, uprooted and solitary, that the giants of the past suffer the most burning defeat, precisely through those monuments that were supposed to transmit to posterity the eternity of their regime (fig. 7).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that the process of *damnatio memoriae*, which might appear as a “race to erase”, is in fact a re-appropriation of history, according to what Adrastos calls *creatio memoriae*.<sup>21</sup> Taking advantage of the *damnatio memoriae* desired for the defeated enemy, a liberated people create new values on which to base their future. Looking back at the past, at what the public monument represented at the time it was erected, the community comes to terms with the victors who previously wrote history and seeks the best way to ensure that the public monument represents a true *hypomnemata*, a useful device to help us understand what we have been and what we should no longer be. Collective memory, which needs tangible signs and concrete actions to subvert the wounds inflicted on society, still uses precise strategies: on the one hand, the irrational impetus to destroy that which no longer represents oneself; on the other, the reasoned strategies of remembrance, which warn about what is right or wrong.

<sup>20</sup> Jakob, “Grutas”.

<sup>21</sup> Adrastos Omissi, “Damnatio Memoriae or Creatio Memoriae? Memory Sanctions as Creative Processes in the Fourth Century AD,” *The Cambridge Classical Journal*, no. 62 (2016): 170–199.

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## THE ERECTION OF A ROYAL MONUMENT AS A CITY PLANNING OPPORTUNITY: THE MONUMENT TO KING ALEXANDER I AND PLEČNIK'S SOUTH SQUARE\*

### Abstract

*Shortly after the assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia (1934), a campaign was initiated in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana to erect a monument to the King, which, for various reasons, lasted six years. The most daring of the proposals was undoubtedly the 1937 project by the architect Jože Plečnik, who envisaged the construction of the so-called Alexander's Propylaea on the northern side of Kongresni trg (Congress Square). Behind them, a new public space – Južni trg (South Square) – would be developed to solve a number of contemporaneous urban planning problems. The architect's idea remained unrealised due to the opposition from a part of the public. The present contribution discusses Plečnik's plans for South Square, the circumstances of their creation and their fate, as well as their influence on the subsequent urban planning of Ljubljana's city centre.*

### INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918, when a significant part of today's Slovenia was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (after 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), represented a crucial turning point in the history of the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, which, with the establishment of the new state, finally acquired the role of the Slovenian political, cultural, and economic centre. The following two decades also had a major impact on the fields of architecture and urban planning, as the period was marked, among other things, by the work of the architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957), who became a professor at the newly established University of Ljubljana in 1921, after several decades of living in Vienna and Prague. Over the next twenty years, until World War II, he gradually transformed Ljubljana from an Austrian provincial city into the Slovenian capital through a multitude of architectural and urban planning interventions.<sup>1</sup>

\* Research for this article was conducted within the scope of the research programme *Art in Slovenia at a Cultural Crossroads* (P6-0061) and the research project *Bourgeois Art Commissions in Carniola and Styria in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (J6–3136). The author acknowledges the financial support from the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

<sup>1</sup> About Jože Plečnik, see Damjan Prelovšek, *Josef Plečnik 1872–1957. Architectura perennis* (Salzburg, Wien: Residenz Verlag, 1992) (revised Slovenian edition: Damjan Prelovšek, *Jože Plečnik. Arhitektura večnosti. Teme, metamorfoze, ideje* [Jože Plečnik. Architecture of Eternity. Themes, Metamorphoses, Ideas] (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2017); Peter Krečič, *Jože Plečnik* (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1992); Jörg Stabenow, *Jože Plečnik. Städtebau im Schatten der Moderne* [Jože Plečnik. Town Planning in the Shadow of Modernity] (Braunschweig, Wiesbaden: Vieweg, 1996); Tomáš Valena, *O Plečniku. Príspevki k preučevanju, interpretaciji in popularizaciji njegovega dela* [On Plečnik. Contributions on the Research, Interpretation, and Popularisation of his Oeuvre] (Celje: Celjska Mohorjeva družba, 2013).

## ALEXANDER'S PROPYLAEA AND SOUTH SQUARE

During the first Yugoslav state, headed by the former Serbian royal family of Karađorđević, two monuments to the rulers were erected in Ljubljana. It is not insignificant that both of them were erected after 1929, when dictatorship was imposed in Yugoslavia and unitarism became the official ideology, emphasising the idea of a single Yugoslav nation and persecuting national movements.<sup>2</sup> In 1931, an equestrian monument to King Peter I (King of Serbia 1903–1918, King of Yugoslavia 1918–1921) – the work of the Belgrade-based Slovenian sculptor Lojze Dolinar and architect Jože Plečnik – was unveiled in front of Ljubljana's City Hall.<sup>3</sup> However, the developments related to the erection of the monument to King Alexander I (King 1921–1934), which significantly influenced the cultural life of the second half of the 1930s and to which Plečnik also contributed his own ideas, are far more interesting in view of (re)designing the public space.

Shortly after the King's assassination by the members of Croatian and Macedonian nationalist organisations in Marseille on October 9, 1934, the Ljubljana city authorities, like those of other Yugoslav cities, decided to erect a monument to the late King. The initial discussions mainly focused on whether the monument should be an artistic installation or whether a social institution (e.g. a hospital) named after the King should be constructed. Consequently, the "monument campaign", which was presented to the public on December 1, 1934, on the anniversary of the establishment of Yugoslavia, and which attained an "all-Slovenian" character, envisaged the erection of royal monuments in Ljubljana and Maribor and the construction of a hospital named after the King.<sup>4</sup> The Committee for the erection of the monument to Knight-King Alexander I the Unifier, which first gathered on October 29, 1934, under the chairmanship of Ivan Hribar, the elder statesman of Slovenian politics, faced various dilemmas from the very beginning. In addition to selecting a suitable location and the difficulty of raising funds, the question of the monument's form soon arose. It was generally agreed that it had to be sculptural and preferably equestrian, although opposing views were also expressed. The debate was often heated, and the daily press often got involved.<sup>5</sup> In the first

2 See Peter Vodopivec, *Od Pohlinove slovnice do samostojne države. Slovenska zgodovina od konca 18. do konca 20. stoletja* [From Pohlin's Grammar to the Independent State. Slovenian History from the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2010), 192–209.

3 About the monument to King Peter I, see Špelca Čopič, *Javni spomeniki v slovenskem kiparstvu prve polovice 20. stoletja* [Public Monuments in Slovenian Sculpture of the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] (Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 2000), 131–133, 316–319; Renata Komić Marn, "Men on Horseback. Role and Reception of the Equestrian Monument in Slovenia," *Acta historiae artis Slovenica*, no. 18/2 (2013): 76–81.

4 France Stele, "Spomenik kralja Aleksandra I. Zedinitelja v Ljubljani" [Monument to King Alexander I the Unifier in Ljubljana], *Kronika slovenskih mest*, no. 7/3 (1940): 129. Only the Ljubljana monument was eventually realised: the Maribor monument was the subject of a competition, but World War II prevented its erection, while the idea of building a hospital was soon abandoned. About the Maribor monument, see Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 147–148, 358–361; Komić Marn, "Men on Horseback," 87.

5 Stele, "Spomenik kralja," 133–135; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 372–373; Komić Marn, "Men on Horseback," 82–83.



year of its activities, the Monument Committee proposed Zvezda park (Star Park) next to Kongresni trg (Congress Square) as a suitable location. To this end, the architect Herman Hus prepared a redevelopment plan that would have radically changed the appearance of the popular park, but the Committee nevertheless left the matter open and decided it would be subject to a public competition.<sup>6</sup> At the initiative of the Committee, the Architects' Club organised a consultation on the erection of the royal monument, which did not bear fruit. Therefore, the first public competition was launched between December 13, 1935, and February 23, 1936, though the monument's location had not yet been determined.<sup>7</sup> As far as can be seen from the extant sources, the competition focused more on the monument's location than the monument itself. From several proposals, the Monument Committee finally selected Congress Square, with the precise location to be determined later.<sup>8</sup>

The further course of events was considerably altered by Hribar's unexpected move when, ignoring the competition, he invited Plečnik to design the royal monument. On September 6, 1937, Plečnik submitted his plans for the monument, named Alexander's Propylaea, to the Committee free of charge.<sup>9</sup> The architect envisioned the monument on the northern edge of Congress Square. In his urban planning and architectural redesign of Ljubljana, Plečnik adhered to the idea of a land axis starting at his house in what was at the time still the suburb of Trnovo, crossing the river Gradaščica and continuing along Emonska cesta Street, past Križanke (the monastery of the Teutonic Order), along Vegova Street and, via Congress Square and Star Park, concluding at the newly planned square to the north of the park.<sup>10</sup> By creating a new square, which Plečnik had already considered before Hribar's invitation, the architect would have solved the pressing problem of the city's untidy courtyards, which, in his opinion, were hidden behind the façades. Simultaneously, Ljubljana would have gained a new traffic-free zone where citizens could gather, while the buildings that would have enclosed it could have been used as city offices.<sup>11</sup> The invitation to design the monument to Alexander I was thus a welcome opportunity for Plečnik to intervene in the development of that part of the city.

The architect envisioned Alexander's Propylaea to the east of the Kazina building (unknown architect, 1836–1837) in what was then the Kazina garden, located directly on the axis of the Vegova Street, which would conclude, through Star Park, in the square behind the Propylaea. The Propylaea would be built in the form of a portico with double columns. Twelve columns and

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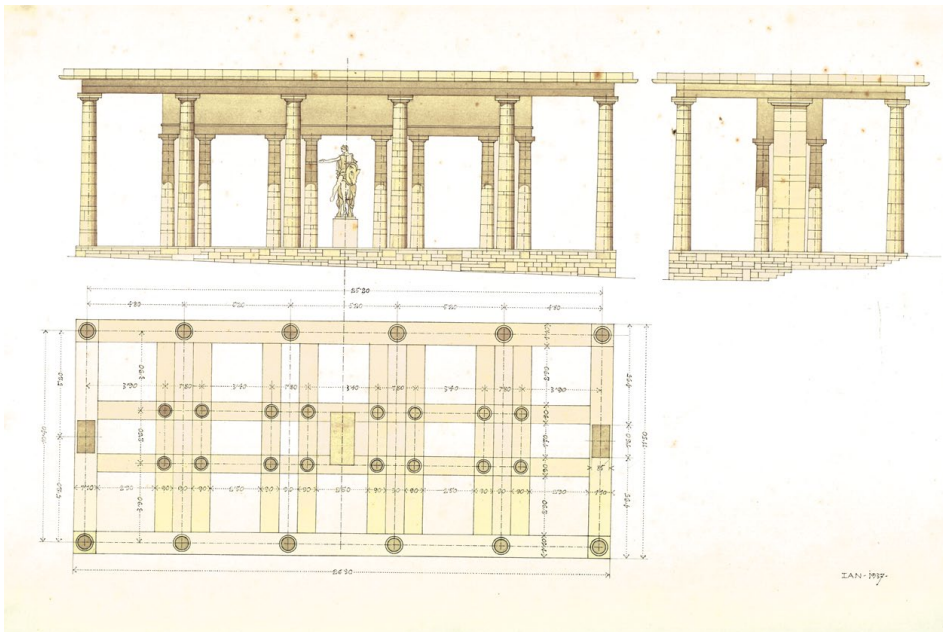
6 Stele, "Spomenik kralja," 135; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 372–373.

7 Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 374.

8 Stele, "Spomenik kralja," 135–137.

9 Ibid., 137; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 373. Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 238, states that Plečnik drew up the plans for Alexander's Propylaea between May 1936 and January 1937.

10 Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 205; see Breda Mihelič, *Urbanistični razvoj Ljubljane* [Urban Development of Ljubljana] (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, Partizanska knjiga, 1983), 13–14.



**Fig. 1.** Jože Plečnik, Design for the Alexander's Propylaea in Ljubljana, 1937, Plečnik Collection, Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana.

two piers – 7.5-metre-high, with a finely finished surface – would stand on the outside. The inside would consist of sixteen 5.5-metre-high columns, polished to the highest gloss (**fig. 1**). The outer columns would support a concrete, stone-clad architrave with a bronze inscription, while the inner columns would support a brick frieze set on the concrete architrave, bearing a fresco with the iconography of Yugoslav statehood, the work of the painter Slavko Pengov.<sup>12</sup> The interior ceiling would be coffered, with light fittings placed in individual coffers. According to the initial versions of the plan, Alexander's equestrian monument, the work of the sculptor Božo Pengov, would be located inside the propylaea.<sup>13</sup> However, according to the version that Plečnik submitted to the Committee, it would stand in front of them. The bronze monument was to have colossal dimensions: five metres high, with the horse standing on its hind legs and the King holding a sword.<sup>14</sup>

On both sides of the propylaea, visitors could climb a flight of stairs to reach the newly created public space, which the architect called Južni trg (South Square) because of the access from the south.<sup>15</sup> South Square would be a rectangular space measuring 45 x 107 metres, surrounded on the western, northern, and eastern sides by monumental buildings of a similar appearance, with ground floors opened by arcades. The western building would be constructed as an extension of the Kazina building, and its classicist façade would be retained. Meanwhile, the façade of the building constructed instead of the house at Congress Square 3 would share an almost identical look. On the northern side, the square would be connected via passageways to the nearby

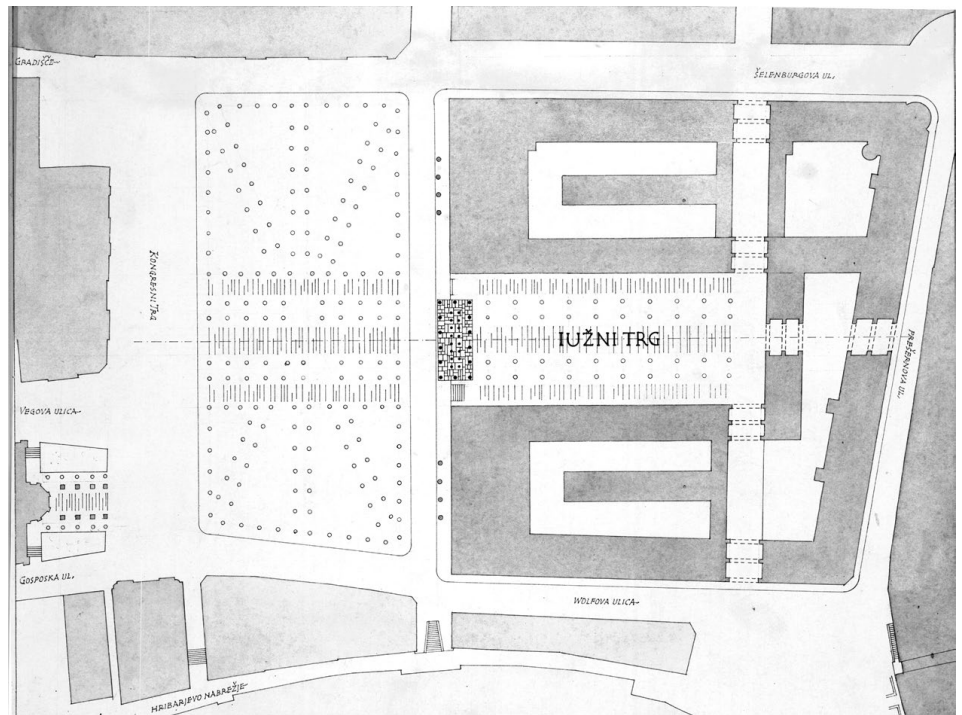
11 Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 237–238; Prelovšek, *Josef Plečnik*, 285–286; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 376–377.

12 Anton Stupica, "Aleksandrove propileje v Ljubljani" [Alexander's Propylaea in Ljubljana], *Slovenec*, September 26, 1937, 7; Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 238, 469, n. 352; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 377–378.

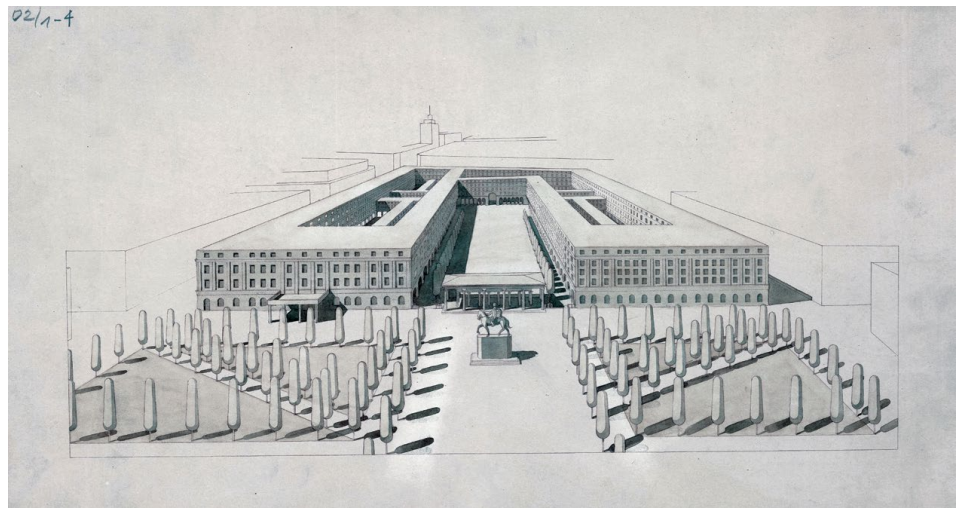
13 Stupica, "Aleksandrove propileje," 7; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 137.

14 Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 378.

**Fig. 2.** Jože Plečnik, Layout of the South Square in Ljubljana, 1937, Plečnik Collection, Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana.



**Fig. 3.** Jože Plečnik, Design for the South Square in Ljubljana, 1937, Historical Archives of Ljubljana.



Prešernova Street (now Čopova Street), Mary's Square (now Prešeren Square), Šelenburgova Street (now Slovenska cesta Street) and the planned extension of Knafljeva Street (now Tomšičeva Street) (fig. 2, fig. 3).<sup>16</sup> As mentioned above, the square itself would be closed to traffic and dedicated to the gathering of the citizens, further encouraged by commercial establishments and cafés under the arcades.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The architect had already been thinking about the layout of South Square at the end of the 1920s, when he drew up the general urban plan; see Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 237; Damjan Prelovšek, "Plečnikova vizija slovenske prestolnice" [Plečnik's Vision of the Slovenian Capital], in *Da ne pride v pogin in pozabljenje. Plečnikova vizija Ljubljane – slovenskih Aten. Arhitektov dar knjižnici*, ed. Veselin Mišković (Ljubljana: Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, 2007), 25.

<sup>16</sup> Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 376–377.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 377. Plečnik's associate in designing Alexander's Propylaea and South Square was his graduate Marjan Tepina; see Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 237.

The shape of the square with buildings on three sides and arcades on the ground floor makes it somewhat reminiscent of the Uffizi complex in Florence (Giorgio Vasari, begun in 1560). Although extant sources do not contain any explicit references to Plečnik finding inspiration for his design there, it is known that he visited the Uffizi several times while he resided in Florence between December 1898 and January 1899 as part of his study tour of Italy and France.<sup>18</sup> When redesigning Ljubljana, Plečnik would also often draw on the ideas and urban planning principles of Max Fabiani, an architect from the earlier generation who played an essential role in the restoration of Ljubljana after the 1895 earthquake. In this sense, the unrealised South Square can be seen as a dialogue with Fabiani's Slovenski trg (Slovenian Square, nowadays Miklošič Park), designed in 1899, which is also distinguished by its stylistically unified buildings.<sup>19</sup>

The project of South Square with Alexander's Propylaea was therefore distinctly multifaceted. Due to its predominantly architectural rather than sculptural design, the monument to the King represented a distinct innovation compared to the rest of Ljubljana's public monuments.<sup>20</sup> However, at the same time, it had the most pronounced Yugoslav (rather than Slovenian) connotation of all Plečnik's creations. The envisioned South Square would enrich Ljubljana with an effective architectural and urban planning solution, providing citizens with an important meeting place. New connections would be established between Congress Square and the adjacent streets and the Municipality would gain premises for its offices, while the project in its entirety would represent a meaningful enhancement and completion of the architect's land axis.

Plečnik's project provoked both positive and negative reactions. Its advocates, who stressed the originality of the plan and its contribution to the city's image, included mainly architects<sup>21</sup> and art historians,<sup>22</sup> but it also had

18 About Plečnik's study stay in Florence, see France Stele, *Arhitekt Jože Plečnik v Italiji 1898–1899* [Architect Jože Plečnik in Italy 1898–1899] (Ljubljana: Slovenska Matica, 1967), 44–89, 95–99.

19 Fabiani's idea for Slovenian Square was only partially realised. On Slovenian Square, see Marco Pozzetto, *Max Fabiani. Ein Architekt der Monarchie* [Max Fabiani. The Architect of the Monarchy] (Wien: Edition Tusch, 1983), 39; Marko Pozzetto, *Maks Fabiani. Vizije prostora* [Max Fabiani. Visions of Space] (Kranj: L. I. B. R. A., 1997), 123; Jelka Pirkovič and Breda Mihelič, *Secesijska arhitektura v Sloveniji* [Art Nouveau Architecture in Slovenia] (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za kulturo, Uprava Republike Slovenije za kulturno dediščino, 1997), 47–48; Andrej Hrausky, Janez Koželj, and Miran Kambič, *Maks Fabiani. Dunaj, Ljubljana, Trst* [Max Fabiani. Vienna, Ljubljana, Trieste] (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2010), 108–111.

20 To a lesser extent, Plečnik realised the idea of an architectural monument in the so-called Zois Pyramid, which was erected in 1927 in the eponymous street in memory of the enlightened entrepreneur and patron of the arts Žiga Zois; see Prelovšek, *Josef Plečnik*, 281; Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 208–209.

21 Dušan Grabrijan, "Spomenik kralju Aleksandru v Ljubljani" [Monument to King Alexander I in Ljubljana], *Slovenec*, August 19, 1938, 3, reprinted in: Dušan Grabrijan, *Plečnik in njegova šola* [Plečnik and His School] (Maribor: Obzorja, 1968), 147–153; Marjan Tepina, "Ljubljana in kraljev spomenik" [Ljubljana and the King's Monument], *Slovenec*, October 13, 1938, 5; Božo Gvardjančič, "Vprašanje spomenika kralja Aleksandra" [The Question of the Monument to King Alexander], *Slovenec*, November 29, 1938, 3; Marjan Mušič, "Še h kraljevemu spomeniku v Ljubljani" [More on King's Monument in Ljubljana], *Slovenec*, November 13, 1938, 9.

22 Stele, "Spomenik kralja," 138; Stane Mikuž, "Po razstavi osnutkov za kraljevi spomenik" [After the Exhibition of the King's Monument Designs], *Slovenec*, February 12, 1939, 9.

23 Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 373.



supporters in the municipal leadership. Its critics, however, mainly subscribed to the idea that only a sculptural monument – especially an equestrian one – was suitable for the King, while many also found the South Square idea problematic from the financial point of view, despite the assurances of Mayor Juro Adlešič that the Square’s construction would be completed within three years.<sup>23</sup> The atmosphere was further inflamed by the opposition of the sculptors who, fearing for their own profits, sent two protest notes to the Committee for the erection of the monument on September 28 and October 25, 1937, which were also published in the newspapers.<sup>24</sup> Based on these objections, on October 1, 1937, the Committee rejected Plečnik’s plans for Alexander’s Propylaea by a roll-call vote, thus burying the South Square idea. After a series of complications and disputes between the City and the Monument Committee, in which even the Royal Ban’s Administration had to intervene by appointing a new Committee, a second public competition was held between October 16, 1938, and January 16, 1939. This time, first place was awarded to a project by the sculptor Tine Kos and the architect Miro Kos, but the Monument Committee eventually selected the project by Lojze Dolinar and Herman Hus, which had received second place.<sup>25</sup> The traditionally designed equestrian monument erected on the northern side of Star Park, the largest in Slovenian history,<sup>26</sup> was unveiled on 6 September 1940 in the presence of King Peter II and Prince Paul. It adorned Ljubljana for only ten months, as it was removed by the Italian occupiers on 25 July 1941.<sup>27</sup>

## THE FAR-REACHING NATURE OF THE SOUTH SQUARE IDEA

Despite the failure of Plečnik’s project, the idea of a square north of Star Park, surrounded by buildings on three sides, was much more far-reaching than it first appeared. The architect’s students expressed their regret about the outcome of the events in several newspaper articles and advocated for the realisation of the project,<sup>28</sup> while the idea of South Square – at least in the plans of the leading Slovenian architects – remained relevant for decades after the end of the First Yugoslavia.

In the years leading up to World War II, new tendencies emerged in Ljubljana’s urban planning. In 1940, the City of Ljubljana launched a competition for the city’s regulation plan.<sup>29</sup> Several younger architects with rather daring solutions

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> For more details about these events, see Stele, “Spomenik kralja,” 138–141; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 373–374. For the presentation of the proposals, submitted for the competition, see Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 138–140.

<sup>26</sup> The monument was 10.8 metres high and stood on a four-metre-high pedestal. See Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 370; Komič Marn, “Men on Horseback,” 84.

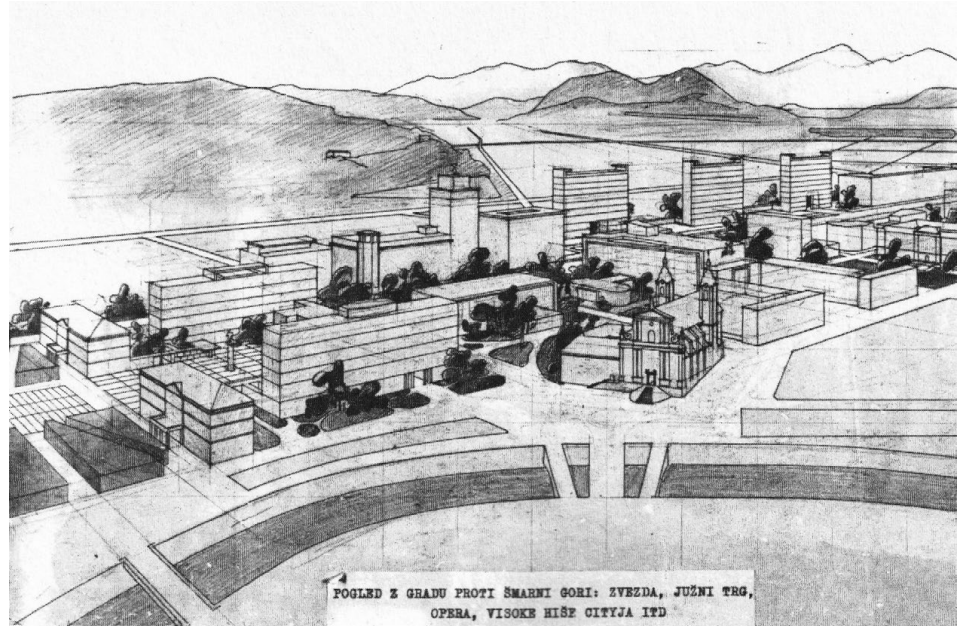
<sup>27</sup> Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 370; Komič Marn, “Men on Horseback,” 84, 86, n. 84.

<sup>28</sup> See note 22 above.

<sup>29</sup> About the competition, see Mihelič, *Urbanistični razvoj*, 18–21; Stabenow, *Jože Plečnik*, 90–93. The competition was based on the Yugoslav Building Act, adopted in 1931, which required that a regulatory plan should be drawn up for each city.



**Fig. 4.** Edvard Ravnikar, Design for the City Centre of Ljubljana, 1940, from Karl Friedrich Gollmann, *Edvard Ravnikar. Bauten und Projekte. Die Fortsetzung einer mitteleuropäischen Architekturtradition* (Wien, Graz: Neuer Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2005), 54.



also entered the competition, including Edvard Ravnikar (1907–1993), Plečnik’s student who had worked in Le Corbusier’s office for three and a half months in 1939.<sup>30</sup> Ravnikar, who became one of the leading Slovenian architects after the war, submitted an urban plan for the city centre, designed in accordance with the principles of the CIAM *Charter of Athens*. His plan would have radically changed the image of the city centre by removing most of the older structures and replacing them with functionalist buildings, without regard to the existing street network. In the broader area of Congress Square, the architect intended to preserve Star Park and the Kazina building, which, as Plečnik had already envisaged, would receive its counterpart with the same architectural design on the eastern side (on the site of the building at Congress Square 3). Between them, South Square would occupy the width of a section in Star Park but would not be “closed” by the propylaea. Like Plečnik’s square, Ravnikar’s square would have extended to today’s Čopova Street, where, according to the architect’s plans, most of the buildings were to be demolished. However, he conceived the enclosing of the square in a completely different way from his teacher, with the eastern and western sides almost entirely occupied by two longitudinally designed six-storey buildings (i. e. taller than the Kazina building), which would form a spatial accent and would be – in the spirit of Le Corbusier’s principles – placed on pilotis (**fig. 4**).<sup>31</sup> Despite Ravnikar’s deliberate denial of the previous

30 About Edvard Ravnikar, see France Ivanšek and Marta Ivanšek, “Fragments for Edvard Ravnikar / Fragments for Edvard Ravnikar’s Curriculum Vitae,” in *Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar 1907–1993*, ed. France Ivanšek (Ljubljana: self-published, 1995), 14–30. On the issue related to specifying when Ravnikar resided in Paris, see Bogo Zupančič, *Plečnikovi študenti in drugi jugoslovanski arhitekti v Le Corbusierjevem ateljeju* [Plečnik’s Students and Other Yugoslav Architects in Le Corbusier’s Atelier] (Ljubljana: Muzej za arhitekturo in oblikovanje, KUD Polis, 2017), 44–45.

31 About the plan, see Karl Friedrich Gollmann, *Edvard Ravnikar. Bauten und Projekte. Die Fortsetzung einer mitteleuropäischen Architekturtradition* [Edvard Ravnikar. Buildings and Projects. The Continuation of the Central European Architectural Tradition] (Wien, Graz: Neuer Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2005), 54–55; Mihelič, *Urbanistični razvoj*, 19–20; see Zupančič, *Plečnikovi študenti*, 104.

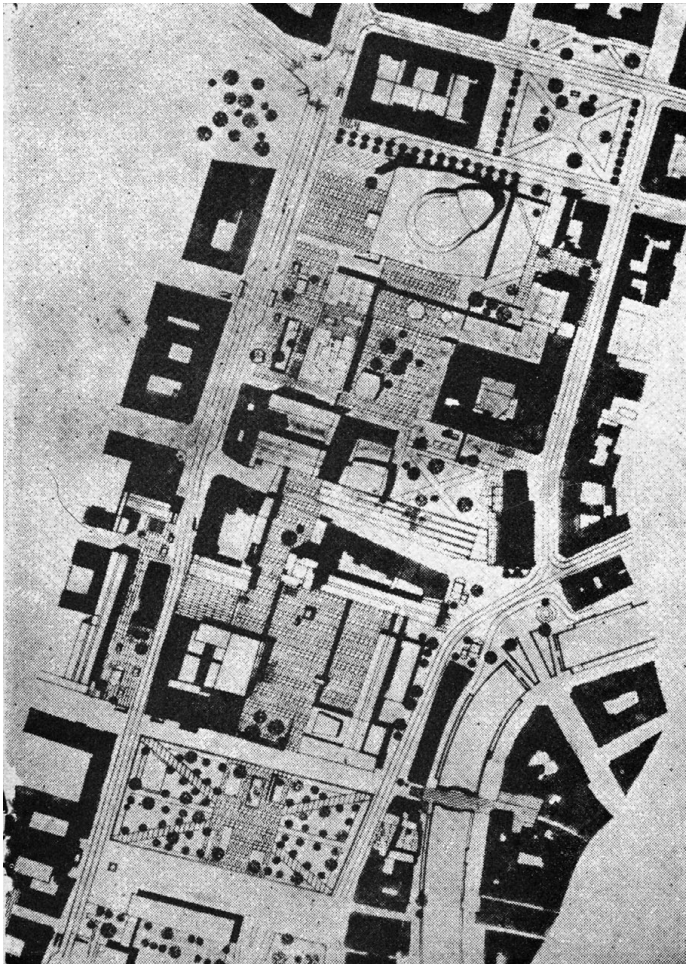


Fig. 5. Edvard Ravnikar, Regulation Plan for the Northern Part of the City Centre of Ljubljana, 1957, from Breda Mihelič, *Urbanistični razvoj Ljubljane* (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, Partizanska knjiga, 1983), 56.

urban design of Ljubljana, his thoroughly modernist plan nevertheless retained some of his teacher's elements, including South Square, which shows the far-reaching nature, sensibility, and quality of Plečnik's idea. The proposed plan was never adopted or implemented, but it did get Ravnikar a job at the city's building office.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the failure of the idea of Alexander's Propylaea and the new, more functionalist views of the municipal leadership, Plečnik did not stop making plans for this part of the city. In 1939, i.e. even before the erection of Dolinar's monument, he planned a lower triumphal arch, enlarged with two side wings, on the site of Alexander's Propylaea, which shows that he had not yet given up on the idea of South Square.<sup>33</sup> During World War II, in 1944, he began to design the Odeon building, a "music house" with several concert halls. It would occupy the entire eastern side of Congress Square, extending to Dvorni trg (Court Square) and the river Ljubljanica. However, since it would cut off the connection between Wolfova Street, which was the main traffic route at the time, and Gosposka Street, Plečnik intended to extend the existing Vegova Street through Star Park to South Square, where it would break off at the north-east corner and conclude at today's Prešeren Square. To

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this end, the architect sacrificed the envisioned eastern side of South Square, and while the space would retain its rectangular shape, it would nevertheless lose its completeness and, above all, become congested with traffic.<sup>34</sup>

At the turn of the decade from the 1950s to the 1960s, the tendency towards a thorough "architectural modernisation" of a part of Ljubljana's city centre became more prominent than ever. In this regard, we should mention the 1957 public competition for the layout of the northern part of the city centre, in which Edvard Ravnikar also participated. His plan, which also remained unrealised, considered this area of the city as a sequence of squares (without additional streets) intended for pedestrians only, and in this sense yet again envisaged the creation of South Square as an extension of Congress Square (fig. 5).<sup>35</sup>

32 Mihelič, *Urbanistični razvoj*, 20; Ivanšek and Ivanšek, "Fragmenti," 16; Gollmann, *Edvard Ravnikar*, 54.

33 The plan published in: France Stelè, Josip Plečnik, *Napori* [Efforts] (Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1955), CXXXVI. Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 238, 360, states, without citing a source, that after the war, Plečnik wanted to offer the abovementioned triumphal arch as a monument to the heroic Ljubljana and that the post-war authorities supposedly envisioned it in Congress Square.

34 About Odeon, see Stelè and Plečnik, *Napori*, XXVI–XXIX; Krečič, *Jože Plečnik*, 342–343; Prelovšek, "Plečnikova vizija," 24–25. About Plečnik's interwar traffic regulation plans, see Stabenow, *Jože Plečnik*, 93–95.

35 Mihelič, *Urbanistični razvoj*, 43–44.



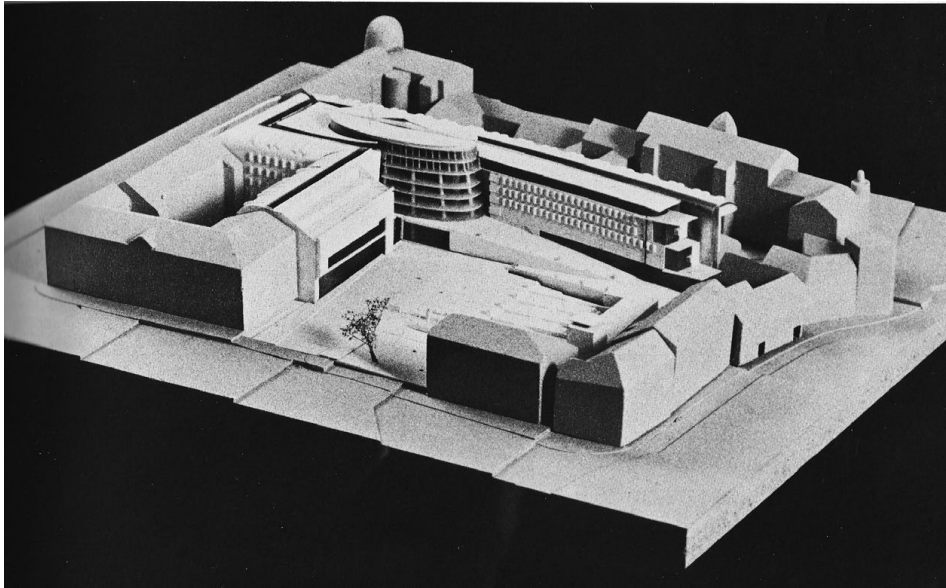


Fig. 6. Boris Podrecca, Model of the South Square with a Hotel, 1989, in: *Sinteza*, no. 87–90 (1991): 27.

Most recently, the development of South Square was considered in 1989, when what was then the Municipality of Ljubljana-Centre launched a competition for the development of South Square where a hotel of the highest category was foreseen. This was one of the last high-profile public competitions in Ljubljana during the Yugoslav era. The planning of the hotel and simultaneous development of South Square undoubtedly posed a particular challenge, as it was clear that the creation of the square according to Plečnik's ideas and on such a large scale would call for extensive demolition works and would therefore not be feasible.<sup>36</sup> The winner of the competition, the Vienna-based Slovenian architect Boris Podrecca, managed to combine the two requirements thoughtfully and innovatively (fig. 6), while some other contestants also contributed interesting solutions. However, as ambitious as they were, the plans once again remained unrealised.

The area that Plečnik envisaged for South Square remained undeveloped until 2017, when the *Monument to the Victims of All Wars*, designed by architect Rok Žnidaršič and his colleagues, was erected in its southern part, next to the Kazina building. From the artistic point of view, the monument is of inferior quality and consists of two vertical concrete slabs, different in shape but identical in height and volume, connected by a shared ground-bearing slab. Both the professional and general public opposed it already at the time of its construction. Above all, it represented a blow to Plečnik's urban planning idea, which could, at least in its basic points, still be realised in the future (e.g. in the sense of the 1989 competition), thus giving Ljubljana a new and exciting public space of superior architectural and urbanistic quality.<sup>37</sup>

36 Gojko Zupan, "Štirje natečaji za Ljubljano" [Four Competitions for Ljubljana], *Sinteza*, no. 87–90 (1991): 25–35.

37 "Spomenik žrtvam vseh vojn" [Monument to the Victims of All Wars], *LC Team*, no. 9 (2017–2018): 50–53.

## CONCLUSION

Jože Plečnik saw the invitation to design a monument to King Alexander I as an opportunity for the urban redevelopment of the area north of Congress Square, which would have provided the city with a new public space and made a considerable contribution to the quality of life in the city. Although individual interests and the opposition of a part of the public prevented its realisation, the South Square idea continued to appear in the plans for the city centre until the end of the 1980s. This alone demonstrates its exceptional rationality and timelessness, as the “metamorphoses” of Plečnik’s plan prove that South Square would have retained their architectural quality even if the ruler’s monument had been removed.





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## MONUMENTALISM: SCULPTURAL MEANS OF INTERWAR POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN HUNGARY

**Keywords:** 'Roman School', sculpture, political representation, monumentalism, interwar period

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### Abstract

*At the time of political realignment after the Great War, the representational strategies of newly born states also changed. Due to its geopolitical status, Hungary as a receiver state in a political and cultural sense intentionally turned to Italy as a reference from the 1920s both in political and aesthetic matters. As a result, Tibor Gerevich, one of the most notable figures of cultural politics during the Horthy regime, endeavored to create a new Hungarian art relying on contemporary Italian tendencies. During their scholarships, the artists of the 'Roman School,' inspired by artifacts of previous eras, forged a new style for the modern visual representation of the Hungarian Catholic Church and the state. Sculpture, which in many ways is more vulnerable to authoritarian systems than other forms of art, can plastically reveal the self-image of a regime. This might help to answer the following question: Why did Hungary fail to establish a truly modern form of political representation, compared to Italy?*

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### INTRODUCTION

Hungary's development of the sculpture of political representation between the two World Wars is closely associated with the millennial anniversary of the founding of the Hungarian state, the Great War, and the consequences of the latter's conclusion for Hungary, in particular the territorial reduction that resulted from the Treaty of Trianon. The monuments that are linked to these events operate with 'traditional' symbols that the establishment could easily adapt for its goals of legitimation, and to illustrate its aspirations in foreign and domestic policy. However, questions of how and why specific symbols were preferred are related to the orientation of Hungary's foreign policy, and even though the source of influence is not exclusive, its significance justifies closer analysis.

Even if one knows barely about the history of Hungary at the time, observing public space reveals an unusual feature that correctly illustrates Hungarian history during this period. The unfortunate historical events predetermined the topics of public sculpture, and the power necessarily turned to the glorious moments and persons of Hungarian history. The members of the political establishment after the Great War and of the short-lived Hungarian

Soviet Republic had started their lives and careers in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and thus unsurprisingly had ties to the aesthetics of political representation of the Habsburg era, including suspicion toward any modernist and avant-garde approaches that openly opposed the *ancien régime*. Therefore, their hesitant practices of representation became eclectic, and, at least in the beginning, stylistically incoherent. In the following, I will discuss how this hesitant political representation in sculpture unfolded, and what events and ideas prevented the consolidation of a coherent aesthetic perspective and its realization in public space.

## **MILLENNIAL FESTIVITIES AND THE GREAT WAR: PRELUDE TO SCULPTURAL INTERWAR POLITICAL REPRESENTATION**

In 1896, millennium festivities took place across the Hungarian Kingdom celebrating the conquest and acquisition of land in 896 – the historical origin of the presence of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. The nationwide celebration witnessed not only numerous exhibitions, concerts, and, in a ritualistic sense, different occasions of gatherings, but also newly erected monuments that referred to the ancient Hungarians and the continuity between the conquerors and their heirs of the time. The most iconic among these architectural and sculptural artifacts is the one built on the Square of Heroes in the heart of Budapest, though it was finalized only in 1906. It is worth consideration as a millennial monument because it contains nearly all the main elements that provide an iconographic basis for the monuments to forthcoming events and political regimes: the ancient Hungarian chieftains of the seven tribes, the state founder St. Stephen, and all the significant kings and persons that a political system would proudly refer to as means of legitimacy. Naturally, the widely spread iconography visualized on the monuments to the millennium resulted in a fixed concept for the “institutionalized remembrance” that appeared not long after the outbreak of World War I and manifested in different types of statues that can be grouped by their figures.<sup>1</sup> Before getting to World War I monuments – which, though they started to appear before the war’s end in 1918, only proliferated in significant quantities all across the country after 1920 – it is important to mention the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic and its attitude towards the already-existing monuments from the Habsburg era and its political representation in the public space. During its existence between March 21 and August 1, 1919, the socialist state intended to radically break not just with the previous political establishment, but with the existing artistic canons as well. From our point of view, the most spectacular gesture

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<sup>1</sup> Örs Somfay, “Az I. világháború magyar vonatkozású köztéri, valamint közösségi hősi emlékei és ezek adatbázisa” [World War I Hungarian-related Public Art and Community Memories of the Heroic, and Their Database] (PhD diss., Pázmány Péter Catholic University, 2014), 117.

that captures this discontinuity happened during the festivities of International Workers' Day on May 1<sup>st</sup>: The state covered the statues and monuments of the preceding regime with red shrouds, including the above-mentioned millennial monument, and applied different Communist slogans, symbols and insignias to them.<sup>2</sup> The iconography of the memorials for the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 and of the millennial monuments anticipate the iconography of World War I memorials; this iconography was expanded with further innovations after 1920.<sup>3</sup> The prewar iconography included hussars and significant politicians who achieved partial independence from the Habsburg dynasty, which resulted in the dualist system of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy after the Compromise of 1867. Iconography after the war, however, involved not only these figures, but also some ancient symbols and attributes from the pre-Christian history of Hungarians. This iconographic concept of the World War I memorials unfolded according to the symbolic structure of the developing *civil religion*, whose complex elements connected significant figures from the past to the heroes of the present, and lifted earthly events to mythical altitudes.<sup>4</sup> The idea that wartime sufferings were legitimated as a result of divine chosenness and as an ordeal from God appears on memorials using symbols from the salvation history and the cult of the Virgin Mary. The figure holding the fallen soldier on the Pietà-compositions can appear as the Virgin Mary with the Hungarian Holy Crown, as the *Patrona Hungariæ*, a pagan foremother from the time of the Carpathian Basin's conquest, or as another soldier – and we also see combinations of these types.

About twenty years after the millennial festivities, totemistic ancestors and historical figures from pre-Christian times began to be highlighted on monuments in order to strengthen the construction of a national self-image, and to connect it with the Hungarian nation's origins. This group's most common elements are the *turul*, a mythical bird more or less similar to a hawk or falcon; the obscure attribute of the Hunnic-Hungarian origin myth, the *Sword of God*, which was Attila the Hun's legendary weapon, said to render its bearer invincible; and the great figures of Hungarian prehistory. These conquering leaders, chieftains, and their descendants are given prominent roles on World War I memorials, which depict the archetypes of Hungarian martial virtue in later ages, so that the connection between the fallen soldiers and the Hungarian past becomes evident. In this context, the pagan antecedents, similar to the Virgin Mary, appear as protectors of the Hungarian nation,

2 Emese Révész, "A múltat végképp eltörölni" [May the Past Be Swallowed Up at Last], *Artmagazin*, no. 56. (2013): 8–11.

3 Miklós Szabó, "A magyar történelmi mitológia az első világháborús emlékműveken" [Hungarian Historical Mythology on the Monuments of the First World War], in *Monumentumok az első háborúból*, eds. Ákos Kovács, and Néray Katalin (Budapest: Népművelési Intézet – Műcsarnok, 1985), 56–73.

4 Elemér Hankiss, "Nemzetvallás" [Civil Religion], in *Monumentumok az első háborúból*, eds. Kovács, Katalin, 36–48.

although their identification is not always an easy task. Of course, the ancient heroes and canonized saints who destroyed their enemies, such as Hercules or Saint George, could not be left out of the World War I monuments' allegories, but going beyond the war memorials, they should also be seen as more serious references for the representation of power.

## **AFFINITIES AND CHOICES OF THE CULTURAL POLICY IN THE HORTHY REGIME: TIBOR GEREVICH AND THE BIRTH OF THE 'ROMAN SCHOOL'**

The period after the Great War and the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, from 1920 until 1944, was named after the regent, and thus the supreme political dignitary of the state, Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya. The state, which had been shrunk to one-third of its former territory and was severely deprived of both material and intellectual resources, witnessed a collapse in its room for maneuvering in foreign policy. For Count Kunó Klebelsberg, one of the most decisive cultural politicians of the Horthy era, escape from isolation could be achieved through a revival of Hungary's scientific and cultural life. From our point of view, his most important accomplishment was the reopening of Hungarian cultural institutes abroad and the establishment of new ones, with which he intended to emphasize Hungary's cultural supremacy in the region. However, it also served to support the governing power's stability by providing elite domestic training and the construction of a useful system of relations for territorial revisionist efforts. The reacquisition of the Collegium Hungaricum in Rome by the Hungarian state was brought about by the art historian Tibor Gerevich (1882–1954), who, thanks to his extensive Italian connections, rhetorical skill, and diplomatic abilities, became a key figure in the deepening of relations between the two countries.<sup>5</sup>

Gerevich's claim for the creation of modern Hungarian art can be approached through the synthesis of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance traditions, as well as a form of realism that avoids details, and the adaptable achievements of the avant-garde, which had often been the subject of sharp criticism.<sup>6</sup> His intention of renewing ecclesiastical art can already be detected in his early programmatic statements, which in fact even then meant reforming the entirety of Hungarian art. He criticized Impressionism for its materiality, omission of content, and analytical approach, among other things, and he expected Hungarian art to give birth to a "calm monumentality expressing inner experiences."<sup>7</sup> It is important to emphasize that Gerevich's critique of Impressionism – and the avant-garde

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5 See also Gábor Ujváry, *A harmincharmadik nemzedék* [The Thirty-Third Generation] (Budapest: Ráció Kiadó, 2010).

6 See Julianna P. Szűcs, *A római iskola* [The Roman School] (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1987).

7 Tibor Gerevich, "Egyházművészetünk jövője" [The Future of Our Ecclesiastical Art], *Magyar Iparművészet*, no. 1 (1920): 27–31.

more generally – was not merely aesthetic in nature. For him, these artistic tendencies were also the embodiment of the regime’s ideological opponents due to the cosmopolitanism and Leftism of the artists and their supporters. At the same time, he acknowledged and praised the anti-academic aspirations and innovations of the avant-garde because he believed that their radicalism was a necessary condition for the renewal of art, which in his opinion had first been realized in Mussolini’s Italy.<sup>8</sup> It must be also highlighted that Gerevich’s visions would have been ignored if Klebelsberg, despite his admittedly old-fashioned taste in arts, had not respected Gerevich’s authority of knowledge and proficiency regarding questions of art, and supported him in realizing his ideas. However, from the 1930s forward the state increasingly reduced the budget of foreign academies partly due to the global economic crisis, while structural changes also took place. Klebelsberg dismissed Gerevich from his directorial duties in 1930 to be able to focus on his curatorial position, but after Klebelsberg died in 1932, the new Minister of Religion and Education, Bálint Hóman terminated the curatorship of the academies in 1935. Despite these structural changes and limited financial means, Gerevich’s authority remained intact and he was able to continue his art-organizing activities.<sup>9</sup> In his plans for the founding of his school, Rome played the role that Munich or Paris did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century among Hungarian artists who wished to study abroad. The first artists who received a scholarship in 1928 went to Rome by invitation or on the recommendation of their masters. There were no exact methods to determine how the scholarships were awarded: Whether the apprentices applied or their masters recommended them, Gerevich alone made the decision in the end. There were certainly some exceptional instances in the selection process as well, for example in the case of the painter Pál C. Molnár. The young artist applied for an exhibition dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi but the jury ruled out his painting and deposited it with other artworks. Gerevich, as director of the Collegium Hungaricum in Rome and also as government commissioner and holder of different political and cultural titles, asked the jury to show him the rejected artworks, as a result of which he retrieved Molnár’s painting and invited him to join the first group of scholarship recipients.

Initially, there were four sculptors: Dezső Erdey, Ernő Jálics, Lívia Kuzmik, and Pál Pátzay. Their art was deeply rooted in antiquity and in the most influential classicist sculptor of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Adolf von Hildebrand, and his perception of relationship between architecture and sculpture.<sup>10</sup> During the following years, further artists in the scholarship program, as well as others

8 Tibor Gerevich, “A modern olasz művészet” [Modern Italian Art], *Magyar Szemle*, no. 5–8 (1929): 236–243.

9 Gábor Ujváry, “Amikor a kultúra a politika fölé kerekedett...” [When Culture Took Over Politics...], *Európai Utas*, no. 19. (2008): 74–82.

10 Adolf von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der Bildenden Kunst* [The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture] (Straßburg, 1893).



outside of the program but still connected to Gerevich and the ‘Roman School’, contributed to the wide range of sculptural approaches which will be discussed in the following section. These undoubtedly talented artists each represented different trends, which suggests that Gerevich also sought pluralism in addition to creating a unified artistic direction. The heterogeneous approaches of the artists can be viewed from various perspectives. They individually differed in their aesthetic tastes and choices of references, and their susceptibility to applying techniques of historical styles could be described as almost accidental. Accordingly, Gerevich could send these talented artists to Rome to let them improve in their own way to fulfill the upcoming tasks that awaited them. Depending on the surrounding environment, a sculptor interested and trained in, for instance, the gothic style could accomplish works in a stylistically similar milieu. Putting aside this practical point of view, perhaps a more important interpretation comes into sight. Because of recent historical events and the geopolitical status of Hungary – isolation in foreign politics, revisionist efforts, the will to demonstrate intellectual supremacy in the region, etc. – the state aimed to demonstrate the country’s commitment to the West, on which it counted for recognition of the legitimacy of its revisionist efforts. The claim that contemporary Hungary was the true heir of antiquity (Pannonia in the Roman Empire), the political and military power of medieval times (the kings of the Árpád dynasty) and the erudition of Renaissance (King Matthias Corvinus and his Venetian connections) was supported by adopting historical styles in modern art, which could be interpreted as a form of strategic pluralism by choice.

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## SCULPTURE OF THE ‘ROMAN SCHOOL’

To reveal the essence of the idea above discussed and illustrate its claims in practice, it is important to present the sculpture of the ‘Roman School’ through the artists and some of their significant works. Perhaps one of the most iconic pieces of the ‘Roman School’, and definitely Pátzay’s most famous statue, is his *Monument to the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussar Regiment* (**fig. 1**) that was erected in Székesfehérvár in 1939.<sup>11</sup> The contemporary press praised both its vigorous and naturalistic depiction of an “idealized type of horse of a certain breed” and the way the naked hero dissolves the right angle between the animal and himself with his right arm swinging backward.<sup>12</sup> Abandoning certain details (e.g. horse tack), the artist rather emphasizes large surfaces and shapes. The horse’s steady gallop and its disciplined, dynamic bearing of the rider together strengthen the statue’s monumentality and the sacredness of the occupied space. The freshness of this conception of sculpture and its spatial and urbanistic aspects are also an exemplary fulfillment of the task of the ‘Roman School’ in mobilizing society. In

11 The 10<sup>th</sup> Imperial and Royal Hussar Regiment existed between 1741–1918. The officers and three squadrons of the regiment comprised a formation known as the Hussars of Fehérvár.

12 Ervin Ybl, “Pátzay Pál művészete” [Art of Pál, Pátzay], *Szépművészet*, no. 7 (1942): 169–174.



**Fig. 1.** Pál Pátzay, *Monument to the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussar Regiment*, 1939, Székesfehérvár, © Department of Sculptures and Medals, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

this respect, Pátzay states: "... a monument depicting an ideal image of society or an idea that moves societies can only be displayed using the large-scale tempers and proportions of monumentality. Of course, it also requires an architecturally assigned placement worthy of its significance. Without a sense of elevated fervor, there is no monumentality. The pathos leads to a synthetic vision, as well as the form which is created out of the grasp of the essential to a large-scale simplicity."<sup>13</sup>

Under the influence of his master István Szentgyörgyi, Dezső Erdey, who is considered a conservative among the artists of the 'Roman School', started his career on the path of Hildebrand's classicism and then gained inspiration by turning to antiquity and the Renaissance during his stay in Italy. Among his public works, the plans for tombs and wells are particularly important in his oeuvre, underlining the importance of his already characteristic architectural approach. Similarly, Erdey's friend, Ernő Jályics, turned to the Gothic style after his stay in Italy. Although he produced his first

significant sculpture, the *Monument to the 44th Infantry Regiment*, in 1932,<sup>14</sup> after his Roman scholarship, the ancient theme of Hercules and the lion of Nemea, and its style show the artist's ability to adapt to the demands of his clients.<sup>15</sup> The artist created his slender, suggestive ecclesiastical works of art based on the forms of Gothic sculptures (*Gothic*, 1930s; *St. Rita*, ca. 1938; **fig. 2**), but if, for example, the Neo-Renaissance environment of the Basilica of St. Stephen required adaptation, he turned to his experience in Italy for inspiration in the making of the relief of the *Coronation of St. Stephen* (1938).

<sup>13</sup> Pál Pátzay, *Alkotás és szemlélet* [Creation and Approach] (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1967), 90, translation by author.

<sup>14</sup> The 44th Infantry Regiment existed between 1744 and 1918. Somogy County and a part of Tolna County belonged to them, and from 1860 one of the regiment's battalions formed the garrison of Kaposvár. Ernő Jályics fought as a reserve lieutenant of the regiment in World War I.

<sup>15</sup> The figure of Hercules, who is struggling with the lion of Nemea, was modeled after the wrestler József Sugár, but according to other sources, circus wrestler Zsigmond Czája was the model.



**Fig. 2.** Ernő Jályics, *Gothic*, 1930s, © Department of Sculptures and Medals, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

If Pátzay represents the classicizing sculptors of the ‘Roman School’, Béla Ohmann was the most widely-employed sculptor of the archaizing artists. However, he is in many ways the odd one out. First of all, he was not a recipient of the Roman scholarship; he could not have been due to his age and because, at the time of the first class, Ohmann was already an accomplished sculptor in the Neo-Baroque and eclectic styles. Nevertheless – or perhaps precisely because he had a few years of extra experience – he was one of the busiest artists in Gerevich’s course, and he was able to master and apply what he saw during his German, French, and Italian study tours in the 1920s. The fact that Ohmann was not a recipient of the Roman scholarship, yet exhibited regularly with artists of the ‘Roman School’ at international exhibitions (e.g. at the Venice Biennales in 1940 and 1942, and the world exposition in Paris in 1937) and was frequently employed as a sculptor on important constructions of the time, justifies describing him as a significant artist of the ‘Roman School’. In addition, it is difficult to grasp a concrete direction in his art because the sculptures that can be attributed to him with certainty point in different directions due to the demands of the space and the intentions of his clients. Considering the chronology of his statues, we must conclude that from 1930 onwards the Neo-Baroque no longer haunted him, and the forms of the Romanesque and Gothic styles and the possibility of their renewal, as well as antiquity, became a starting point for his works.<sup>16</sup>

It is not a coincidence that at the beginning of the ‘Roman School’, painting received remarkably greater emphasis than sculpture. This shows, on the one hand, Gerevich’s preference, and on the other suggests the needs of cultural policy at the time and the abilities of the artists who served it. According to this view, the possibility of renewing ecclesiastical art and mobilizing society was seen in mural painting, and not by chance: While the competition between the various trends and -isms in the international art scene had a fruitful effect on Hungarian painters, and certain innovations seemed applicable to the ecclesiastical and state orders, in terms of sculpture this rebirth was yet to come. Although fresh ideas also appeared in the works of the sculptors discussed above, in general, they were hardly able to break away from Hildebrand-esque classicization, with one or two exceptions. This was also due to the barrier represented by the public’s rather conservative

<sup>16</sup> László Prohászka, “Ohmann Béla életműve” [The Oeuvre of Béla Ohmann], *Új Forrás*, no. 7 (2008): 75–92.





**Fig. 3.** Zoltán Borberek Kovács, *Navy*, 1934,  
© Department of Sculptures and Medals,  
Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

taste. In this regard, it is a remarkable development that in the 1930–1931 class we can already find more sculptors among the artists whose art goes beyond the expected direction, such as in the case of the exceptional Tibor Vilt (*The Thinker*, 1936). Some of these artists boldly turned toward inspirations that later contradicted their earlier wishes. The following artists can be classified among the new generation of sculptors of the ‘Roman School’: András Dózsa-Farkas with his manner of large-scale neoclassicism (*Statue of the Hungarian Resurrection*, 1935); the Egyptianizing sculpture of László Mészáros (*Standing Worker*, circa 1930); János Pándi-Kiss, who started his career in Italy and worked there for fourteen years (*Construction*, 1940–42); and from the later scholarship recipients Károly Antal (*Coronation of St. Stephen*, 1938), Zoltán Borberek Kovács (*Shepherd Boy with Cow*, 1936), Jenő Grantner (*Science and Art*, 1939), József Ispánki (*St. Stephen and Gisela*, 1938), and Jenő Kerényi (*Károly Markó the Elder*, 1941), who together represented the post-Gerevich era and broke away from a preference for smooth surfaces and classical themes in their art. The reasons for this change are mainly to be found in the organizational transformation of the Collegium Hungaricum in Rome: Tibor Gerevich was relieved of his position as director in 1930,<sup>17</sup> and then in 1936 as a curator, bringing the era to an end.<sup>18</sup> The criteria of the new generation of sculptors changed, thanks to their ‘leaderlessness’, the guidelines that were previously decisive in their art loosened, and other conceptions were added to their relatively uniform

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aspirations. In this change, theme and form interacted: The smoothness of the sculpture’s surface was increasingly replaced by a shaping that emphasized materiality, which made it possible to amplify the social-critical connotations behind the increasingly frequent depictions of workers and peasants, as well as the masculine and raw illustration of the Hungarians’ Turanian origins. The art of Zoltán Borberek Kovács offers a striking combination of these two trends. The painter who shortly thereafter became a sculptor dealt with social issues from the beginning, and almost involuntarily created “Hungarian types” in his works.<sup>19</sup> The *Navy* (1934) appears before us as a strong worker who is ready for action, his block-like figure free from all solemnity, yet heroic (**fig. 3**). Borberek worked with clear forms, and his composition is characterized

17 Béla Zsolt Szakács, “Gerevich Tibor (1882–1954),” *Enigma*, no. 47 (2006): 188.

18 Szücs, *A római iskola*, 95.

19 László L. Menyhért, *Borberek Kovács Zoltán* (Budapest: Képzőművészeti Kiadó, 1986), 11.



Fig. 4. Béla Ohmann, Árpád, 1938, © Department of Sculptures and Medals, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

by a simple and natural tectonic approach, mostly reflected in his *Self-Portrait* made from artificial stone (ca. 1933), which can be also viewed as a contemporary sculptural example of the “ancient Hungarian phenotype.”<sup>20</sup>

Although Béla Ohmann’s statues of *Árpád* and *St. Stephen* (1938) in the Székesfehérvár town hall show a modern orchestration of early medieval features, in this case, we should emphasize the appearance of Turanian racial characteristics (fig. 4): robust facial structure, slit-cut eyes, rugged facial hair, and sometimes stylized Oriental ornamentation. This departure from the dominant themes and styles of the 1900s behind is not an isolated case, and above all, it is not accidental. Just as with the culmination of the results of the large-scale archaeological projects of the time, the St. Stephen’s Memorial Year of 1938 was a caesura in the life of the ‘Roman School’ as well. As Julianna P. Szűcs argues, it can also be interpreted as the cessation of the complex concept of the ‘Roman School’ and the beginning of its disintegration.<sup>21</sup> In its expression of historical continuity, the sculptural idiom necessarily reached out toward the Romanesque – and more and more boldly toward the Byzantine – instances of foreshadowing which, combined with the display of the Hungarians’ anthropological features, created a ‘St. Stephen’s style’, differing from the previous ‘Roman style’. Compared to the artists who received the Roman scholarship, the sculptors of the previous generation such as Béla Ohmann and Ferenc Sidló, who was eight years older, were able to adapt to the course’s archaic and ‘Turanizing’ needs, armed with their academic qualifications and experiences of the 20th century’s -isms.<sup>22</sup> Sidló’s equestrian statue of *St. Stephen* (1938) is a representative

example of this endeavor, of which he stated: “I wanted to depict the ancient Hungarian St. Stephen with this work: the conqueror, the nation-builder, an immortal expression of strength and foresight.”<sup>23</sup>

## HUNGARIAN REFLECTIONS ON MODERN ITALIAN SCULPTURE

Although the rationale behind the Hungarian artists’ apprenticeship in Rome was to create modern Hungarian art, which could be considered a political

20 Zoltán Vitéz Nagy, “Borbereki Kovács Zoltán,” *Szépművészet*, no. 4. (1942): 85–87.

21 Szűcs, *A római iskola*, 110.

22 Both Béla Ohmann and Ferenc Sidló were disciples of Lajos Mátrai. Besides antiquity, the effect of Art Nouveau can be felt in both of their early works.

23 Ferenc Sidló, “Sidló Ferenc Szent István szobrát Hóman miniszterrel az élen elfogadta a szoborbizottság” [Ferenc Sidló’s statue of St. Stephen was approved by the sculpture committee with Minister Hóman at the helm], *Az Est*, March 11, 1937, 3.



gesture, and even though Tibor Gerevich's aim behind the establishment of the scholarship was to follow Italian endeavors, if we look at the artworks produced in the program's first year, we find that they were inspired 'only' by artworks of the recent past. At that time, six years after the March on Rome, sculptural works that did not display the more or less successful results of Hildebrand-esque classicism or Impressionist experiments in imitation of Rodin likewise appeared as isolated phenomena in Italy. To put it more simply: Modernism in the representation of power in both Italy and Hungary had not yet arrived in the late 1920s. Gerevich's sharpest-eyed student, the art historian István Genthon, necessarily had to choose from the works of sculptors born around 1875 in his 1932 overview of modern Italian sculpture.<sup>24</sup> The sculptural designs of buildings (such as those of the Central Railway Station in Milan, which is at least as eclectic as it is grandiose) so far only bore witness to the blending of the extroverted decorativeness of late Art Nouveau with historical fragments. Myriad World War I memorials were still spreading across the country as classicist reminiscences of realistic military depictions and allegories at the time, and in the field of small sculptures in general, nothing could have been added to Genthon's article. The technique of Ermenegildo Luppi's *Visions of the Past* (1913) and *Without the Sun* (1914) is clearly impressionistic, and the Monument of Monte Berico in 1921 spoils the architectural foundation with its disproportionate masses; the lawyer Antonio Maraini, with his strict editing (*Motherhood*, 1920), his symmetrical compositions (*The Kiss*, 1921), his reliefs, and his one-sided works (*Family Portrait*, 1919) shows the influence of Hildebrand; and although Libero Andreotti was a French-educated sculptor, this influence was already nourished by the art of the generation after Rodin, as well as Bourdelle's heroism (*The Great Warrior*, 1898-1900; *Hercules the Archer*, 1909). The grace of Joseph Bernard's art (e.g. *Dressing Girl*, 1914) may have contributed to the success of Andreotti's art, which was otherwise deeply influenced by the Italian Renaissance (*Roncade Monument*, ca. 1922; *Saronno Monument*, 1923; *Cherry Picker*, 1919).

However, when the young generation of sculptors of the two countries had been commissioned for the first time by the state, municipalities, and the Roman Catholic Church, their paths separated, a process in which the two states' political systems and the differences between their centers of power and their consolidation played a major role. While the civil religion of Fascism was a *state religion* that was not moderated even by the Lateran Convention, and can be considered a tactical concordat rather than a serious declaration of religious commitment, Catholicism was a determining factor of the Horthy era in Hungary. In this way, the difference between the cultural policies of the two countries – the reference and the receiver – and the difference between

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24 István Genthon, "Új olasz szobrászat" [The New Italian Sculpture], *Budapesti Szemle*, no. 658 (1932): 274–295.

their artistic products can be revealed. The veterans of World War I, including those assault squadrons called *arditi*, were of great importance in the myth of Fascist Italy's origins. It follows that the cult of heroism was not only for the memory of the fallen soldiers (as was the case in Hungary), but also appeared in the political narrative as an allegory for the birth of the new state. Belief in the state's omnipotence caused a significant proportion of the sculptural products to display a sacralized profane theme, a phenomenon that was only further reinforced by Futurism's combatant behavior, which was, in turn, elevated almost to the rank of state art: masculinity, strength, glorification of work, sports, the aesthetics of the human body, and optimism. In Hungary, on the other hand, the modern representation of power went in a completely different direction. Gerevich envisioned the new art school on the foundations of ecclesiastical art's renewal, and, strangely, Catholicism was more supportive of this than the state was in its own profane representation. While the works of Italian artists were thematically oriented towards the recent past – the Fascist takeover – the present, and even more so to the future, the majority of Hungarians presented to society the great historical figures of the past, saints, mementos of significant historical events, and tragedies. Instead of the vision of *what will be*, the rhetoric of *what had been* prevailed.

432 The Hungarian artists who arrived in Italy in the second half of the 1930s could see much more that was being realized in accordance with the ideas of Fascist architecture, as well as applied and monumental sculpture. However, their results could no longer be fully utilized in Hungary due to the thematic framework provided by the World Eucharistic Congress and the St. Stephen's Memorial Year of 1938, and then due to the outbreak of World War II. The profane theme according to which sculptural display was supported by Fascist Italy from the beginning, and which had served as a reference for Hungarian artists, would return only after 1945 in the works of the artists of the 'Roman School' and their disciples, who took advantage of their experiences in the previous regime in order to make use of them in socialist realism.

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the tragic closure of the Great War for the Hungarian Kingdom, as well as the short-lived but shocking Communist dictatorship, evidently directed public sculpture toward the glorious past with an atmosphere of bittersweet nostalgia. This historical feature, combined with the rather conservative attitude of society toward the arts, hesitated to support a massive artistic direction in public space akin to that in Italy at the time – while the Roman Catholic Church seemed to be more progressive in its own representation – and fatally determined the destiny of aspirations such as those of the 'Roman School'. On one hand, the stylistic wayfinding of the 'Roman School' in the beginning was necessary, and the limited permissiveness of Gerevich could be interpreted as somewhat liberal thinking. On the other

hand, trying to match the possible stylistic choices in sculpture (Romanesque, Renaissance-like, etc.) with the rather modernist, but still homogenous architecture of the time made it impossible to shape public space in order to illustrate the characteristics of a regime with a determined aesthetic vision. Naturally, the global financial crisis and later World War II made it even harder to articulate any artistic visions in public space. Either way, in the vortex of history the Horthy regime failed to create an image of itself that would last as long as any political establishment would wish.



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## TRAUMA AND IDENTITY: MEDIALISATION AND CONSTRUCT

### Abstract

*This text focuses on the connection between socialist modernism in Croatia during the Yugoslav period and contemporary art's references to the ideological and formal aspects of socialist modernism and its historical revisionism. The central example and first case-study is the competition for the partisan monument with a memorial park on Petrova Gora (opened in 1982 after two competitions for the project of the monument held in 1971 and 1974). The second case-study is David Maljković's trilogy of video and video installations, *Scene for a New Heritage* (2004–2006) on the subject of the monument's (on Petrova Gora) de-ideologized form, here considered as purely aesthetic form. My intention is to analyse two connected case studies, from two different periods of art. Partisan symbolic production has become 'culture and art' once historical events have released it from its social and historical contexts.*

### INTRODUCTION

Henri Lefebvre's key concept of the modern city is that of space as a concrete abstraction: architecture plays the role of a technical setting for the ideological image that space is the substitute for the monumentality of the ancient world.<sup>1</sup> Art, architectural and urban projects in ex-Yugoslavia are often highly valorised heritage that could be the trigger for urban or national identification, or regional collaboration, such as in the case of the exhibition *The Concrete Utopia, 1948–1980* in MoMA New York in 2018.<sup>2</sup> In contemporary art, modernism, understood as 'multiply modernities' including socialist modernism, is often subject to anthropological or sociological mapping as well as archiving, according to Hal Foster's definition of the artist "as Ethnographer" and the "ethnographic turn" in contemporary art.<sup>3</sup> In their work, contemporary artists often refer to (or exploit) the legacy of modernity and modernism, which is an approach called "modernology" by Sabine Breitwieser,<sup>4</sup> by adding a dimension of meta-

1 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 232.

2 Curators: Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić. The exhibition "introduces the exceptional work of socialist Yugoslavia's leading architects to an international audience, highlighting a significant yet thus-far understudied body of modernist architecture, whose forward-thinking contributions still resonate today." It explores "themes of large-scale urbanization, technology in everyday life, consumerism, monuments and memorialization, and the global reach of Yugoslav architecture." "Toward a Concrete Utopia Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980," MoMA, accessed October 20, 2021, <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3931>.

3 Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?," in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1995), 302–309.

4 Sabine Breitwieser, ed., "Modernologies (Contemporary Artists Researching Modernity and Modernism)," exhibition catalogue (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona), 2009.



language or meta-discourse of a work of art in the context of contemporary art production. Modernology refers to attempts at re-evaluating and revitalising the project of modernity and modernism in contemporary art. Beginning with Michel Foucault's and Gilles Deleuze's understanding of modernity as an approach to the present that can be adopted in any period whatsoever – the notion that modernism “should not be interpreted as a historical epoch between a kind of archaic premodernism and an uncertain postmodernism”<sup>5</sup> – many contemporary artworks and exhibitions “demonstrate the relevance of modernity and modernism for our own time, not as historical developments but as the unfulfilled possibility of our relationship to the present.”<sup>6</sup> This is certainly the case in Croatia.

Igor Zabel, a Slovenian art historian and curator and theorist of contemporary art, explained the “retro-principle” as a working method, in way that we can connect with “modernology”: “‘Retro-principle’ implies not only the use of already given forms and models for new needs, but also a conscious political position on which this appropriation is based.”<sup>7</sup> As already mentioned, some examples of Croatian modernist fine art, architecture and urban projects, and intermedia, are often highly valorised heritage. Its actual problems are the following: inversion of the symbolic language of an artwork, especially public art and in particular memorial sculpture; technological obsolescence; and, valuation of modernist heritage as a non-priority for restoration are the causes for the deteriorated state of emblematic socialist architecture.

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In contemporary mapping and criticism of modernity, the leitmotifs of modernism were “production of space,”<sup>8</sup> the architectural space and the social and political space in conflict and harmony at the same time, or the conflicts and correspondences between the architectural space of modernity and the social and political space; and the concept of a “universal language” in the form of abstract symbols and forms. Many contemporary artists exhibit ambivalence and seek (attempt) to develop new readings of the rhetoric of modernity, to document and archive the concomitant grammar of modernism, its conditions, constraints, and consequences – by means of a critical reflection, mapping narratives, alternative points of view, lines of conflict, and unresolved contradictions of modernity, both modernism's ideology and modernism as a socio-political movement aspiring to cultivate (create) a universal language in the form of abstract aesthetic symbols and forms. The main elements of modernism were born out of general efforts to create a more egalitarian society,

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5 Karel Císař, “Modernology: Art after Postmodern Art,” in *Between the First and Second Modernity. 1985–2012*, eds. Jiří Ševčík and Edith Jeřábková (Praha: Vědecko-výzkumné pracoviště, 2011), 65. All translations are by the author.

6 Ibid., 49.

7 Igor Zabel is connecting it with “retro-gardism” (“retro-avant-gardism”) as the ideological position of the Laibach Kunst. Igor Zabel, “Art and State: From Modernism to the Retroavantgarde,” in *Essays I* (Ljubljana: Založba, 2006), 319.

8 Henri Lefebvre moves from metaphysical and ideological considerations of the meaning of space to its experience in the everyday life of home and city, claiming “the right to the city.”

and today this is a starting point for theoretical, artistic and political critiques of the contemporary ideological conjuncture. Contemporary artists in Croatia during the last fifteen years often use strategies of mapping, documenting, and archiving the topics of the National Liberation War during World War II: antifascism, revolution, and international conflict. Yugoslavian or socialist modernity expressed a consistent political trust in geometry and technology as imperative components in the development of the new state.

In my research on contemporary art that refers to the modern art and architecture legacy in Croatia, I seek to identify key controversies related to its symbolising of values and continuity. To quote Vojin Bakić: “After 1945, all of us artists faced the very important task of recreating the abundance of themes and subjects from our recent history of the National Liberation and also from contemporary life. In doing so, we were supposed to avoid all formalistic playing around with the matter, and even all imitation of previous forms and models: we were to invent a new form, a higher and better form that would be adequate for our new man and the time in which we lived.”<sup>9</sup>

Considering that the cultural policy of Yugoslavia since the mid-1970s was moving in the direction of ‘re-ideologization’, i.e., realisation of the ideological goals of the socialist state by using high modernist art and contemporary popular-cultural forms, a space for critical questioning of relations between art and ideology began to open only at the end of the 1980s, and above all through the subversive activities of retro- or neo-avant-garde art. The term “retro-avant-garde” refers to heterogeneous work of artists working in late socialist and post-socialist contexts, from late 1980s to 1990s, aiming “to produce visions and embody the topography of the time loop of the present as ‘the tomorrow’s past’.”<sup>10</sup> It is a “presentational device” developed around the notions of copying or reproducing an already existing visual repertory, as a specific system for ‘displaying’ the art of the past and linked “on the one hand to the notions of disappearance, effacement and death, on the other to criticism, or even negation of the historical process.”<sup>11</sup> Following the end of Yugoslavia (in early 1990s) and the apparent and also formal abolition of socialism, first there were no significant shifts in the direction of critical analysis of relationships between ideologies and artistic practices of socialism. Croatia’s independence and abandonment of the socialist socioeconomic order happened along with a pronounced emphasis on the national state and Christian heritage, as well as with a reimagination of elements of the Croatian cultural and artistic tradition, as usually occurred during transitional processes or radical changes/shifts in dominant social, economic and ideological paradigms.

9 Vojin Bakić, excerpt from the interview “Glasam za narod, glasam za škole” [I Vote for the People, I Vote for Schools], 1950, published on page 45 in publication that has been released on the occasion of the Vojin Bakić exhibition at the Grazer Kunstverein, “Apstrakcija i simboli” [Abstraction and Symbols], held from June 4 to August 24, 2008, curated by What, How & for Whom / WHW and Ana Bakić. It was a somewhat modified version of Vojin Bakić’s exhibition in the Gallery Nova in 2007. Publisher: Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, 1970.

10 Juliane Debeusscher, “Retroavangarde: Vertiginous Forms of Representation,” Irwin, accessed October 20, 2021, <https://www.irwin-nsk.org/texts/retroavangarde-vertiginous-forms-of-representation/>.

## ARCHITECTURE OF THE MONUMENT ON PETROVA GORA

Giorgio Agamben perceives architectural practices as formations of the relations of power (his term *dispositivo* is derived from the juxtaposition or the interpenetration of relations of power, for example, through governmentality, and relations of knowledge [discursive and non-discursive ones], which perceives art practices as formations of the relations of power)<sup>12</sup> and in modernity, the aesthetic dimension is constitutively linked to the abstraction of artefacts from the concrete social and historical context in which they not only emerged but also had a very specific function. Although its purpose was the politicisation of culture:

... Partisan symbolic production is now more accessible to us because it is no longer involved in the dominant ideology. (...) In this view, the anti-fascist symbolic production has once again become relevant because it has finally found its way to where it actually belongs, to the sphere of culture, and to the field of art, after having initially served the propaganda purposes of the People's Liberation Struggle and after having later, in socialism, been kept prisoner by the official ideology of domination.<sup>13</sup>

438 An emblematic architectural monument on Petrova Gora ("Peter's Hill" in Croatian) is an example of a big national project suffused with the ideological symbolism of antifascism and socialist utopia. Many similar monuments had already been built and were shown in Yugoslavia's pavilion at the Venice Biennale 1980. Presented there were large partisan monuments which were actually modernist landscape sculptures, erected on locations with historical memory – commemorating victories in battles, mass murders in lost battles and massive executions of civilians. As such, these monuments "produced the basic elements of a social structure in which fascism would no longer be possible."<sup>14</sup> Two were made by Vojin Bakić (1915–1992) who is today: "... perceived as an 'authentic' modernist sculptor, the main figure of the break with socialist realism who forged the paths for abstraction and freedom of artistic expression in the 1950s, and on the other, as a 'state artist' in service to socialist ideology. Bakić is highly acclaimed in official art histories, yet his monuments to the anti-fascist struggle were devastated and destroyed in the heat of the nationalism and anticommunism of the 90s."<sup>15</sup>

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11 Ibid.

12 Giorgio Agamben, *Che cos'è un dispositivo?* [What Is an Apparatus?] (Roma: Nottetempo, 2006), 5–6. Agamben's concept of an apparatus was first mentioned here, with English edition *What is an Apparatus? (and Other Essays)*, 2009.

13 Rastko Močnik, "The Partisan Symbolic Politics," *Slavica tergestina*, vol. 17 (2016): 20–21.

14 Ibid., 25.

15 WHW [curatorial collective What, How and for Whom], "Revisiting Modernism," *Galerija nova newspapers*, no. 17 (2006): 3. Special issue on the occasion of the exhibition Retired Compositions by David Maljković ([https://www.whw.hr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/novine-17-david-maljkovic-retired-compositions\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.whw.hr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/novine-17-david-maljkovic-retired-compositions_compressed.pdf)).

Igor Zabel stated that from the 1950s onwards, there was a particular symbiosis in Yugoslavia between modernist art and the party-and-state apparatus (I would add: after Miroslav Krleža's speech on October 5, 1952, at the Congress of writers in Ljubljana, when he connected socialist realism with Stalinism), which not only tolerated and even supported modernist artists, but often used modernism for its own public image. As Zabel wrote, in the 1960s in Yugoslavia "... modernism was not only supported by the party-and-state apparatus; it was accepted as its own visual style. (...) As early as the 1950s, not only socialist realism but any academic realistic tradition became outdated in monumental sculpture. In this kind of sculpture, the 1950s can be seen as a transitional period from the realist models of around 1950 to modernist figurative and abstract models of around 1960."<sup>16</sup>

The General Yugoslav Anonymous Tender for the design concept of the monument and memorial park and centre dedicated to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija in the Second World War on Veliki Petrovac, the highest peak of *Petrova Gora* and close to the site of the partisan hospital, was issued in 1970 by the eminent Fund for Landscaping of Petrova Gora Memorial Park through the Croatian Architects' Association, the Croatian Association of Artists, and the Union of Croatian Town Planning Associations.<sup>17</sup> The 15-member jury of the tender was presided by Lieutenant General Rade Bulat, engineer, and included art historian Vera Horvat-Pintarić, architects Neven Šegvić and Josip Seissel (who was also a painter), sculptor Vanja Radauš, painter Zlatko Prica, and writer Mirko Božić. The competition program was an important step forward with regards to previous memorial concepts. It was requested that the object should also have a utilitarian function, i.e. that, in addition to a monument with symbolic meaning, there should also be a museum and a viewpoint with all the necessary accompanying facilities. Thus, the synthesis of architecture, sculpture and signs with the desired meaning was a precedent in the concept of monuments not only in the former Yugoslavia but also on a global scale. In principle, it could be compared only with the project of the Monument to the Third International or Tatlin's Tower. Furthermore, and in contrast to previous practice, this program marked the first time that other important historical events were also mentioned as a component of the site's meaning, apart from the National Liberation Struggle. In this case, for example:

The significance and value of Petrova Gora completes the memory of the fateful the Battle of Gvozd<sup>18</sup> in 1097, in which Croatia lost its independent state due to the death of its leader Petar Svačić. (...) Croatian statehood was re-established on the same territory

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16 Zabel, "Art and State, From Modernism to the Retroavantgarde," 324.

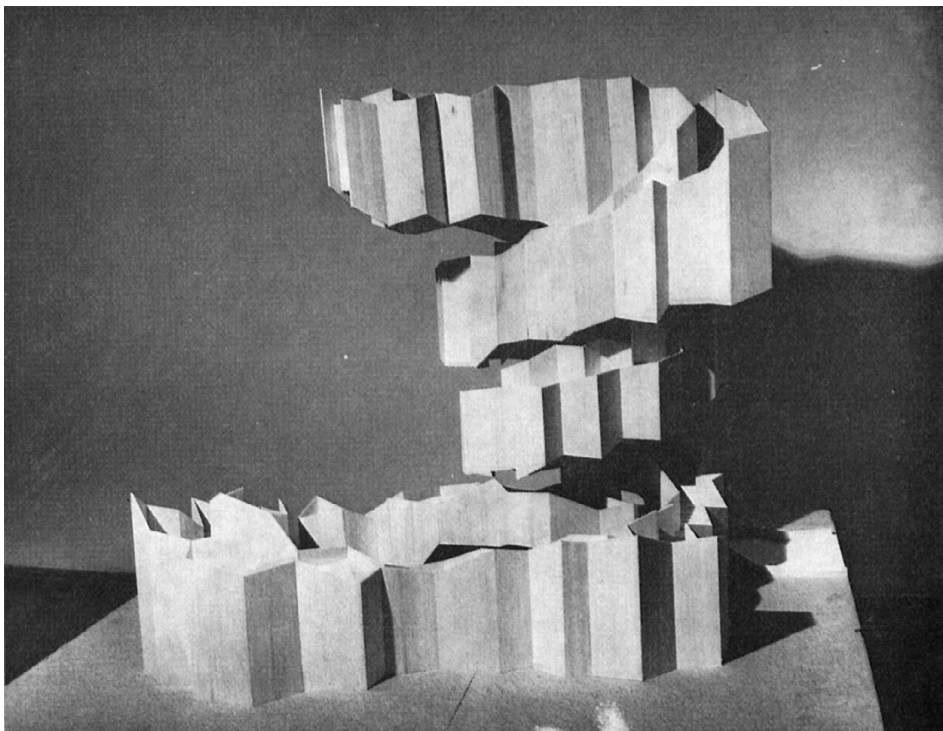
17 The General plan of the Petrova Gora memorial park was created already in 1969.

18 As it was called in the past. It is situated in the central part of Croatia.

by the state-making decisions adopted by the Third session of ZAVNOH,<sup>19</sup> resolutions of which are incorporated into the constitutional and legal foundation of the modern Republic of Croatia, in Topusko in 1944.<sup>20</sup>

That same narrow geographical area therefore has a special symbolic meaning. The program of the competition was created in the general atmosphere of the Croatian Spring.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, it was written in the tender: "The area of Petrova Gora was a scene of intense fighting with the Turks. (...) Therefore, taking into account its role throughout history, (...) Petrova Gora symbolizes the struggle of the people."<sup>22</sup>

This is how the second aspect of the synthesis was outlined, in which different meanings of the burdensome historical, including temporally distant events, are united into a general sense of the historical continuity of the human struggle for freedom. It was above all a semantic problem, how to present the human history through the form of the monument. In addition to the above, it was requested that the monument should be "maximum integrated into the landscape."<sup>23</sup>



**Fig. 1.** Igor Toš, the architectural concept design of the monument at Petrovac, First Prize at the general Yugoslav anonymous tender of 1971. Collaborator: Tumor Čevogđjav, student of architecture; model: Ivica Susović, mechanical engineering student (listed were also the author of the light for the photography, the author of the budget, and a technical collaborator). Photography of the model: Petar Keleminčić, in: *Čovjek i prostor*, vol. 222, no. 9 (1971), 17.

19 The State Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia, commonly abbreviated ZAVNOH, was the chief political representative body in World War II Axis-occupied Croatia.

20 Igor Toš in an interview with Silva Kalčić, held in Zagreb in 2019.

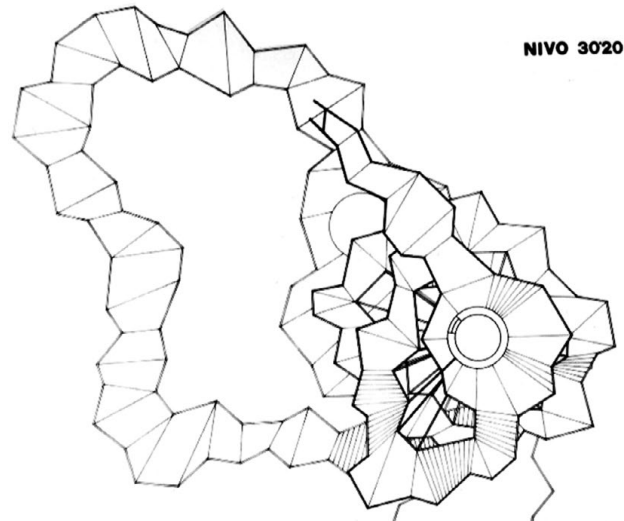
21 The Croatian Spring refers to a political conflict that took place from 1967 to 1971 in the Socialist Republic of Croatia, at the time part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Eventually, the Croatian Spring was accused of economic nationalism and suppressed.

22 Igor Toš in an interview with Silva Kalčić, held in Zagreb in 2019. Toš emigrated to (then Western) Germany after the second competition.

23 Ibid.



Fig. 2. Igor Toš, Layout of the architectural concept design of the monument at Petrovac, 1971. From the archive of Igor Toš.

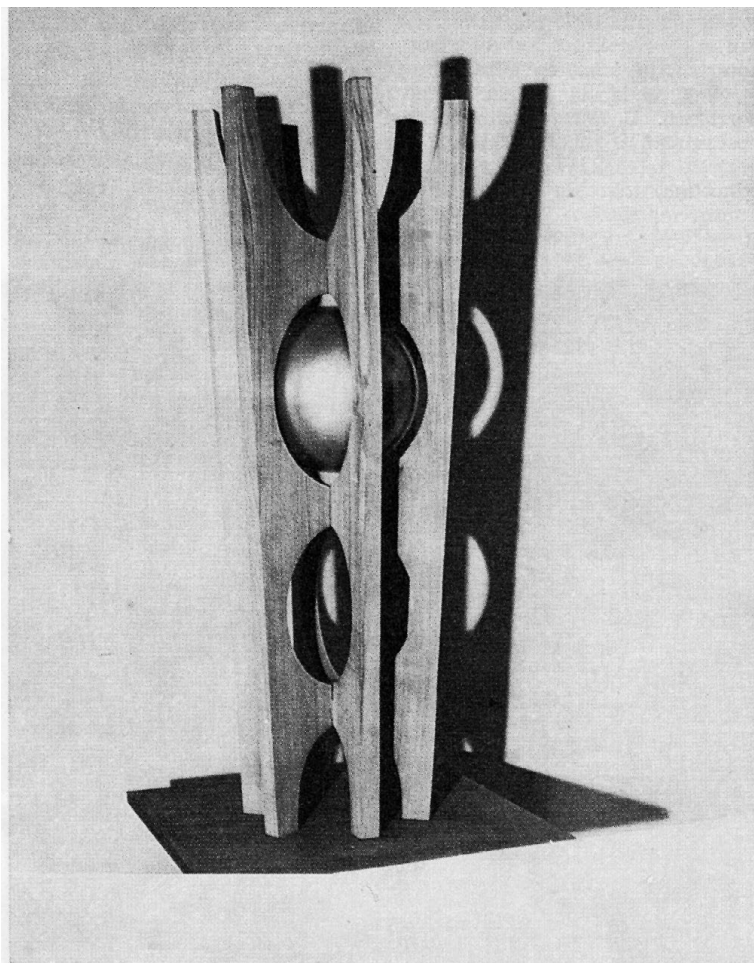


First prize was awarded to the work submitted under number 20 (**fig. 1**, **fig. 2**),<sup>24</sup> and behind that project number was the winning author Igor Toš, a young and unknown architect only 28 years old.<sup>25</sup> The jury's elaboration of their decision, published in the journal *Čovjek i prostor* (Man and Space), notes the quality of the monument's "fluid space," or "liquid space," that is, the monument's design as ambience and the project of panoramas in the manner of progressive perception of detail in this opening and closing of the vision of the monument to those who approach it. By designing a twofold broken fluid rock, a space was obtained for the future integration of a museum. "The area of Petrova Gora was a major field of battle against the Hungarians, Ottomans, in World War II and it was a part of Serbian Krajina in the 1990s. (...) The jury stated, considering its role throughout the entire history, (...) Petrova Gora is the very symbol of the struggle of nations."<sup>26</sup> As Igor Toš wrote in his project proposal, it proceeded from the generalisation of the notion of the struggle for freedom, ranging from the struggle for freedom of an individual, of oppressed nations, or of entire nations throughout the whole of human history, which never ends and must necessarily be continued in the future, with faith in further conquest of freedom in every sense. The struggle for freedom is expressed with a form consisting of two "walls-rocks fluid in parallel" which, alongside the overcoming of eternal resistances, "convulsively ascend" up to the moment "of victory that wavers, broken by memory," in a form that does not end, but rather aspires into the future. Due to the complexity of the program's requirements, primarily

24 "Natječaj za izradu idejnog rješenja spomenika na Petrovcu u Petrovoj gori" ["Tender for the Design of the Monument on Petrovac in Petrova Gora"], in the section "Natječaji" [Competitions], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 222 (1971): 16.

25 His associates were: a student of architecture, Tumur Cevegđav, and the model was made by Ivica Susović, mechanical engineering student; collaborators on the project were also Petar Keleminčić (photography), Zoran Šonc (lighting), Marko Kučinec (cost calculation) and Borislav Doklestić (technical cooperation).

26 Igor Toš in a recorded interview we had in Zagreb, on March 20, 2017.



**Fig. 3.** Vojin Bakić, the conceptual design of the monument at Petrovac, Second Prize at the general Yugoslav anonymous tender of 1971. Horticulture: Dragutin Kiš; architecture: Zoran Bakić and Jadranka Jugo; photography of the model: Aleksandar Karoly, in: *Čovjek i prostor*, vol. 222, no. 9 (1971), 17.

was an artist who, on one hand, was perceived as an ‘authentic’ modernist sculptor, the main figure of the breakup with soc-realism and the proponent of abstraction who forged the paths for freedom of artistic expression in the 1950s, and on the other hand, as a ‘state artist’ whose art was in service to ideology. In October 1974, after the suppression of the idea of reform and the abolition of the Croatian Spring, the Monument Construction Committee made a decision announcing the Supplementary Invitation to Tender. The jury liked the optimistic ascending line of Toš’s monument, I would dare to guess, but his concept was not acceptable because it was too general, it was not focused on the Second World War and it did not emanate the opinion that it was the ultimate and last war. An invitation to participate was sent in November 1974 to the authors of the first three awarded works (Toš, Bakić, and Luketić and Vitić). Toš did not participate in this tender due to the (mailed) invitation being received too late, and the decision to award first prize to Vojin Bakić was made by the Committee in March 1975.

in terms of the required multiple synthesis (architecture, sculpture and signs with the desired meaning, and the synthesis of historical events), which was an extremely difficult and new task, a number of tender works did not successfully solve the problem of synthesis but simply suggested separation of the monumental sculpture from its utilitarian function, which would be embodied in another architectural object. Toš’s proposal successfully solved such a synthesis, in a way that was completely new in a commemorative plastic form.

Under the work code 13<sup>27</sup> (**fig. 3**) there was a proposal-conceptual design and a model by sculptor Vojin Bakić: within the six radial, spaced masses of reinforced concrete with harpoon jets, there is a sphere whose inner space is two-sided.<sup>28</sup> It consists of a museum with an outer shell of steel, and a gazebo that is glazed, inside a transparent exterior with mirror glass to preserve the glow effect of the sphere, which was also designed with the night view of Petrovac in mind. To resume, Vojin Bakić

27 “Natječaj za izradu idejnog rješenja spomenika na Petrovcu u Petrovoj gori,” 17.

28 In collaboration with Dragutin Kiš (horticulture), Zoran Bakić and Jadranko Jugo (architecture), Aleksandar Karoly (photo).

## FIRST PRIZE IN THE REVISED COMPETITION FOR THE MONUMENT ON PETROVA GORA

If we look at the monument's concept authored by Vojin Bakić (fig. 4)<sup>29</sup> at the Supplementary Tender (in reality it was a new invitational competition) we can see that formally and conceptually it had nothing to do with his concept at the first tender of 1970/1971, but was rather an elaboration of Toš's proposal from the first tender, and we can conclude that now the symbolically strong and expressive form obtained proper ideological aspects that were missing in the first awarded project, three years before. The construction of the monument (save for its interior decoration) was completed in 1981, authored by architect Berislav Šerbetić<sup>30</sup> and sculptor Vojin Bakić, and ceremoniously opened on July 4, 1982.<sup>31</sup> The monument is one of the principal realisations of the socialist modernism project, and one of its most important public monuments; Vojin Bakić had been working on it for more than a decade. "In the age of socialism,

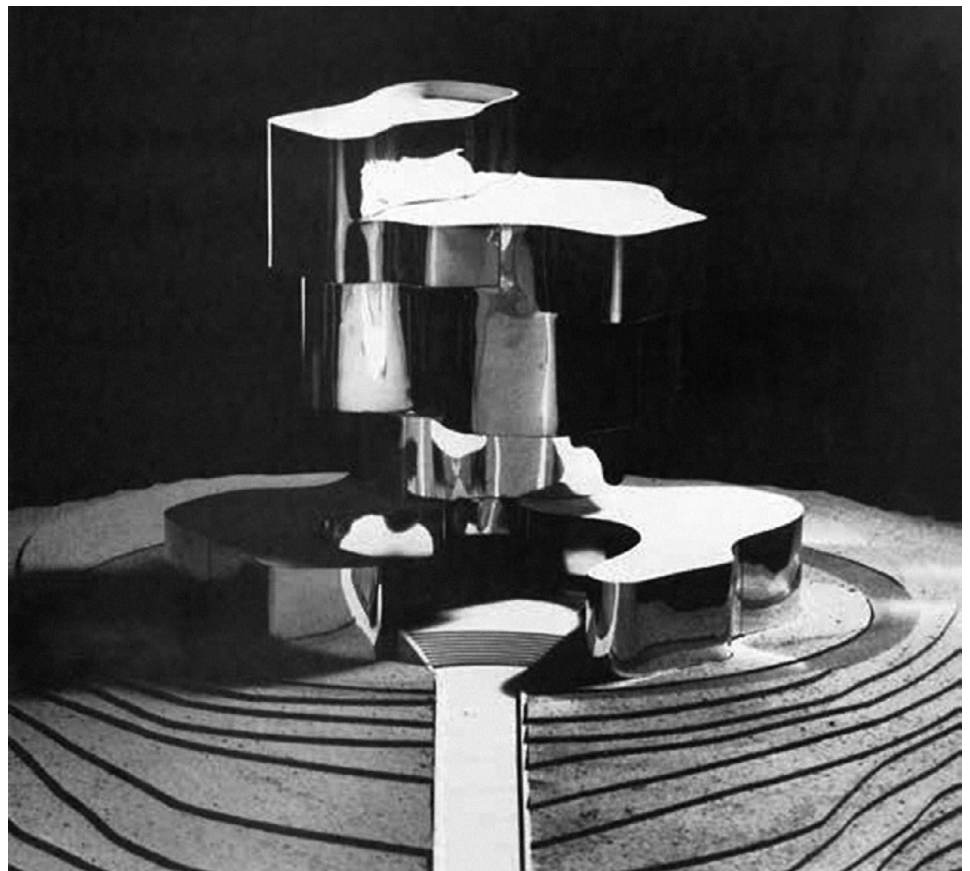


Fig. 4. Vojin Bakić (concept), Berislav Šerbetić and Tomislav Odak (architecture), monument on Petrova Gora (Monument to the Uprising of the People of Banija and Kordun), First Prize at the Supplementary Call for Tender, 1974.

29 Photography of the model is found in *Design of the Monument on Petrova Gora* (Institute of Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb, 1981), 51.

30 Sanja Horvatinčić, "Memorial Sculpture and Architecture in Socialist Yugoslavia," in *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Yugoslavian Architecture 1948–1980*, eds. Vladimir Kulić and Martino Stierli (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018), 107. In the same catalogue, in the description of the illustration, Zoran Bakić was mentioned as the architect alongside Berislav Šerbetić, while Tomislav Odak was omitted. On page 106, "partisan war" was translated into English as "guerrilla warfare."

31 The whole process was described in the book by Silva Kalčić, *Svijet prema labirintu: eseji o visokoj modernosti i postmodernizmu 1970-ih i 1980-ih* [*The World Toward the Labyrinth: Essays on High Modernism and Post-modernism in the 1970s and 1980s*] (Zagreb: ULUPUH, 2017), 400–412.

almost obligatory visits to this monument amounted to a collective social ritual.<sup>32</sup> Jerko Denegri commented on whether Bakić was a “state artist”:

I wouldn't say in advance that someone working like Bakić automatically worked for the system or that he was manipulated by it. The question is who constituted that system; perhaps it consisted of small, progressive groups that also wanted to improve their environment. And if a monument to the victims of war was to be done, then it was done in a way that suited the modern idea of sculpture, rather than one that was anachronistic as such.<sup>33</sup>

I wrote about Petrova Gora for the first time in 2017, in the form of an interview with Igor Toš about the results of the first competition, that were published in the magazine *Čovjek i prostor* (Man and Space, no. 222) in 1971. At the exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Yugoslavian Architecture 1948–1980* in MoMA, New York (2018), the monument was of course attributed to Vojin Bakić and was given as an example of<sup>34</sup> – as opposed to the hitherto prevalence of sculpture – “interdisciplinary cross-fertilization between architecture and sculpture, [that] led to the development of new typologies” in most clearly evident in “hybrid design that brought a pronounced sculptural quality to functional architectural objects”<sup>35</sup> (where a conference and exhibitions spaces, a library and a lookout were planned). The monument built in reinforced-concrete was covered in stainless steel panels, modulating and multiplying units with mirroring effects, and using expensive, brand new materials at the time, such as stainless steel. Jerko Denegri, a prominent art historian, theoretician and critic, who is one of the greatest experts for the work of the Exat 51 group and Vojin Bakić, called it “impersonal, like the surface of a machine.”<sup>36</sup> Denegri also points out:

But Bakić was probably guided by a different underlying motive, perhaps by the issue of interplay between light and what it symbolized, rather than issues that aimed at the topical problems. It would be worth investigating in some detail, but for me it is still a new topic and I am not yet in the situation to explain the processes that Bakić was going through. In any case, it must have been a very extraordinary development. It was, in all respects, a crossroads of two paradigms: on the one hand, there was the

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32 WHW, “Revisiting Modernism,” 3.

33 WHW, “Interview with Jerko Denegri,” in *Bakić*, eds. What, How and for Whom/ WHW (Zagreb: What, How and for Whom / WHW, 2008), 58. This publication has been released on the occasion of the Vojin Bakić exhibition at the Grazer Kunstverein, 2008 ([https://monoskop.org/images/4/43/Vojin\\_Bakic\\_Grazer\\_Kunstverein\\_2008.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/4/43/Vojin_Bakic_Grazer_Kunstverein_2008.pdf)).

34 As well as Toš's awarded proposal from 1970.

35 Sanja Horvatinčić, “Memorial Sculpture,” 106.

36 “Sto napraviti s Petrovom gorom?,” DAZ, accessed on April 20, 2020, <http://www.d-a-z.hr/hr/vijesti/sto-napraviti-s-petrovom-gorom,1637.html>.



sculpture of the 50s, which rejected the real and preserved the plastic form, regardless of its references (...) not crucial enough to violate the pure idea of plasticity; on the other hand, there was change and it could fit into what the New Tendencies were representing.<sup>37</sup>

Built through the contributions of the county's population, in the period of the self-proclaimed so-called Republic of Serbian Krajina (1991–1995), the monument was an important strategic and symbolic point, but since then it is in a process of decline-decay and has become a ruin. Its stainless steel has been plundered; it allegedly served as a medical waste storage facility, and in 2019 the Ministry of Culture of Croatia and the local municipality gave permission to a German television series to film at the site, which resulted in criticism over its use as “ruin porn”<sup>38</sup> in the media.

In the period from 1953–1958, Vojin Bakić detached himself from social realism, working in thematic series such as that of *Bulls* (Bikovi), in which he explored closed volumes in order to create the simplest organization of volume in space. In 1957, Bakić began work on the *Polyvalent Forms* and *Foliated Forms* cycles. His reduction of figuration towards abstract sculptural forms represented an evolution of his own art. The foliated form is that of the Monument to the Victory of the Revolution of the People of Slavonia in Kamenska (1963–1968), with exterior metal plating – like the later monument on Petrovac.<sup>39</sup> Bakić described it in the following way: “All that is actually an abstract form, it doesn't represent anything. It is no symbol such as ‘the flame of the revolution’, as some have tried to interpret it – I think that it is no flame; it is a sculpture that has certain elements in its construction, in its logic, so to say, and when it is extended, it expresses that joy of victory.”<sup>40</sup>

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## CONTEMPORARY ART AND “NEW HERITAGE”

With the history of the site as a backdrop, I now refer to the Petrova Gora Monument as a referential object in new media and video installations projects by Croatian contemporary artist David Maljković (b. 1973, Rijeka). This offers an example of Agamben's theory of the contemporary impoverishing of modernist cultural signs, transforming them into “zero signs” or “weak signs”.<sup>41</sup> The concepts of historical amnesia and the reinvention of history are crucial in Maljković's reference to the monument, and to his idea that the architectural

37 “Interview with Jerko Denegri,” 54.

38 E.g., in the text by Jurica Pavičić, “Nijemci su snimili alegoriju Republike Hrvatske. TV seriju o tupsonima...,” *Jutarnji list*, accessed and published on 27 February 2021. <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/nijemci-su-snimili-alegoriju-republike-hrvatske-tv-seriju-o-tupsonima-15053783>.

39 Zvonko Maković, “Spomenička plastika Vojina Bakića” [The Memorial Plastic of Vojin Bakić], in *Vojin Bakić – Svjetlosne forme: retrospektiva*, ed. Nataša Ivančević, catalogue of retrospective exhibition (Zagreb: Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2013), 199.

40 Vojin Bakić, “Apstrakcija i simboli” [Abstraction and Symbols], *Bakić*, eds. WHW, 3.

41 Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).



sculpture on Petrova Gora whose ideological symbolism will be forgotten in the future, and reduced to its own aesthetic form, will be symbolically silent to future generations, or de-ideologised. Maljković is interested in the formal aspect of the monument – he perceives the monument as an aesthetic form. The ideology behind the monument will be forgotten by, say, 2025 (in his first video work, *Scene for a New Heritage I*) or 2045 (in *Scene for a New Heritage II*) on May 25 – Tito’s symbolic birth date, also observed as Youth Day in former Yugoslavia. The monument itself will be reduced to its formal aspects, which will be silent symbolically to future generations; it will be forgotten that it visualised the idea of social and economic progress in socialist society. “Maljković is exploring the modernist remnants of socialist Yugoslavia and their echoes on the present, as well as their future possibilities. Opening this cracked, almost invisible space for the future, he was also gradually opening it for various, parallel interpretations. For the first time after several decades in the local milieu, but also internationally, the *Scenes for a New Heritage* series summoned the work of Vojin Bakić from oblivion, almost literally.”<sup>42</sup> The monument is a “Retired Composition.”<sup>43</sup>

Maljković’s works evoke modernism as an unfinished project, and show the inability of today’s public to reconstruct the “emotion” that was its trigger. His *oeuvre* is based on research of the historical, cultural and theoretical legacy of the socialist modernist project and on the mapping of its relationship, as one of the so-called peripheral modernisms,<sup>44</sup> in comparison with “Western” modernism. In the *Scenes for a New Heritage*, two parts of a trilogy, Maljković deals with the past (embodied in the partisan monument on Petrova Gora, the memorial park and the architectural sculpture) and the collective amnesia of the present, transposed into the future liberated from the historical fact. By linking up personal and collective memories and documentary aspects of contemporary art, he refers to socialist celebrations honouring the conquered as the creation of a community of equal and free people, or the sense of belonging to a community. In *Scene for a New Heritage I* (fig. 5), he connects Modernism and Socialism, and “although they refer to the past, Maljković’s works are not concerned with nostalgia, but the possibility of looking at the past with sober eyes, to reassess its potential for the present.”<sup>45</sup> Maljković thematised the historical and socio-political conditions of modernism with a

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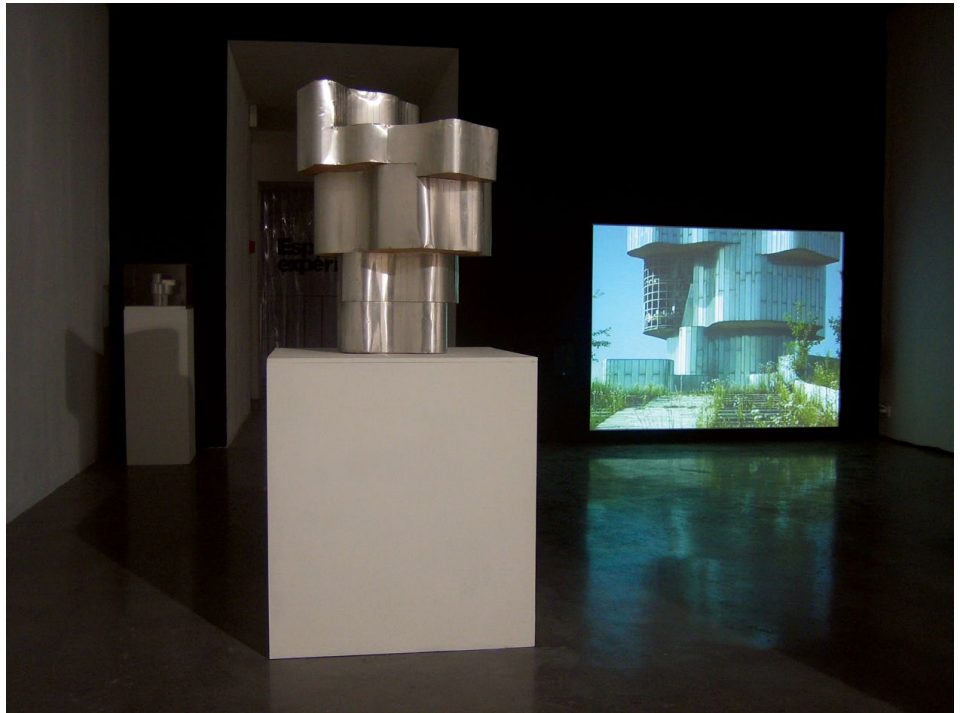
42 WHW, “Revisiting Modernism,” 3.

43 The reference is to David Maljković’s exhibition *Retired Compositions*, accessed April 20, 2020, [https://www.whw.hr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/novine-17-david-maljkovic-retired-compositions\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.whw.hr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/novine-17-david-maljkovic-retired-compositions_compressed.pdf).

44 The reference is to Ljubo Karaman’s discourse on centre and periphery, or the centre-periphery paradigm in terms of art history. Karaman’s concept of “Peripheral Art” has an emancipatory potential in local contexts. Ljubo Karaman, *Problemi periferijske umjetnosti: o djelovanju domaće sredine u umjetnosti hrvatskih krajeva* [Problems of Peripheral Art. On the Influence of Local Surrounding on the Art of the Croatian Areas] (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2001), 5–6.

45 “Art Always Has Its Consequences,” eds. What, How & for Whom (WHW) Curatorial collective, Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László, Magdalena Ziolkowska and Katarzyna Słoboda, *kuda.org* (Zagreb: WHW, 2010), 182. (<https://www.whw.hr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/knjiga-art-always-has-its-consequences.pdf>).

Fig. 5. David Maljković, *Scene for a New Heritage*, 2004, collage, 70 x 100 cm, and the installation with Vojin Bakić's models from 1978. Maljković's exhibition with Joan Jonas, curated by Caroline Bourgeois, *Le Plateau*, Paris, 2005. Courtesy of David Maljković.



special accent on socialist modernism. But instead of directly offering theses and conclusions about this relationship (between Modernism and Socialism), he actually suggested a form of oblivion – by omitting the context of buildings and locations shown in his work, and by posing the thesis that nobody will care about the symbolism of the object on Petrovac. Yet even now, some 15 years after this video work, the ideological aspect of “the object” is still something we are very aware of. However, a new question opens up, namely, the one of a monument’s visual language: Should not its ideological symbolism be able to speak in a universal and timeless language? In Maljković’s video, people of the future speak by singing an atonal traditional polyphonic chant derived from Croatian folklore, with an incomprehensible wailing text. By using a communicative system stripped of the meaning or symbolical transfer of knowledge, past times will be erased, not only interpreted (in a post-truth era), by collective amnesia. Maljković finds this location drastically altered; effaced, forgotten and almost decrepit. He interprets it “as a place of fascinating absence, as a place that was completely absent. If we are to elaborate the facts, we might say that these places do not exist anymore, that they exist only in a physical sense. But for me, what was important was the personal memory which tied me to the location, and the historic part, and Bakić’s place in it, all this just started to emerge. I was trying my best to use the empty space of the future.”<sup>46</sup>

Educated as a painter, Maljković expanded his “situational” research in painting around the year 2000, and began the transition toward real spaces and broader research into history, time and duration. The monument on Petrovac

<sup>46</sup> David Maljković in conversation with Nataša Ilić, “The empty space of the future,” *Almost Here*, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Dumont, 2007.

is viewed exclusively as a form, evoking historical *formalism*; it is viewed as Clive Bell's "significant form" (in the book *Art* in 1914), a certain combination of lines, as well as surfaces and their relationships that arouse an aesthetic feeling in the viewer. In early modernism, Roger Fry's and Bell's formalist art theory, as it is known, was the prevailing way of looking at the autonomous work of art, outside of life itself, until Duchamp's annulment of the aesthetic quality of art when it became a "consequence of a mental event."<sup>47</sup> The video *Scene for a New Heritage I* begins with a retro-futuristic scene, with stage props deliberately made as if they were cheap and improvised, like in low-budget movies:

... a contemporary saloon car, entirely wrapped in silver foil, cruises down a country lane; the metallic material conjuring up references to early tv sci-fi, twentieth-century robots and the dawn of space travel. Its destination is a 12-storey curving, monolithic building with a similarly reflective facade: a monument, a bit of further research elicits, erected in the mountain forests of Petrova Gora, Croatia, for victims of the Second World War. Arriving at the building, the passengers of the car congregate with others who have also come to the site in foil-wrapped vehicles. The original function of the building, now in disrepair, is lost on this throng – its purpose long forgotten in the transition between our present and theirs. In an incomprehensible yodelling 'language' (subtitled in English for the viewer), these people of the future discuss the function of this historic artefact. 'Times were different back then', one howls. Another answers, 'Yes, times that don't matter to us!'<sup>48</sup>

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## CONCLUSION

My intention in this text was to rearticulate a suppressed subject in the official versions of history, and further to explore creative possibilities—new programs and revitalisations of the monument, as well as to question the basic idea of the monument as a public and symbolic act, using as a paradigm the decayed structure on Petrova Gora. In the contemporary context, these potentials lie precisely in questioning and deconstructing the mechanisms of political representation, such as in David Maljković's *Scenes for a New Heritage*. "Could an artist like David Maljković have come to the fore 20 years ago? (...) the answer is no, David Maljković's work could only have been made this millennium. It's not the medium that is new, but the world that the work is part

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<sup>47</sup> Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 8. On p. 9, Danto talks about Wittgenstein's definition of art as undefinable, that is, the definition can only be devised on the basis of institutional factors.

<sup>48</sup> Oliver Basciano, "David Maljkovic," review first published in *Artreview* in October 2023, published online on July 21, 2014. Accessed on 20 April 2020. <https://artreview.com/october-feature-david-maljkovic/>.

of.”<sup>49</sup> The preoccupation and fetishisation – the haunting – of contemporary culture by the past is often referred to as “hauntology,” a term introduced by Jacques Derrida (with reference to Marx, specifically his proclamation that “a spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism,”<sup>50</sup> as well as to Hegel), who understands it as a symptom of a lack of political development.

With the fall of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, monuments and memorial sites built by Bakić were destroyed, as was the one on Petrova Gora. His reputation has been minimized and ignored by many – not only in Croatia, but also in the European art community. Arjun Appadurai’s well-known hybrid term “ideoscape”<sup>51</sup> refers to a series of images relating to ideologies and anti-ideologies; in this light, the two case studies in my text form a specific *ideoscape* of socialist and post-socialist visual arts, in a transition from modernist to contemporary post-transitional society. “Why does yesterday’s masterpiece become tomorrow’s trash?”<sup>52</sup> This was Brian Holmes’s way of evoking Vojin Bakić’s heritage as indicative of a wider political diagnosis. But in recent years Bakić’s work has been reinscribed in the history of Croatian and European art, along with other socialist modernist monuments evoking remembrance for the victims of fascism. Many misunderstandings in the interpretation of Vojin Bakić’s contribution derive from a simplified, “unambiguous understanding of the paradigm of modernism itself.”<sup>53</sup>

David Maljković’s solo exhibition *With the Collection* at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, in January 2020, was another example of his manipulation of and engagement with modernist art. Artworks from the Museum’s collection were set up at the same level, above the standard viewpoint of the observer, on a specially designed solid plinth that extended along the 40-meter wall of the exhibition space, 2.20 m height. Such a “destabilised museum collection”<sup>54</sup> was treated as a collective, panoramic fact, rather than as singular artefacts (**fig. 6**). Amid them, barely visible, was a Vojin Bakić sculpture, which was made by modulating identical mirror units under the influence of the optical experiments of the New Tendencies movement,

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49 Ibid.

50 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”, February 1848, in: *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969), 14. Derrida calls on Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, particularly a phrase spoken by the titular character: “Time is out of joint”. Mark Fisher, “The Metaphysics of Crackle: Afrofuturism and Hauntology,” *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*, no. 5/2 (2013): 50.

51 Ideoscape is a term introduced by Arjun Appadurai (1990) to represent one of the five contemporary global cultural flows (the others are: ethnoscape, technoscape, financescape and mediascape). Ideoscapes are constitutive of linked images and ideas related to the political discourses of the Enlightenment such as sovereignty, freedom, rights, welfare, representation, and democracy. Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” *Public Culture*, issue 2, vol. 2 (1990): 1–24.

52 Brian Holmes, “WHW: The Process of Becoming,” *Maska Performing Arts Journal*, no. 117-118, vol. XIII (2002).

53 WHW, “Izložba je kamen smutnje” [The Exhibition is a Stumbling Block], *Novine Galerije Nova* [Gallery Nova newspapers], no. 12, June 2007.

54 Ivana Meštrović, in her curatorial text for the exhibition catalogue: *S Kolekcijom* [With the Collection] (Rijeka: Muzej moderne i suvremene umjetnosti, 2020), 57.



**Fig. 6.** David Maljković, *With the Collection*, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMSU), Rijeka, 2020. Courtesy of the MMSU, Rijeka. Bakić's sculpture is on the shelf: Vojin Bakić, *Lightbearing Forms*, c. 1968, stainless steel 990 x 770 x 540 mm, MMSU, Rijeka (inv. no. MMSU-1087).

again in stainless steel. Bakić's training made him "permanently preoccupied with the idea of monumental sculpture, the monument,"<sup>55</sup> or monumental and memorial forms. Without a doubt, Bakić was a major sculptor of the time, and in 1967 Udo Kultermann included him in his overview of contemporary sculpture,<sup>56</sup> but his proposal for the monument on Petrovac was much weaker than the awarded one. The project for the monument on Petrova gore should be correctly attributed, or co-attributed to Igor Toš, in order to correct the fact that he was erased from official history. This would not diminish the greatness of Bakić's *oeuvre*. In any case, the monument in question, like many others, was devastated in the heat of nationalism and anti-communism in the 1990s.

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In the first case-study, Igor Toš's project was taken as a form, its concept (meaning) was changed and it was attributed to the prominent artist who often represented the state or whose work was representative for a state. Vojin Bakić more successfully dealt with the problem of the relationship between art and society, implying the socialization of art (its integration into society). David Maljković, for his part, "is not interested in the phenomenon of modernism in Yugoslavia and Croatia in a general sense. His personal motivation is to attempt to create new platforms on the ruins of existing grounds. For example, the scene for his series, *Scenes for a New Heritage*, is a magnificent and devastated monument on Petrova Gora, on a remote location, a memorial for the greatest Partisan hospital in WW2."<sup>57</sup> The ideological meaning of the monument was

55 WHW, "Interview with Jerko Denegri," 55.

56 Udo Kultermann, *The New Sculpture: Environments and Assemblages*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968). Kultermann was a corresponding member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and was also a member of the international editorship of the journal *Prostor* issued by the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb. See Milan Pelc, "Udo Kultermann (1927 – 2013) – Master of International Overviews and Historical Synthesis," *Art Bulletin*, no. 63 (2013): 216–217.

57 WHW, "Revisiting Modernism," 3.



interpreted, and in the second case study, David Maljković de-ideologised it completely, looking at it as at the pure aesthetic object. He extracted its memory as a reference to the construct of present-day social discourses. “Focusing on the link between the empiricism of buildings and the abstract notion of time (a link that explains the purpose of memorials and the preservation of sites of trauma), the artist uses decaying architecture to further underline the idea of the past as being an active facet of the present, both in the work and the wider world.”<sup>58</sup> In summary then, my intention was to thematize the status and relations of modernism with contemporary art, to rearticulate a suppressed subject in the official versions of history and to point to the lack of an integral discourse of history and art history.



# Art

and

**the State**

in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# Political Architecture, the Architecture of Politics

**Darko Kahle**

THE COMPARISON OF CONSECUTIVE  
ARCHITECTURAL LEGISLATIONS IN  
CROATIAN LANDS FROM THE HABSBURG  
EMPIRE UNTIL THE INDEPENDENT STATE  
OF CROATIA

**Igor Marjanović, Katerina Rüedi Ray**

ARCHITECTURE MASTER SCHOOLS:  
COMMUNISM, PATRIARCHY, AND  
PEDAGOGY

**Richard Kurdiovsky, Anna Stuhlpfarrer**

WHEN THE STATE BUILDS. THE  
ARCHITECTURAL AGENDA OF THE  
K.K. MINISTERIUM FÜR ÖFFENTLICHE  
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DEVELOPMENT DURING YUGOSLAV  
SOCIALISM (1948–1980)

**Darko Kahle**

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# THE COMPARISON OF CONSECUTIVE ARCHITECTURAL LEGISLATIONS IN CROATIAN LANDS FROM THE HABSBURG EMPIRE UNTIL THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA

**Keywords:** architectural legislative jurisdiction, Austrian Empire, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Banovina of Croatia, Independent State of Croatia, engineering chamber, licensed architect

<https://www.doi.org/10.17234/9789533792170.32>

## Abstract

*Architectural legislative jurisdictions in Croatian lands were established in 1861 in Istria, in 1864 in Dalmatia and in 1877 in Croatia-Slavonia. Temporary decrees regarding licensed professionals and engineering chambers were promulgated in 1924 by the first Yugoslav state. The Banovina of Croatia, approved on August 26, 1939, acquired autonomy in architecture, construction and engineering administration, education and legislation jurisdiction. The Zagreb and Split engineering chambers were united, and licensing exams were subsequently returned to Zagreb. The fascist Independent State of Croatia, proclaimed on April 10, 1941, seized existent professional bodies, legislation, education and construction administration. Professional and public officials were forced to take an oath to Poglavnik Ante Pavelić. Architects who graduated from Academies of Fine Arts were formally converted to Licensed Architects. Existing architectural and engineering administration infrastructure was suspended in 1946.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The article tackles an important period of Croatian architectural history,<sup>1</sup> namely architectural legislative jurisdiction during World War II (1939–1945).<sup>2</sup> The imminent outbreak of war in August 1939 forced British diplomacy to initiate the federalization of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia through creation of the Banovina<sup>3</sup> of Croatia, a semi-independent entity similar to that of Transleithania during the late Habsburg Monarchy. The territory of the Banovina of Croatia consisted of the former Savska (capital Zagreb) and

1 I want to cordially thank Professor Dragan Damjanović for inviting me to the conference. Further I want to thank the reviewers of this article for improving it and making it more pleasant to read. Finally I want to express my gratitude to the State Archives in Zagreb and the National and University Library in Zagreb, where I was provided with all possible help in researching the topic.

2 A compendium of professionalism in architecture and construction engineering comparing the United Kingdom with historical development from guilds in Florence to United States of America, Germany and France was recently published as an upshot of Grenfell tragedy. Simon Foxell, *Professionalism for the Built Environment* (London: Routledge, 2019). The seminal French law on duties and responsibilities of licensed architects, *Le Code Guadet* (1895), is translated into English on pages 322–325, to emphasize its importance to the English-speaking audience.

3 Banovina, Banat, trans. Dominion with devolved legislation, possessive from Ban, Croatian for the ‘Viceroy’, originally from the Avarian Bayan, itself being either from proto-Turkic root baj- (rich, wealth, prince etc.) or proto-Iranian baga- (god, lord). English Wikipedia, Ban (title), accessed March 15, 2023, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ban\\_\(title\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ban_(title)).



Primorska (capital Split) Banovinas, enlarged by regions with a Croatian majority from other Banovinas. Compared to the Habsburg Empire, the Banovina of Croatia contained Transleithanian Croatian (the whole of Croatia-Slavonia including its Military Frontier, but excluding the ethnically Serb parts of Sirmium and Dvor na Uni),<sup>4</sup> Bosnian Herzegovinian (ethnically Croatian parts of Posavina and Herzegovina), Cisleithanian (small parts of Carniola, and most of Dalmatia) and Transleithanian (Međimurje) territories. The territorial gains of the Independent State of Croatia regarding Banovina of Croatia in 1941 were Sirmium (under Croatian jurisdiction until 1919) and the remainder of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Territorial losses to the Kingdom of Italy in 1941 (Sušak, Ravni Kotari, Šibenik and Split) were returned to Croatia by Adolf Hitler after Italy's capitulation to the Allies in 1943, yet he left Istria, Rijeka, Zadar, and the islands of Cres, Lošinj and Lastovo to the Repubblica di Salò, against Pavelić's request. Međimurje was lost in 1941 to Hungary until the end of World War II. During the period of World War II the territories included in the Banovina and, later, in the Independent State of Croatia predominantly included three previous architectural legislation systems: Austro-Croatian (1850–1919), Austro-Dalmatian (1850–1919), and Bosnian-Herzegovinian (1863–1919), as well as the Royal Yugoslav system (1919–1939), which was the centralized successor of the former three.

456 The Enlightenment influenced the discipline of architecture in the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century through three seminal publications: the scientific monograph *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten* (Remarks on the Architecture of the Ancients) by Johann Joachim Winckelmann in 1762; the article/book *Architecture et parties qui en dépendent* (Architecture and Related Subjects) in Diderot and d'Alembert's Encyclopedia in 1778; and, finally, *Allgemeines Magazin für die Bürgerliche Baukunst* (General Magazine for Civil Architecture), the first architectural periodical by Johann Gottfried Huth, issued irregularly from 1789 until 1796. Yet the wider circulation of architectural knowledge had to await the invention of the steam-powered printing press, achieved in 1812 in London by German-born Friedrich Koenig. The architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, a high official of Prussian state, studied industrial architecture in United Kingdom in 1820s, which helped him in the design and construction of the *Bauakademie* between 1832–1836. A seminal architectural professional society was founded in Berlin in 1824, followed by similar associations in other sovereign German states (1833 in Munich, 1842 in Stuttgart, 1846 in Dresden, 1851 in Hanover). The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) was founded in 1834, der Schweizerische Ingenieur- und Architektenverein (the Swiss Architects and Engineers Association; SIA) in 1837, and the predecessor of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1857 in New York City. The architectural and

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4 Dragan Damjanović skillfully narrated the history of Military Frontier architectural legal jurisdiction in "Building the Frontier of the Habsburg Empire: Viennese Authorities and the Architecture of Croatian-Slavonian Military Frontier Towns, 1780–1881", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, no. 2 (2019): 187–207.

engineering associations of Austrian Empire were both founded in 1848 in the wake of the Revolution. Soon after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867, Magyar Mérnök Egylet (the Hungarian Association of Engineers) was founded. Since the Croatian-Slavonian Dominion retained autonomy in internal affairs in Transleithania, Klub inžinirah i arhitektah (the Society of Engineers and Architects) was founded in Zagreb in 1878, while, outside of the Empire, Udruženje srpskih inžinjera i arhitekata (the Association of Serbian Engineers and Architects) was founded in Belgrade in 1890. All of these associations issued regular periodicals, which became seminal architectural journals in their corresponding society or state.

The Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy recognized *professionali civili* (civil professionals) in construction service as aides and counselors to government officials in three branches:<sup>5</sup> *periti agrimensori* (Land Surveyors), *architetti civili* (Civil Architects) and *ingegneri civili* (Civil Engineers, also competent for hydraulic engineering). In united Italy after the Risorgimento, similar competences were reintroduced only in 1923. In the Austrian Empire the *Vorschrift über die Aufnahme von Bau-Eleven und die Einführung von Staatsprüfungen für den Baudienst* (the Decree on Construction Cadets and the Introduction of State Examinations for the Construction Service) was passed in 1850, prescribing the state exam for future state officials in the construction service of the Empire. The *Decree of Organization of the Construction Civil Service* was promulgated in 1860, reintroducing the former Lombardo-Venetian *professionali civili* as the *Civil Techniker* (Civil Professionals) in Cisleithania only, because the imperial civil legislation was invalid in future Transleithania after the fall of Neo-Absolutism. The Hungarian Engineering Society was established in 1870, but the regulation of professionals in the construction service was only finally amended in 1923, after the end of the Empire.<sup>6</sup> Regarding Cisleithanian crownlands, civil professionals were approved in Bohemia in December 1860; in Moravia, Silesia, Trieste, Littoral, Tirol, Vorarlberg and Lower Austria in 1861; in Upper Austria in 1862; and finally in Dalmatia in 1864. Since it retained full autonomy in internal affairs based on the amended Hungarian-Croatian Settlement in 1868, the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia enacted the Cisleithanian system of *Civil Technikers* in 1877. Croatian civil professionals were graduates of Cisleithanian Institutes of Technology, and therefore examined for licenses per the 1850 *Decree on Construction Cadets*. The schedule of fees of the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects was also prescribed in Croatia-Slavonia. Comparatively, Illinois was as the first US state to regulate the architectural profession in 1897, while Italy and Hungary did so in 1923, the

5 For a short history of civil professionals in Lombardy-Veneto, compare DeWiki.de, *Ziviltechniker*, accessed October 11, 2020, [https://dewiki.de/Lexikon/Ziviltechniker#google\\_vignette](https://dewiki.de/Lexikon/Ziviltechniker#google_vignette).

6 Ibid. Further claims that the “Gesetz vom 2. Jänner 1913, betreffend die Errichtung von Ingenieur-kammern” [The Law from January 2, 1913, regarding the Establishment of Engineering Chambers] enforced civil professionals in whole Habsburg Monarchy, i.e. in Cisleithania and Transleithania together. Due to the nature of Compromise from 1867 that was not possible.

United Kingdom in 1931, and France in 1940 during the Vichy regime. There was no licensed professional architectural regulation in Germany until the fall of the Weimar Republic in 1933.

## ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSIONALS ON THE TERRITORY THAT BECAME THE BANOVINA OF CROATIA AND THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA BEFORE 1919

According to an Imperial Government Decree from July 4, 1863, upon the Introduction of Civil Professionals in Dalmatia (fig. 1) on January 12, 1864,<sup>7</sup> the Lieutenantcy (*Statthaltereii*) of Dalmatia prescribed three classes of professionals, namely a) *Civil-Ingenieure* (Civil Engineers) for all construction subjects, b) *Architekten* (Architects) and c) *Geometer* (Surveyors). Persons applying for the position of civil professional had to be at least 24 years old, citizens of Cisleithania of good moral standing and fluent in the native language of the corresponding region (e.g. Italian in Zadar, Croatian in Sinj). Candidates to become civil engineers had to possess a corresponding university degree obtained at an Austrian Institute of Technology or at a foreign institute with ministerial prescription, have five years of experience obtained either at the Construction Civil Service or another civil engineering firm, and had to pass the strict theoretical and practical exam (*Rigoros*) according to the 1850 Decree on construction cadets. Candidates to become architects were additionally obliged to enroll and pass the higher course of architecture given at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Candidates to become surveyors were required to have three years of experience. Every civil professional had to organize an office in their place of residence and promptly submit a numbered list of all prior projects. He was legally liable to the local government, and if convicted of misdoing his civil position was revoked. According to the prescribed provisional tariff, an architect's working day of 6 hours in Dalmatia cost 4 Austrian standard florins in 1864. From additional tariffs one can deduce that, for example, the engagement of an architect from Zadar on the island Silba was expensive, and consequently the majority of population designed and built edifices for themselves. Civil architects designed and prepared drawings for building permits for community, state, transportation and military edifices.

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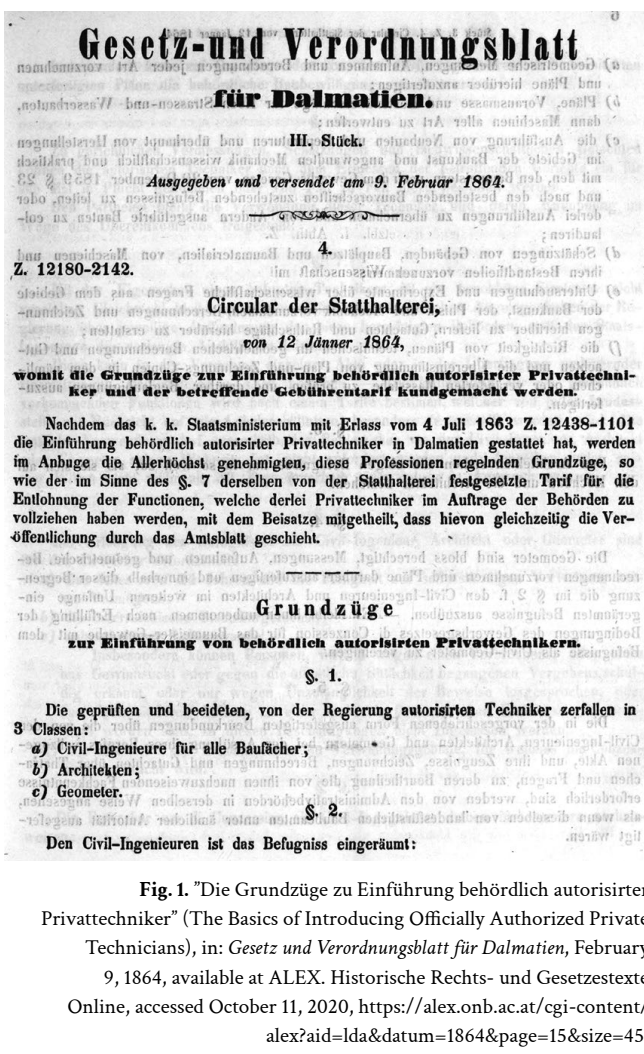


Fig. 1. "Die Grundzüge zu Einführung behördlich autorisirter Privattechniker" (The Basics of Introducing Officially Authorized Private Technicians), in: *Gesetz und Verordnungsblatt für Dalmatien*, February 9, 1864, available at ALEX. Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lda&datum=1864&page=15&size=45>.

7 "Die Grundzüge zu Einführung behördlich autorisirter Privattechniker" [The Basics of introducing officially authorized Private Technicians], *Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für Dalmatien*, February 9, 1864, available at ALEX. Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lda&datum=1864&page=15&size=45>.

In the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia *civilni tehničari* (civil professionals) were established per *Naredba kraljevske hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinske zemaljske vlade* (the Dominion Government Decree) on February 26, 1877,<sup>8</sup> and divided into four classes, namely a) *civilni inženjiri* (Civil Engineers) for all construction subjects including surveying; b) *arhitekti* (Architects); c) *gradjevni mjernici* (Construction Measurers) and d) *mjernici i zemljomjeri* (Measurers and Surveyors). The overrepresentation of surveyors was due to the historical practices of land surveying in Croatia-Slavonia, where the fourth class was comprised of professionals without academic degree. The particular requirements were either slightly looser or tighter than in Dalmatia – in particular, the prescribed institutes of technology for degrees in civil engineering were Vienna, Prague and Graz, while foreign polytechnic institutes were equal to Cisleithanian ones without official approval. Architects were obliged to have degree in architecture from either a polytechnic institute or an academy of fine arts. The strict exam according to 1850 *Decree on Construction Cadets* was prescribed only for professionals without academic degree, while civil servants could become civil professionals without taking the exam. Obligatory age, citizenship and experience were not prescribed until 1911. To conclude, the Croatian decree from 1877 was a slightly simplified version of the Cisleithanian (or Dalmatian) one, with a higher price for an architect's working day of 6 hours in the amount of 6 Austrian standard florins (forints in Transleithania). It was a translated architects' schedule of fees for the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects, with a division into five classes according to the complexity of given edifice, ranging from barns to pulpits inside churches.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, which the Habsburg Empire occupied in 1878, the imperial authorities reconfirmed the Ottoman Bosnian Law on Houses and Streets from 1863 in 1879, and further issued a Building Code for capital Sarajevo and other prescribed important cities in 1880. An improved Building Code was prescribed in 1893 for Sarajevo only. After formal annexation in 1908, Bosnia-Herzegovina became a common Austro-Hungarian dominion, subject to common Department of Finance. Virtually all architectural design and construction of public and military edifices was made and overseen by the Provincial Construction Office, established in 1891 and staffed by architects from throughout the Empire, including Croatian architect Josip Vancaš. Consequently, civil professionals were unnecessary except of surveyors, whose activities were prescribed as *autorisirter Civil-geometer* (Authorized Civil Surveyors) in 1906. However, in 1910 an allowance was given to *fachkundige öffentliche Funktionäre* (Professional Public Servants) to perform their private

8 "Naredba kraljevske hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinske zemaljske vlade" [The Dominion Government Decree], *Sbornik zakonah i naredabah, valjanih za kraljevinu Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, October 27, 1877, available at ALEX. Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lks&datum=1877&page=715&size=45>.



civil profession without legal conflict of interest,<sup>9</sup> outside of official hours and public offices, without aides and with written permission given by the provincial government. In this manner architects who were public officials could design private houses and buildings in Sarajevo, as well as in other major cities because Bosnia-Herzegovina was well connected by a narrow-gauge railway network, built by Austria-Hungary between 1879 and 1914.

Just before World War I (fig. 2) it became necessary to organize civil professional activities throughout Cisleithania, while Croatia-Slavonia, due to its internal sovereignty, improved its regulation of civil professionals. *Naredba Bana kraljevina Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije* (The Viceroy's Decree) of March 31, 1911<sup>10</sup> strictly regulated professional competences and procedures for their authorization. They were divided in four classes, namely Civil Engineers, Civil Architects, Civil Mechanical Engineers including Electrical Engineers and Civil Surveyors. A minimal age of 24, Transleithanian citizenship, moral virtue excluding people legally sentenced to jail time of more than 6 months, and, further, proficiency in spoken and written Croatian were strictly prescribed. All candidates had to possess appropriate academic degrees from approved Austro-Hungarian Institutes of Technology. The Croatian government reserved the right to acknowledge academic degrees from foreign polytechnic institutes. Three years of experience for surveyors and five years of experience for other professionals were also prescribed. A detailed exam for civil engineers, architects and mechanical or electrical engineers was established and held in Zagreb until 1925. Unsuccessful candidates had the right to repeat the exam only once in a period between six and twelve months. The daily salary of an architect was set at 24 Austro-Hungarian crowns, about 12 former Florins/Forint. From 1911 onwards Croatian architectural legislative jurisdiction corresponded to the Cisleithanian jurisdiction, although the prescription of proficiency in Croatian was adopted to exclude candidates fluent in Hungarian but deficient in Croatian from civil service in Croatia. However, the requirement of Transleithanian citizenship had the unintentional consequence of excluding Cisleithanian civil professionals of Croatian ethnicity. *Das Gesetz vom 2. Jänner 1913, betreffend die Errichtung von Ingenieurkammern* (Law on the Establishment of Engineering Chambers) in Cisleithania was passed and enacted on January 2, 1913, but it was never enforced in Dalmatia and other parts of Cisleithania due to the permanent crisis in Habsburg Monarchy which was forcibly resolved in World War I.

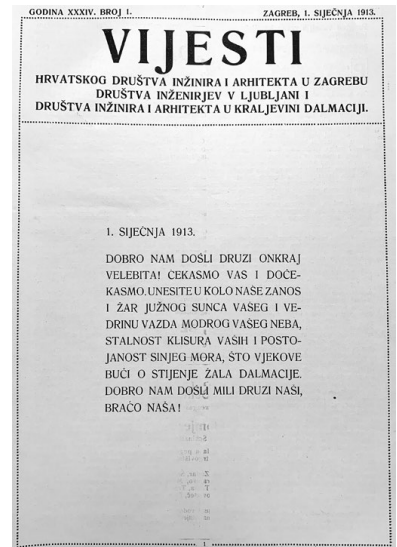


Fig. 2. The front page of *Vijesti* (The News), the first joint semiofficial journal of the Croatian, Slovenian and Dalmatian Societies of Engineers and Architects, January 1, 1913, Darko Kahle collection, Essen.

9 "Verordnung ... betreffend die Betätigung fachkundiger öffentlicher Funktionäre auf dem Gebiete des privaten Bauwesens in Bosnien und der Hercegovina" [Ordinance ... Concerning the Activity of Competent Public Officials in the Field of Private Construction in Bosnia and Herzegovina] available at ALEX. Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lbh&datum=1910&size=45&page=41>.

10 "Naredba bana kraljevina Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije: od 31. ožujka 1911. broj IL. C. 1070., kojom se uređuje djelokrug civilnih tehnika i postupak glede njihovoga ovlašćivanja," [The Viceroy's Decree of March 31, 1911], available at ALEX. Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=lks&datum=1911&page=397&size=45>.



# ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSIONALS AND LEGISLATIVE JURISDICTIONS OF THE FIRST YUGOSLAV STATE, 1919–1939

After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in November 1918, the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed on December 1, 1918, as a pseudo-federal monarchy (fig. 3). Roughly seven historical entities around the cities of Belgrade, Zagreb, Split, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Cetinje and Novi Sad continued to maintain their former architectural jurisdictions until the proclamation of the Vidovdan Constitution on June 28, 1921. The new kingdom established a *Ministarstvo gradjevina* (Department of Construction) in 1919, which was divided into eight Ministerial Directorates; those in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Split and Sarajevo retained some of the duties of the former Habsburg provinces. A new type of State Exam was prescribed, much lighter and easier than the Croatian exam from 1911. Because Carniola, Dalmatia and Croatia-Slavonia possessed inherited legal systems for civil professionals, while Bosnia-Herzegovina,

Vojvodina, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro did not, it was necessary to regulate civil professionals throughout the whole territory of the new kingdom. In 1924 two regulations were proclaimed: the *Privremena uredba o ovlaštenim inženjerima i arhitektima u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (the Temporary Decree regarding Licensed Engineers and Architects in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), prescribed in Article 119 of the Financial Law for [fiscal] Year 1924/25, and the *Privremena uredba o osnivanju inženjerskih komora u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (the Temporary Decree regarding the Establishment of Engineering Chambers in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), prescribed in the same article of the same law.<sup>11</sup> These regulations basically repeated the Cisleithanian civil service system, supplemented with the state exam from 1919 and without fines for misrepresenting the title Architect. Nevertheless, they enabled the constitution of Engineering Chambers in residences of the Ministerial Directorates in Zagreb, Split, Ljubljana, Sarajevo etc., with the Headquarters of Engineering Chambers in the capital of Belgrade (fig. 4). In 1933, the Zagreb Engineering Chamber started their own gazette, *Službeni vjesnik* (Official Gazette), containing laws, proceedings



Fig. 3. The front page of *Tehnički list* (Technical Gazette), the first semiofficial journal of the Society of Engineers and Architects of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, August 1, 1919, Darko Kahle collection, Essen.

<sup>11</sup> The decrees were proclaimed in *Službene Novine* [The Official Gazette of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes], October 25, 1924.



**320**      **TEHNIČKI LIST**      1924.

Prilikom velikim naličnim prama jezgu se provodi: kruti tuzi (Budinje 81 m) stazi u stanici Bakar km 164,136, kot 261,7; Prošavci stajalište Sv. Kuzm (km 166,20), kot 217,0; željeznička staza severnim obronkom Druge, koja prelazi kod Sv. Ane vskoim nastupom te kod Miriškovićke završava na južni obronak trasnog bratja. Prošavci kod km 174,136, ograniči se izložakom, prelazi većinom željeznom vjadrskom, stazi u 447 m dugi Kikarvski tunel, te prelazi glavni ulaz rjeke, odvaja na rijekojskoj stanici (km 176,103, kot 3,0).

Da se odredi prostorno skicirana rječna stazica, obratom na varenito žbunat transport drveta, gradilo počelo se zadnjih godina prošlog vijeka graditi neposredan ograniči sa crkve, preko u bitan tvornice "Plumbum" do lake na krajci. Daljina ovog ograniči, podjednako prometa 20 tona 1909, iznosi 236 m, od toga 163 m u spratnom terenu, a cijela pruga u pada od 21%. Spratni dio stazice od kruti tuzi laka sa polimerima od 300 odnosno 350 metara.

**PRIVREMENA UREDBA O OSNIVANJU INŽENJERSKIH KOMORA U KRALJEVINI SRBIA, HRVATA I SLOVENACA.**

**Član 1.**  
Na podnožju svih građevinskih ustanova Ministarstva Građevinarstva, osniva se Inženjerske Komore, koje nose ime po sedištu u kom su.

**Član 2.**  
Zadaci svih Komora jest: da se staraju za zaštitu interesa svojih članova, za čuvanje njihove časti i ugleda; da se bave reklamiranjem svih odnosa i pitanja, koja proizilaze iz odnosa u pravnim praksi; da štite odnosa inženjerske i arhitektske u sepnim slučajevima; a Glava Uprava Inženjerskih Komora daje vlastitu svoje mišljenje i predloge po svima pitanjima, koja spadaju u nadležnost Komore.

**Član 3.**  
Poslove Inženjerskih Komora obavljaju njihove Uprave i Skupštine.

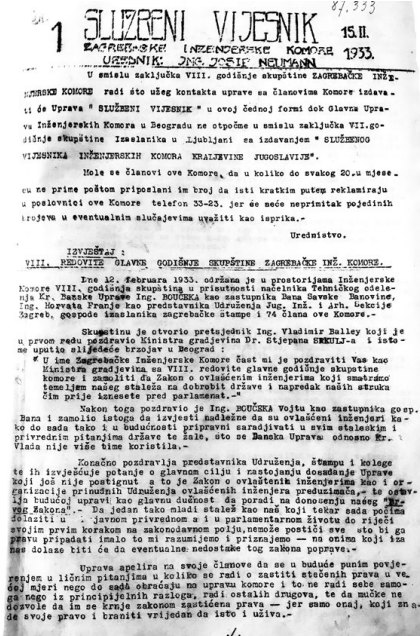
**Član 4.**  
Kao predstojnik svih Inženjerskih Komora osniva se Glava Uprava Inženjerskih Komora, sa sedištem u Beogradu, a sa zadatkom da rešava sva pitanja, koja se tiču zajedničkih interesa svih ovakvih inženjerske i arhitektske u Državi.

**Član 5.**  
Glava Uprava Inženjerskih Komora čine predstojnici i potpredstojnici pojedinih Inženjerskih Komora i predstojnici pojedinih Inženjerskih Komora bitni sa njihovim skupštinama i to 9%, od broja članova dotične Komore. Ovi tajni glavnim glavnim predstojnicima, dva člana i jednog zamjenika nadležnog odbora. Ovaj izbor obavlja se od 15. marta.

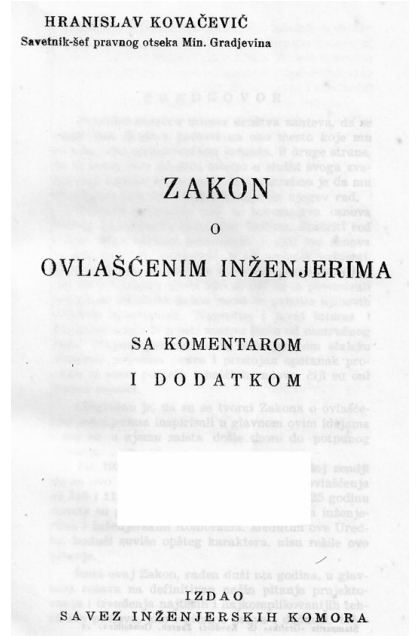
**Član 6.**  
Glava Uprava Inženjerskih Komora odobrava i donosi zajedničke pravilnike, propise i t. d. za sve Komore. Ona je krajnja instanca za sve žalbe.

Državne vlasti traže mišljenje Glave Uprave Inženjerskih Komora o svim pitanjima, koja se tiču zajedničkih interesa ovakvih inženjerske i arhitektske, koji i mišljenja o imenima i dopunama Privremene

**Fig. 4.** "Privremena uredba o osnivanju inženjerskih komora u Kraljevini Srbija, Hrvata i Slovenaca" (The Interim Decree on the Establishment of Chambers of Engineers in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), in: *Tehnicki list*, December 15, 1924, 323–324, Darko Kahle collection, Essen.



**Fig. 5.** The seminal front page of *Sluzbeni vjesnik* (Official Gazette), the official journal of the Zagreb Engineering Chamber, February 15, 1933, National and University Library, Zagreb.



**Fig. 6.** "Zakon o ovlaštenim inženjerima" (The Law on Certified Engineers), with commentaries by Hranislav Kovačević, Belgrade, 1937, Darko Kahle collection, Essen.

and members' correspondence (fig. 5). Engineering chambers succeeded in preparing and amending the *Zakon o ovlaštenim inženjerima od 30. augusta 1937*. (Law regarding Licensing Engineers from August 30, 1937), which became valid on October 13, 1937 (fig. 6). The law was composed according to western influence and passed in Yugoslav parliament in spite of Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović's dictatorship, and was regarded as progressive at the time.

## ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE AND LEGISLATIVE JURISDICTIONS ON THE TERRITORY OF THE BANOVINA OF CROATIA AND THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA (1939–1945)

The Cvetković-Maček Agreement, ratified on August 26, 1939, federalized the Kingdom of Yugoslavia by creating a financially independent entity called the Banovina of Croatia, comprised of eleven Banovina Departments, which was empowered in internal affairs and obliged to reimburse common expenditures. Architecture, construction and engineering administration, education and legislation became exclusively Banovina affairs. On September 23, architect Zvonimir Pavešić was appointed as Banovina Head of the Department for Technology (*tehnički radovi*). The Zagreb and Split Engineering Chambers were retained, with an Inter-Chambers Committee in charge for common affairs, similar to common affairs in the Habsburg Empire after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. The Zagreb Engineering Chamber's



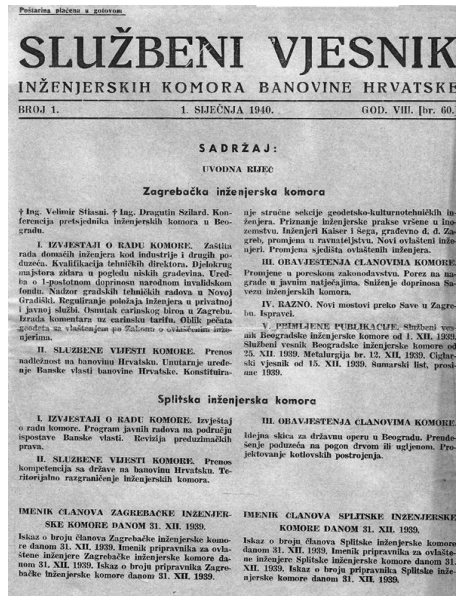


Fig. 7. The front page of *Službeni vjesnik* (Official Gazette), the official journal of the Croatian Engineering Chambers, February 1, 1940, Darko Kahle collection, Essen.

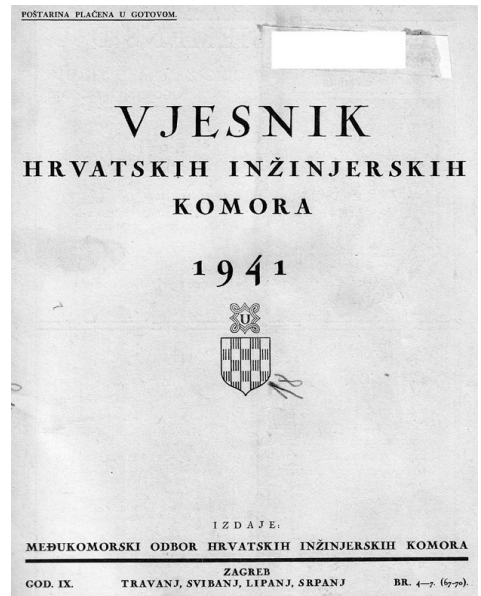


Fig. 8. The front page of *Vjesnik Hrvatskih Inženjerskih Komora*, (The Official Gazette of the Inter-Chamber Committee of Croatian Engineering Chambers), Zagreb, 1941, Darko Kahle collection, Essen.

official gazette became the “Official News of the Engineering Chambers of the Banovina Croatia” (fig. 7). The Association of Yugoslav Engineering Chambers was abolished and a very loose connection in the form of the Conference of Presidents of Engineering Chambers on Yugoslav Territory was established. On November 18, 1939, jurisdiction over civil engineering and construction was transferred from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to the Banovina of Croatia. Licensing exams were moved back from Belgrade to Zagreb effectively from January 5, 1940. The Ordinance on prices control was issued in March 1940, while the Regulation on recognizing the program of study of the Department of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts was amended but not yet enacted. Jovan Korka decided to leave the Banovina of Croatia and subsequently moved to the Belgrade Directorate, while Marijan Ivacić did the opposite and went to Zagreb, and, finally, Nikola Dobrović chose to stay in Dubrovnik under the auspices of the Banovina of Croatia. Fearing for their lives, a certain number of architects and other professionals Croatinized their surnames to hide their Jewish origin, for example engineer Josip Neumann became Josip Najman, while architect Dr. Pavao Deutsch became Pavao Duić.

The German Reich endorsed proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia on April 10, 1941, as an additional device to achieve swift victory immediately after its attack on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The new puppet entity took over all of the administrative infrastructure of the Banovina Hrvatska, including architectural professional bodies, legislature, education and construction administration. *The Official News* soon implemented emblems of new state (fig. 8) and prescribed the predominance of “ijekavski”, later the “iekavski” (both Croatian) over “ekavski” (Serbian). Basic laws from 1931



## CONCLUSION

The comparison of five consecutive architectural legislations in Croatian lands – the Austro-Hungarian jurisdictions, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia jurisdiction, the Banovina of Croatia jurisdiction, the Independent State of Croatia jurisdiction and, finally, shared jurisdiction in Socialist Yugoslavia/Croatia – in the period from the early 1920s until the late 1950s reveals a gradual but constant shift away from liberal practices to state and party corporativism. During the 1920s and early 1930s the position of architects within the professional construction community, and more generally within the *laissez-faire* economy, was insecure and often subject to disrespect from architectural competitions up to positions in public service. This resulted in architects' collaboration and even admiration during the process of issuing the *Law on Licensed Engineers and Architects* in 1937. The law was specific to the Banovina of Croatia, while the regulatory bodies in Zagreb and Split were exempt from the rest of Yugoslav legislation and loosely connected through the Croatian Inter-Chambers Committee. Architects started to lose their independent position because they were jurisprudentially more dependent than other professionals, such as structural or mechanical engineers. The economy of the Banovina of Croatia begun to corporatize due to the growing administrative demands caused by war conditions throughout Europe and advocated by some contemporary economists. Legislation tolerated changing the surnames of certain prominent professionals of Jewish origins, who tried to hide themselves from National Socialism. Although the Independent State of Croatia reversed this and forced licensed professionals to state their "racial" affiliation, some licensed architects and professionals of Jewish and Serbian origin were not victims of pogroms, though their licences were suspended and their professional lives effectively came to an end. The Independent State of Croatia declared itself as an anticapitalistic society in enforcing totalitarianism in every corner of its economy, thus unequivocally binding itself to the fate of Third Reich.

Comparative analysis of architectural jurisdictions in Croatia during World War II, juxtaposed to the period between the World Wars and before, during the final decades of Habsburg rule, reveals a gradual increase of state influence on the architectural profession. Architects and civil engineers in the Austrian Empire, later Austria-Hungary, were regulated by the government instead of establishing liberal associations such as those in United Kingdom or United States of America. The enactment of Croatian architectural jurisdiction in 1877 on the *Cisleithanian* model emphasized the political struggle for Croatian autonomy within *Transleithania*, and was assured by the introduction of professional licensing exams in 1911 and higher architectural education in 1918. Enthusiasm for South Slav unification resulted in the amalgamation of constituent architectural jurisdictions into the centralist Association of



Yugoslav Engineers and Architects, which struggled to protect the titles of “architect” and “engineer” inside a national economy driven by *laissez-faire* principles, while its members could only lobby politicians to enact legislation regarding architectural matters. Important professional problems in the interwar period included disobeying the law and corruption, visible in the construction of whole estates and public buildings without building permits or in disrespecting regulated titles and correspondent responsibilities. Temporary ordinances on regulating the architectural and engineering professions, passed in 1924, centralized licensing exams while lowering the criteria for passing them. In 1931, the Association lobbied for the *Law on Building*, while in 1937 the *Law on Licensed Engineers and Architects* was composed on the basis of western, predominantly German models. As a reaction to the nonintervention of the state in construction sector, the Banovina of Croatia gradually corporatized its reestablished architectural jurisdiction after August 26, 1939.

Strict control of architects, engineers and contractors was intensified after April 10, 1941, when the fascist Independent State of Croatia absorbed architectural jurisdictions in its territory. Professionals were forced to proclaim allegiance to the new regime, while those who refused to do so were racially segregated. Disobedient architects were court-martialed and even executed. Unlike the Third Reich, a ban on the design of edifices with flat roofs was never promulgated. Furthermore, academic architectural degrees were converted to engineering degrees for architects who desired this option. Certain resident and deceased members of a disputed “racial” background were listed in encyclopedias as domestic architects. Generally, the fascist regime attempted to synthesize a Croatian architectural identity based on all tolerated styles and peoples, which forced some professionals either to abstain from work or to collaborate unwillingly with the regime.

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## ARCHITECTURE MASTER SCHOOLS: COMMUNISM, PATRIARCHY, AND PEDAGOGY

### Abstract

*In post-1945 East-Central European communist states, the education of artists, architects, and designers was central to creating symbolic forms for a new communist “civilization.” With their emphasis on mass production and applied design, technical universities and colleges of applied arts served that purpose well, advancing socialist goals of collectivization, industrialization, and placating citizens with consumer goods. Yet the parallel resurgence under socialism of bourgeois academy atelier models – select students led by a revered male master – is perhaps less obvious. Master schools of architecture in Prague and Budapest and state master workshops in Zagreb and other Yugoslav cities enrolled young practitioner elites in individualized study conferring high cultural status, often through prominent commissions. Merging pedagogy and ideology, these schools grappled with both socialist and capitalist forms of professionalization and the patriarchal legacy of the “master” embodied in their names – with ensuing tensions between class privilege, individual identity, and social equality, in particular gender equity. Some master schools closed even before their sponsor states disbanded, suggesting that “emulation of the master” conflicted with regime ideology, foreshadowing the end of the political if not the personal patriarchy of the communist state.*

**Keywords:** architectural education, communism, master school, master workshop, Budapest, Prague, Zagreb

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### INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the communist era in East-Central Europe today – more than forty years after the fall of the Iron Curtain – we often see it through one of two extremes: either as a time of political oppression and obedience produced by institutionalized socialism in the Eastern Bloc between the 1940s and the late 1980s or, at the other end of the spectrum, a period of high aspirations for a more egalitarian and just society with benefits such as health care and education available to all. In this essay we turn to educational institutions that occupied a peculiar space in between these extremes, cannily navigating the world of “architecture and state” by combining political conformity and evasion, collectivism and elitism. Master schools and master workshops became unique postgraduate architecture institutions in several communist states – including Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia – most originating after World War II and paralleling similar models in the Soviet Union. They include the Državna majstorska radionica za arhitekturu (State Master Workshop for Architecture) in Zagreb, the Mesteriskola (Master School) in Budapest and the ‘master’ or ‘special’ Škola architektury, Akademie Výtvarných Umění (Master School of

architecture of the Academy of Fine Arts) in Prague. These institutions enjoyed higher cultural status than colleges of applied arts or technical universities, with each enrolling a small, highly competitively selected group of students, who were often licensed architects pursuing individualized courses of study.

Most architects in communist East-Central Europe were trained at technical universities that enrolled hundreds of students yearly and offered mass lectures and tightly prescribed professional curricula in design, technology and planning. Located in large, usually new institutional buildings, these schools produced a new technocratic class central to collectivizing and industrializing socialist spaces. In addition to university-based education, socialist architects were also trained in colleges of applied arts, often situated in large nineteenth-century buildings, which also embraced technology and design but were more often focused on the industrialization of interior and product design in order to appease communist populations with material benefits.

Unlike these university or art college settings, master schools and workshops were more singular and independent. Located in urban villas in prestigious neighborhoods and often led by a single tutor, they echoed the intimacy and ethos of both medieval master masons' lodges and aristocratic and bourgeois academies. The collectivity of the medieval lodges perhaps resonated with communist aspirations for communal life and training and thus provided an acceptable model. But the "survival" of bourgeois academies under communism is somewhat less obvious. Initially originating in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, academies of fine arts – or *beaux arts* academies – were dedicated, through drawing and debate, to the pursuit of symbolic architectural forms in the service of merchant princes and royalty. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century empires such as Austria-Hungary adopted the *beaux arts* atelier model, in which a selected group of students was led by a venerated male "master" artist or architect.

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Despite such privileged aristocratic and bourgeois history, communist regimes quickly appropriated academies as postgraduate master ateliers producing symbolic and built representations of social progress. This was the case in the Soviet Union, where such master ateliers were compatible with the academicist Stalinist style that they were meant to produce. The Soviet model inspired new or legitimized existing master ateliers in East-Central Europe.<sup>1</sup> These master schools or master workshops evolved to accommodate shifting political climates and ideological messages, often more quickly than the technical schools, embracing socialist realism, then high modernism, and later brutalism and postmodernism. Such a broad evolutionary arc suggests both the longevity and resilience of the master school model and a certain diversity of cultural and social production of communist spaces, as evidenced by the three schools discussed in this essay and their home cities: Zagreb, Prague, and Budapest.

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<sup>1</sup> Some master ateliers – those in Prague or Vienna, for example – had roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whereas others, such as Zagreb's, emerged in the 1940s.

## STATE MASTER WORKSHOP FOR ARCHITECTURE, ZAGREB

In the decades after World War II ambitious young architects assembled in a neoclassical villa on a hill above Zagreb to further their studies in the *Državna majstorska radionica za arhitekturu*, or State Master Workshop for Architecture (**fig. 1**). Offering both apprenticeships and postgraduate study, it was one of several painting, sculpture, and architecture workshops founded in Yugoslav cities such as Belgrade and Ljubljana in 1947, at the height of the country's short-lived Stalinist orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> Inspired by similar Soviet enterprises, it offered two- and three-year postgraduate government bursaries to a talented elite working under experienced “master” architects, training them in advanced socialist aesthetics for prominent public commissions. Despite Yugoslavia's exit from the Soviet sphere of influence in 1948, the Zagreb workshop survived for more than three decades, representing an unusually independent hybrid integrating academia and practice, art and architecture.

The workshop was led between 1952 and 1964 by Dragutin (Drago) Ibler, a prominent modernist with major Yugoslav interwar commissions, including public buildings and residences, who quickly shifted the focus away from socialist realism. He was also no stranger to integrating architecture with fine arts. A student of Hans Poelzig at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin, Ibler had returned home in 1926 to set up the department of architecture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. The school of architecture at the Royal Academy – which came to be known as the Ibler school<sup>3</sup> – would

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**Fig. 1.** Mijo Geher and Aladar Baranyai, Villa Ehrlich-Marić, Zagreb (1890–1891 by Mijo Geher, renovation by Aladar Baranyai in 1928). Later *Državna majstorska radionica za arhitekturu* (State Master Workshop for Architecture), today Croatian Museum of Architecture. Ulica Ivana Gorana Kovačića 37, Zagreb. Photograph by Igor Marjanović.



<sup>2</sup> On the historical overview of Yugoslav master workshops, see Davorin Vujčić, “Majstorske radionice likovnih umjetnosti: Majstorska radionica Antuna Augustinčića” [Fine Art Master Workshops: Master Workshop of Antun Augustinčić], *Anali Galerije Antuna Augustinčića*, no. 26 (2007): 35–86.

<sup>3</sup> On the Ibler school, see Željka Čorak, *U funkciji znaka: Drago Ibler i hrvatska arhitektura između dva rata* [In the Function of a Sign: Drago Ibler and Croatian Architecture between the World Wars] (Zagreb: Centar za povijesne znanosti, 1981), 70–74. See also Ariana Novina, “Škola za arhitekturu na Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti u Zagrebu – Iblerova škola arhitekture” [School of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb – the Ibler School of Architecture], *Peristil 1: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 47 (2004): 135–144.

continue to operate until Ibler immigrated to Switzerland in 1941 as the Croatian Nazi “Ustashe” regime seized power. Despite being much smaller than the Department of Architecture of the Faculty of Technical Studies of the University of Zagreb, which was modeled on the Germanic polytechnic tradition, it produced some of the most significant modernist practitioners in prewar Yugoslavia. Ibler was also closely linked to the arts and between the two World Wars served as the president of the radical art group Zemlja (Earth), which promoted social activism and political critique. Ibler spent most of the war years in Switzerland, where he was closely aligned with the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM). On his return to Croatia and Yugoslavia in 1950, he attempted to revive the architecture program at the Zagreb Academy of Fine Arts but eventually settled for leading its “satellite” postgraduate program, the Master Workshop. There he used the authority and relative independence of the *beaux arts* atelier “master” role to shift the workshop from socialist realism to modernism as a symbol of cultural progress and global connectivity, aspirations reflected in his key role in Dubrovnik’s 1956 CIAM X meeting.<sup>4</sup>

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The workshop was housed in the Villa Ehrlich-Marić, which also served as Ibler’s private office and his home – he slept on its upper story (**fig. 1**). Located in an elite Zagreb neighborhood, its elegant bourgeois rooms provided generous studio space while lush landscaping reinforced a feeling of “being apart”, amplifying the workshop’s privileged position outside tight political control. The workshop had relative autonomy as it shifted between institutions and funding sources: from the federal to the local government, from the Academy of Fine Arts to the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Once enrolled in this program, the workshop participants worked on Ibler’s many state commissions, including the iconic “Wooden Skyscraper” (1956–1958) in Zagreb, the Yugoslav embassy in Moscow (1959; unrealized), and state residences in Belgrade and beyond. The Wooden Skyscraper remains a testament to the workshop’s aesthetic: it combines wood and concrete, merging modernism with local vernacular tradition. Andrija Mutnjaković, later a prominent practitioner and director of the Croatian Museum of Architecture, remembers spending long days at the villa, working on the Wooden Skyscraper drawings and talking to Ibler, who at the time was also deeply engaged nationally, serving as the president of the Yugoslav Association of Architects. According to Mutnjaković, the use of wood was inspired by the so-called *ganjčec* wooden porches often found in local villages.<sup>5</sup>

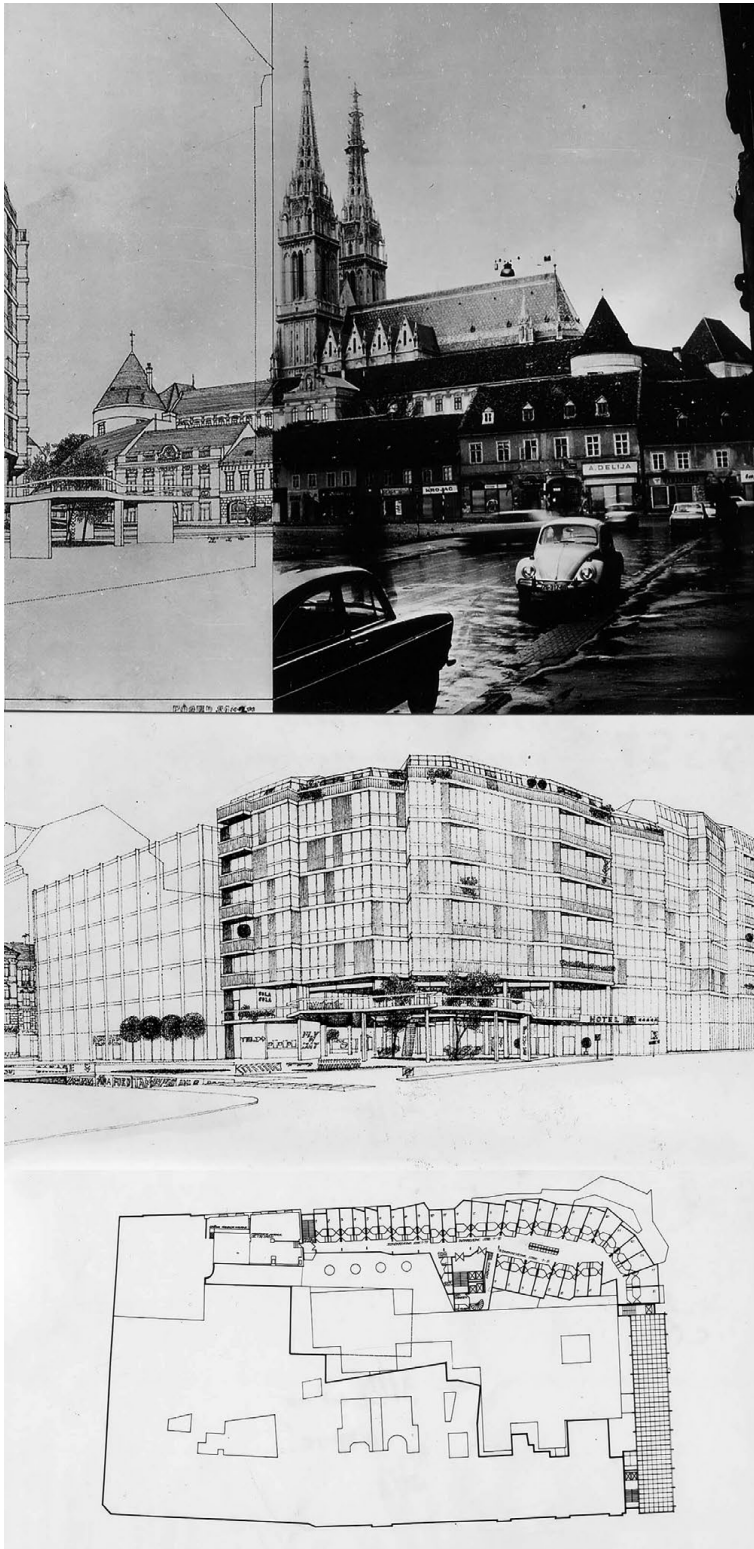
After Ibler’s death, the workshop was led from 1964 to 1984 by Drago Galić, Ibler’s student and close associate on major interwar projects. Galić

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4 Tamara Bjažić Klarin, “CIAM Networking – International Congress of Modern Architecture and Croatian Architects in the 1950s”, *Život umjetnosti: časopis o modernoj i suvremenoj umjetnosti i arhitekturi*, vol. 99, no. 2 (2016): 40–57.

5 Andrija Mutnjaković, conversation with Igor Marjanović, Zagreb, May 28, 2019. See also Andrija Mutnjaković, “Drago Ibler,” *Arhitektura*, no. 158–159 (1976): 4–11.





**Fig. 2.** Ines Filipović, Nikola Filipović, Branko Kincl, State Master Workshop for Architecture of Drago Galić, Project for Hotel Gradski Podrum (Urban Cellar), Zagreb, competition entry, first prize, 1967. Courtesy of Croatian Museum of Architecture, Zagreb.

maintained its independence, mentoring a cadre subsequently influential in Croatian academia and practice, including Hildegard Auf-Franić, who later served as the dean of architecture at the University of Zagreb. Unlike Ibler, Galić encouraged participants to pursue projects and competitions on their own – hotels, recreational districts, and cultural institutions – allowing the workshop to serve as an incubator for participants’ own professional offices (**fig. 2**). Artistic drawings and models from this period fused a socially and formally progressive agenda, and projects grew in scale to encompass large housing estates and entire city sectors, spurring further growth of the regional form of modernism that fully spanned the university and academy. While men like Galić continued to hold leadership positions at the Master Workshop, there was also an increase in the representation of women among the participants, including Melita Rački, who later pursued educational opportunities abroad, including in Japan.

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Intimate and elite, the workshop resulted in much built work and successful competition entries. As such, it formed a highly enterprising and productive – if still ideologically acceptable – bridge between academia and practice. Operating fairly informally in its last years, it gradually dissolved in the 1980s.<sup>6</sup> This closure was due in part to its unofficial character and reliance on a singular person, as well as its idiosyncratic disposition – both outside the institutional educational system and too close to fading centers of communist power.

Yet its volume of built work was radical for a Yugoslav educational enterprise, ensuring the survival and ascendancy of modernism as the mainstream building practice in postwar socialist Croatia and Yugoslavia.

<sup>6</sup> The Croatian Museum of Architecture lists 1952–1982 as the years of operation, while Velimir Neidhardt wrote that the Zagreb Master Workshop closed in 1984. Davorin Vujčić on the other hand suggests that Galić might have led some version of the workshop until his passing in 1992. See Zvonko Kusić, Velimir Neidhardt, Andrija Mutnjaković, Borka Bobovec, Iva Ceraj, Dubravka Kisić, and Marina Smokvina, *Hrvatski Muzej Arhitekture / Croatian Museum of Architecture* (Zagreb: Croatian Academy of Art and Sciences, 2018); Velimir Neidhardt, “Drago Galić (1907–1992),” *Život umjetnosti: časopis za pitanja likovne kulture*, no. 52/53 (1992/93): 30–35; Vujčić, “Majstorske radionice,” 46.

## MASTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PRAGUE

Further north, also in a villa-like building adjoining a large park on a Prague hill, a communist-era enterprise trained young architects through a three-year postgraduate architecture course. The ‘mistrovská’ Škola architektury, or ‘master’ School of architecture, was, unlike the Zagreb workshop, a long-standing part of an established art institution, the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, and under communism continued to nurture the nation’s architectural elite (fig. 3). Between one and five postgraduate or, sometimes, advanced undergraduate architecture students were admitted yearly. Students received no state financial support other than free tuition, and many were already licensed and working in state offices. A single professor – renowned for integrating architecture and art – led the school, supported by architectural assistants, professional consultants, and a secretary. Its post-World War II roster of teachers included, as professors, the acclaimed modernists Jaroslav Fragner (1945–1966) and František Cubr (1968–1976) and, later, as associate professors, the conservationist and exhibition designer Marian Bělohradský (1966–1968, 1977–1982, both times as interim director) and the brutalist Vratislav Růžička (1982–1988).

The Prague Academy of Fine Arts had deep historical roots, originating at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as an aristocratic initiative modeled on the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and the Academies of Fine Arts in Munich and Dresden.



**Fig. 3.** Jan Kotěra and Josef Gočár, Mistrovská škola architektury (Master School of Architecture), Academy of Fine Arts, U Akademie 2, Prague, original building project 1922–1924. Renovation by Marcela Steinbachová, Skupina Architekti, 2018–2020. Photograph by Tomáš Souček.

Architecture became a separate topic of study in the mid-1900s. In 1910 Jan Kotěra, a pupil of Otto Wagner, became the lead professor of architecture and, with previous director Josef Gočár, designed the “architecture villa.” Completed in 1924, it had two floors of studios, with office space for the director, assistants, and secretary above.<sup>6</sup>

The Academy of Fine Arts closed under Nazi occupation, reopening in 1945 under the leadership of Fragner, who also updated the villa’s interior.<sup>7</sup> With impeccable political credentials due to his prewar membership in the left-leaning avant-garde group Devětsil (Nine Forces), Fragner was able to preserve the Master School by presenting it as his own practice despite communist regime pressure in 1948 to nationalize architectural education. His role as director of Projekt Studio R, an entity of the state-run architecture office Stavoprojekt Praha, in some ways made him untouchable because his work with students on major Prague state commissions was symbolically important to the regime.<sup>8</sup> The Master School’s work on the renovation of the Karolinum – Charles University’s central complex – had to be completed by 1948, in time for the university’s 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary. And the rebuilding of the Protestant Betlémská Kaple (Bethlehem Chapel, 1949–1954), closely linked to the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Hussite movement, was seen by the regime as a vital celebration of communism.<sup>9</sup> Nationalization of the Master School would have ground these projects to a halt.<sup>10</sup>

Fragner did not, however, prevent the infiltration of politics entirely. In 1951 the state declared that the school’s architecture curriculum must include classes in Marxism-Leninism, Russian language and – at the height of Cold War anxiety – military training. These supplemented the usual studio course work in drawing, model making, art and architectural history, construction technology, building typology, urbanism, organization of construction, and light and sound, taught by professionals working in state practices or the Academy’s art professors. The program’s mission was explicit: “to link to life

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6 “Historie AVU” [History of AVU], Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze / Škola architektury prof. Emila Příklad [Academy of Fine Arts / Emil Příklad’s School of Architecture], accessed December 12, 2021, [http://arch.avu.cz/index.php?page=school&school\\_page=history](http://arch.avu.cz/index.php?page=school&school_page=history).

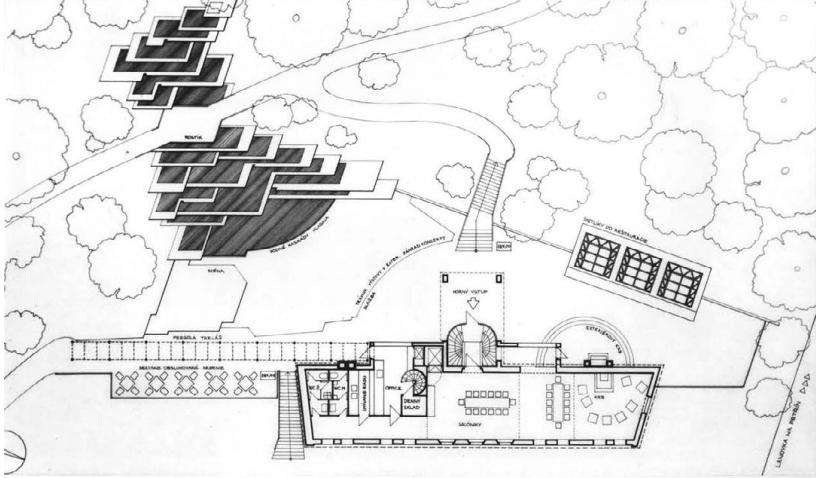
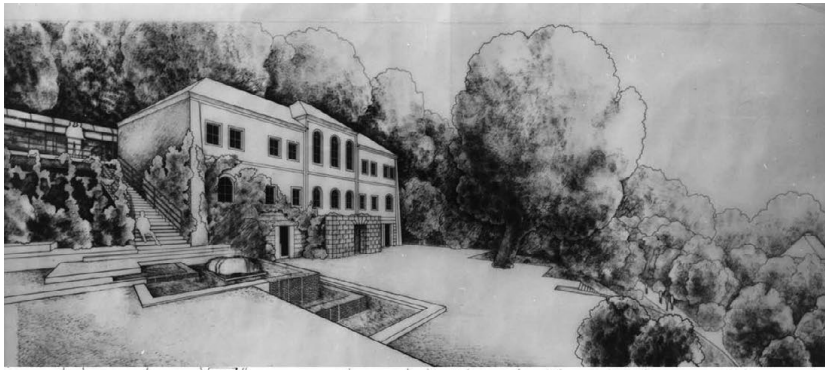
7 See “Tisková zpráva k památkovému obnovení budovy Školy architektury ze dne 12. 2. 2020” [Press Release on the Historic Renovation of the Building of the School of Architecture, dated 12 February 2020], accessed January 10, 2022, <https://www.avu.cz/document/tiskov%C3%A1-zpr%C3%A1va-k-pam%C3%A1tkov%C3%A9mu-obnoven%C3%AD-budovy-%C5%A1koly-architektury-avu-6165>.

8 Project Studio R of Stavoprojekt Prague later formed the basis of the Specializovaný Ústav pro Rekonstrukce Památkových Měst a Objektů, or SURPMO (State Institute for the Reconstruction of Monuments, Cities, and Buildings).

9 The communist adoption of Jan Hus as a heroic figure was central to the merger of socialism and nationalism in the ČSSR, a rejection of the Habsburg imperialist past, and a Slavic identity that was more conducive to Soviet hegemony.

10 “Historie AVU” [History of AVU], Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze / Škola architektury prof. Emila Příklad [Academy of Fine Arts / Emil Příklad’s School of Architecture], accessed December 12, 2021, [http://arch.avu.cz/index.php?page=school&school\\_page=history](http://arch.avu.cz/index.php?page=school&school_page=history). All the translations of the quotations are made by Ruedi Ray.





**Fig. 4.** Albert Mikoviny, Prague Academy of Fine Arts, Master School of Architecture student project for the renovation of the Nebozízek restaurant, Petřín hill, Prague, 1982. Courtesy of Zdenka Nováková. By permission of Albert Mikoviny.

and to perform specific tasks given by industry, agriculture, trips to workplaces, and brigades.”<sup>11</sup>

The architecture studio, with most curricular hours, was taught by the lead professor and his assistants, following the *beaux arts* atelier model. Students often attended individually; under Fragner they met after work, with critiques continuing late into the night; under Cubr and afterward, they met mostly during the day. Projects reflected both political priorities and symbolic, formal, and philosophical aspects of socialist values. In the 1960s, maternity schools and housing on key Prague sites upheld collective ideals. Projects paralleling major cultural commissions (theaters, opera houses, galleries, recreation sites) reinforced national pride and leisure activities, and Union of International Architects design competitions promoted the East in the West. As in Zagreb, under Fragner students worked on his prestigious state commissions; Cubr kept his practice separate, but with his academy assistant Zdenka Nováková, later associate professor herself, as his professional collaborator.<sup>12</sup> Nováková’s student Albert Mikoviny’s 1982 drawings for a restaurant on Petřín hill, near Prague Castle, resonate with the soft tones of traditional buildings and landscapes – a reflection of the budding contextualism

of the era – while at the same time recalling abstract modernism through geometric terraced fountains (**fig. 4**).

The Master School’s prestige and a more lenient political atmosphere in the 1960s sometimes allowed party orthodoxy to be evaded. Fragner, who

<sup>11</sup> “Učební Plán Vysokých Škol Výtvarných Umění: Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze a Vysoká škola výtvarných umění v Bratislavě” [Curriculum of University-Level Institutions of Fine Arts: Academy of Fine Arts in Prague and University of Fine Arts in Bratislava], Ministry of Education, Science and the Arts, July 7, 1951, 1.

<sup>12</sup> After Cubr’s death in 1976, Nováková continued to lead the office’s projects and, with Bělohradský as interim director, was promoted to associate professor, equal in rank to both Bělohradský and Růžička.

was obliged to invite party-sanctioned architects, cannily served them enough alcohol to keep them from following the studio's work.<sup>13</sup> Yet in the Stalinist 1950s his teaching – maybe due to political anxiety – was terse, with little studio discussion.<sup>14</sup> When Cubr succeeded Fragner in 1968, the studio's independence grew.<sup>15</sup> Cubr too was deeply respected within and beyond the academy, mainly for his acclaimed Czech Pavilion at Expo 58 in Brussels, which carefully integrated art and architecture, symbolizing communism's turn to high modernism and focus on leisure and the arts. The school's culture of trust and protection led to freer conversations and stronger links between architecture and art. Although the so-called normalization period of the 1970s and 1980s circumscribed the school's activities, the studio's intimacy and connection of architecture and art remained.

Such an intimate and open-minded experience was not available to all, especially not in the first two postwar decades, even when communist zeal was at its highest and ideological messages of equality dominated. In the 1940s and 1950s there was only one woman graduate. Of 35 graduates in the 1960s only six were female, even though men and women enrolled in technical university undergraduate programs in close to equal numbers. Percentages of Master School women students were similarly low in the 1970s and 1980s, despite Nováková's significant role during those decades. And of the more than 40 instructors who taught between 1945 and 1989, only three were women.<sup>16</sup>

Today the school's two key eras are still named after their professors: the Fragner school and the Cubr school, echoing similar enterprises such as the Ibler school in Zagreb.<sup>17</sup> Such "mastery," also embodied in the title of "academic architect," which students received upon graduation, conferred prestige and later prominence for alumni practitioners and educators, some of whom are members of today's senior Czech architectural elite. Disproportionally male and Czech or Moravian – as opposed to Silesian, Slovak or of another ethnicity – despite radical political changes since 1989, such an elite represents the ongoing dominance of the solo patriarch in the reproduction of professional and personal identity.

## MASTER SCHOOL, BUDAPEST

Budapest's Mesteriskola, or Master School, like its counterparts in Zagreb and Prague, was an elite postgraduate program. Like the Zagreb workshop, it was a new entity founded in 1953 to immerse postgraduates in Hungarian

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13 Eva Jiříčná, interview with the authors, June 17, 2020.

14 See Rostislav Švácha, personal notes, cited in *Alena Šrámková: Architektura* [Alena Šrámková: Architecture], ed. Helena Doudová et al. (Prague: Kant, 2019), 105 n19.

15 See Zdenka Nováková, "František Cubr," accessed June 15, 2021, <https://www.archiweb.cz/frantisek-cubr>.

16 They were assistants to Cubr, Bělohradský, and Růžička. The youngest hire was also expected to act as secretary; Bělohradský did so under Fragner, and Zdenka Nováková and Iva Knappová did so under Cubr and Růžička, respectively. Jiřina Loudová taught without assuming a secretarial role. Zdenka Nováková, email correspondence with Katerina Rüedi Ray, January 19, 2022.

17 Bělohradský and Růžička were never promoted to professor; their eras are thus not named after them.





**Fig. 5.** Antal Gottgeb, Almásy-Andrássy mansion, 1877, known as MÉSZ-hall, headquarters of Magyar Építőművészek Szövetsége (Chamber of Hungarian Architects), Ötpacsirta utca 2/Múzeum utca, Budapest. Photograph by Daniel Kovacs.

and international architectural theory and practice, which at the time meant resolutely promoting the Muscovite architecture of young socialist realism.<sup>18</sup> Coordinated by Budapest Technical University and the Hungarian Chamber of Architects, it was led by the modernist István Janáky, succeeded in 1957 by another modernist, Jenő Szendrői. The first cohort comprised twenty-one students, mentored by eight founding “masters” – prominent architects including István Nyíri, Gyula Rimanóczy, and Károly Weichinger.<sup>19</sup>

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The school generally accepted approximately 20 licensed architects biannually from 100 to 200 applicants working in state architectural offices. As with the schools in Zagreb and Prague, entry was highly selective. Its teaching, too, centered on individual mentorship but was supported by large group lectures, discussions, yearly two- or three-day symposia in various Hungarian cities, and field trips to buildings, to other Eastern Bloc states, and occasionally to friendly nations outside the bloc.<sup>20</sup> Students met for lectures and debates, sometimes at the university but mostly at the so-called MÉSZ-hall, the national headquarters of the Hungarian Chamber of Architects in Budapest. This grand building was the former Almásy-Andrássy mansion – a stately two-story structure with tall ceilings, an art nouveau entrance, and a monumental neoclassical exterior (**fig. 5**).

18 Tamás Devényi, cited in “Mesteriskola 2020 – Szendrői-díj odaítélése és a XXVI. ciklus indulása” [Master School 2020 – Award of the Szendrői Prize and the Start of the XXVI Cycle], accessed June 26, 2021, <https://epiteszforum.hu/mesteriskola-2020--szendroi-dij-odaitelese-es-a-mixxvi-ciklus-indulasa->.

19 Lajos Arnóth, “MESTERiskola, Folytatás, 26 Fialat Építész” [MASTER Course, 26 Young Architects], exhibition catalog, 3, accessed May 31, 2021, [https://issuu.com/mesteriskola/docs/mesteriskola\\_katalogus\\_preview\\_2005](https://issuu.com/mesteriskola/docs/mesteriskola_katalogus_preview_2005).

20 Botond Bognar, interview with the authors, July 8, 2020. The 1972–1974 Master School cycle also included a trip to Egypt, funded by competition entry fees. See Jenő Szendrői, *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 46.

Studio teaching, however, took place at the master's office desk and involved the completion, over two years, of a number of projects. State architectural offices had to approve participants' enrollment and time to attend lectures and events. They also appointed prominent office architects as "masters." Szendrői later recalled how young architects grouped around an older master, in an almost patriarchal form.<sup>21</sup> Through emulation of the older generation, the master school was to "conquer ... manipulated, prefabricated thinking ... [and support] the framing of a conscious and independent personality."<sup>22</sup> It was this promise of individuality and autonomy that soon troubled the regime. Accusing it, in the harsh post-1956 years, of elite training and lack of active socialist political involvement, the regime closed the school in 1960.<sup>23</sup> It reemerged in 1970 as an informal discussion group called *Fiatal Építészek Köre* (Circle of Young Architects) and only from 1982 again functioned officially under the *Mesteriskola* name.

The curriculum was broader than those in Zagreb and Prague. By 1974 it included topics in architectural theory, economic and social development, sociology, organizational and management theory, aesthetics, structural design, mathematical logic, computer technology, systems theory, theory of technology, urban design, and social tasks of architecture. The masters included practicing architects but also key professors from the *Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem* (Budapest University of Technology) and the *Magyar Iparművészeti Főiskola* (Hungarian College of Applied Arts), many of whom were active practitioners through their institutional departments. Students also had lectures by Hungary's economic, cultural, and political elite.<sup>24</sup>

Yet here too women were underrepresented. For example, in the early 1970s, of the school's 40 or so lecturers, one was a woman. The 1972 competition for entry to the school attracted 80 applicants, and thus, unusually, 33 were accepted, but only six were women. The portfolios of student projects exemplify the transitional nature of the time, referencing both modern and postmodern tendencies: Ágnes Schwarczuk's drawings of large-scale modular structures exemplify the former, while Béla Rex Kiss's drawings represent the latter, providing snapshots of contemporary culture similar to the work of Archigram and Superstudio (**fig. 6**).<sup>25</sup> Like those in Prague, the projects in Budapest had shifted in focus and aesthetic by 1987, with the drawings now incorporating the

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21 Jenő Szendrői, cited in *ÉMÉ Mesteriskola, XX. Ciklus* [ÉMÉ Master School, XX. Cycle], accessed May 31, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130613200831/http://mesteriskola.hu/>.

22 Jenő Szendrői, *Der Architekt*, no. 12 (1991), cited in Lajos Arnóth, "MESTERiskola, Folytatás, 26 Fialat Építész" [MASTER Course, 26 Young Architects], exhibition catalog, 3, accessed May 31, 2021, [https://issuu.com/mesteriskola/docs/mesteriskola\\_katalogus\\_preview\\_2005](https://issuu.com/mesteriskola/docs/mesteriskola_katalogus_preview_2005).

23 "A Mesteriskoláról" [About the Master School], accessed June 10, 2021, <https://mesteriskola.wordpress.com/mesteriskola/>.

24 Ferenc Vámosy, "Az elméleti képzés témakörei, témái és témavezetői" [Topics, Themes, and Supervisors of Theoretical Training], *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 47.

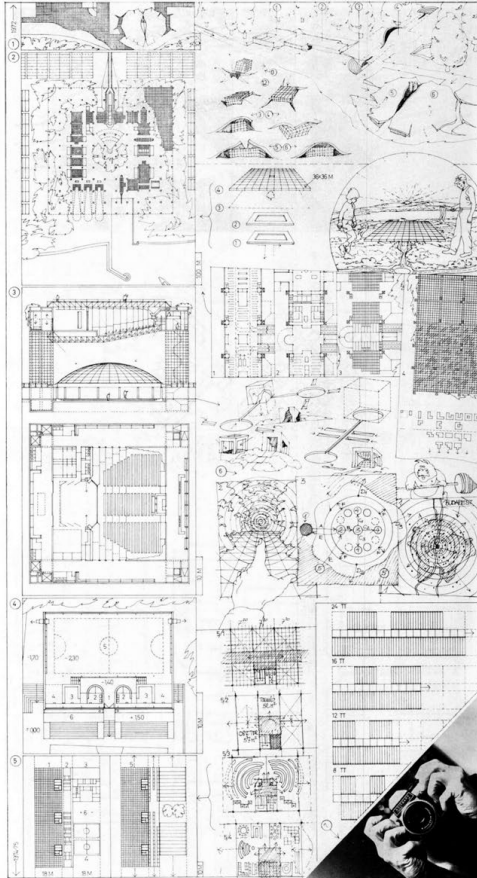
25 See *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 41–42.



Született 1943-ban Debrecenben. Az Eötvös József Gimnáziumban érettségizett. 1967-ben kapott diplomát az Iparművészeti Főiskola Építészeti Tanszékén.

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3. Újpest, városközpont és kultúrház, 1974. (M. Falk Edőssel, Petrovics Lászlóval)
4. Zalaegerszeg általános iskola tornaterme, 1974. (Kivittai terv), 1. Közlekedő, 2. Mosdó-szuhány, 3. Öltöző, 4. Szorító, 5. Tornaszoba, 6. Szabadtéri létesítmény
5. Várboroszterkezeti általános iskolák tervezésük (8–12–16–24 tantermes), 1974–1975. Engedélyezési – kivittai terv. A 12 tantermes iskola földszíni és emeleti alaprészének: 1. Szaktermi zóna, 2. Ködött (aktív, ülő, lakás stb.) zóna, 3. Műhelycsarnok és könyvtár, 4. Tornaszoba, 5. Tanszaki zóna, 6. Údvar 5,5x10 5,4x9 a tantermi zóna változásai.
6. Egymással dinamikus kölcsönhatásban lévő művelődési rendszere. A Magyar Internacionálisok Embékművelődési Intézet, 1974. (Petrovics Lászlóval)
7. Fotókollázs, 1972



1945-ben született Budapesten. 1969-ben védte meg diplomáját a BME Építészeti Művészeti Karán. Diplomamunkájáról a végzős hallgatók pályázatán I. díjat nyert.

Eredményes tervpályázatok

- Környezet architektúra, 1969: Sopron, Állami jogi ügyosztály városrész, 1969; Nagybánya városközpont, 1970; Pécs, Havvágy, 1971; Károkutató városközpont, 1971; Veszprém, Mátyás király Múzeum, 1972; Győrök, Győrpályaváros, 1973; Képzőművészeti városközpont, 1973; Bécs „Danubius”, 1973; Internacionálisok emlékműve, 1974; Újpesti városközpont és főiskolai ház, 1974.

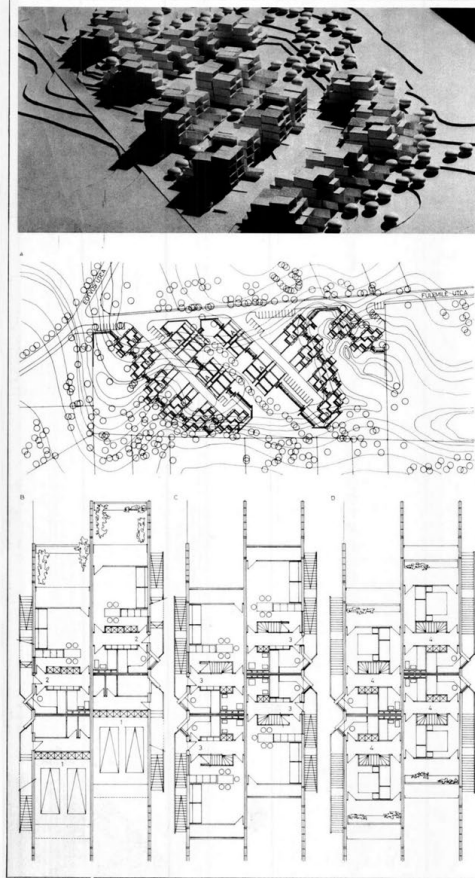
Központi Fizikai Kutató Intézet lakótelepe, Budapest XII., Fűtelműtelek utca

Tervező: Szenci Ottó  
A Szabadság-hegy északkeleti lejtőjén, jelentős találmányai rendezésű területen 114 lakás telepítését oldja meg a terv. Olyan beépítési rendszer kialakítása volt a cél, amely a korszerű követelmények figyelembevételével kiválóan a terület érvényesítését adottságait, annak hegyvidéki és zöldterületi jellegét.

Az adott építési technológia (blokk) felhasználásával a terv kétféle lakóépület telepítését számolt. A tervezési terület viszonylag sík részén álló „A” típusú, valamint a lejtőre részben elhelyezett „B” típusú épületekkel biztosítja a megadott által meghatározott nagyságú lakásokat és azok 5%-os megosztását.

A bemutatott „B” típusú épület 2 db 48 m<sup>2</sup>-es, és 4 db 85 m<sup>2</sup>-es lakást tartalmaz.

Az épületek harmonikus rendszerrel kapcsolódnak a függőleges táborhoz szerkezete a BULAV blokkgyűrűt üzemében elődított: közhelyes-blokkból készült, a rendelkezésre bocsátott gyártási méretek figyelembevételével. A lakótelep kivitelezését 1975-ben kezdik meg.



A) Beépítési terv  
B) „B” típusú épület földszíni alrajza, 1 : 250  
C) „B” típusú épület. emeleti alrajza, 1 : 250  
D) „B” típusú épület II. emeleti alrajza, 1 : 250, 1. Garázsok, 2. Kis lakás alrajza, 3. Nagy lakás földszíni alrajza, 4. Nagy lakás emeleti alrajza.

historical context of Hungarian cities but also echoing Western postmodern tendencies – a sign of Hungary’s loosened “goulash socialism.” By this time the cohort size was down to around 20, a quarter of whom were women.<sup>26</sup>

As in Zagreb and Prague, careful selection winnowed the profession’s elite down to ten or so individuals per year. This often favored men, due to the continued pressures of family life and demands on women, despite socialism’s proclaimed equality. The program’s professionally beneficial personal connections and automatic passage upon graduation to membership in the Hungarian Chamber of Architects – of higher status than architectural licensing alone – created an influential elite. Despite the school’s decade-long hiatus, key masters and participants became leading practitioners and educators both before and after 1989.

## CONCLUSION: MASTERS, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNIST PATRIARCHY

The impact of the master schools lay in their capacity to quickly produce a privileged cadre of practicing architects, surpassing Western models of Master’s-level education, in which academic experimentation was more removed from

**Fig. 6.** Béla Rex Kiss, projects and competitions, and Ágnes Schwarzczuk, housing estate of the Central Physics Research Institute, in: *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 41, 42. Courtesy of *Magyar Építőművészet*. By permission of Béla Rex Kiss and Ágnes Schwarzczuk.

26 “A Mesteriskola IX. ciklusának felvételi tervpályázata: A Magyar Építészeti Múzeum” [The Master School IX. Cycle Competition: The Hungarian Architecture Museum], *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 78, no. 6 (1987): 3–7.



**Fig. 7.** Poster for *Majstori, majstori!* (literally, “Masters, Masters!,” released internationally as *All That Jack’s*), 1980, directed by Goran Marković. Courtesy of the Yugoslav Film Archive, Belgrade.



practice, and licensure and accreditation were, and remain, slow and costly. Even more so than their Western counterparts, master schools contributed to the creation of an architectural elite – a form of professionalization as social distinction discussed by Pierre Bourdieu and Magali Sarfatti Larson. The master atelier’s exclusive, emulation-based teaching model resonates with Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* and its unconscious corporeal/environmental enculturation that creates, in addition to institutionalized cultural capital, the embodied cultural capital of an educated person of distinction.<sup>27</sup> It also resembles the intimacy through which, according to Sarfatti Larson, professional education unconsciously reproduces internalized moral and epistemological norms.<sup>28</sup> Its exclusivity, instead of maintaining market closure, as in the West, ensured different degrees of ideological compliance (a kind of political closure). It created, separated, elevated, and rewarded a state-sanctioned professional cadre far smaller (and thus more controllable) than that graduating from Master’s programs in the West.<sup>29</sup>

Yet these master schools also recall another form of separation, in which the meaning of the word *master* suggests not only power hierarchies but also gender stereotypes. Directed by the Prague-educated filmmaker Goran Marković, *Majstori, majstori!* (Masters, Masters!) is a 1980 Yugoslav film about the often-denied socialist class system (fig. 7). It tells the story of a dysfunctional elementary school and its employees, bookended by two characters: the powerless female

27 See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72, and Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 241–258.

28 See Magali Sarfatti Larson, “The Production of Expertise and the Constitution of Expert Power,” in *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. Thomas L. Haskell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 28–80.

29 See Michael Burrage and Rolf Torstendahl, *Professions in Theory and History: Rethinking the Study of the Professions* (London: Sage, 1990), 23.

school director, played by Semka Sokolović-Bertok, and the school's janitor, Keva (slang for "mom" in Serbo-Croatian), played by an actual janitor, Smilja Zdravković. The plot revolves around a single event: Keva's retirement dinner party, set in the school's gym and evoking the imagery of the Last Supper. Laden with food, alcohol, and internal intrigue, the movie portrays a chaotic organization in which even a capable school director is completely helpless in enforcing responsibility and efficacy. Throughout the endless party, Keva stays silent as others speak up and "celebrate" her life. When everyone leaves, she is left doing what she has done all her life: cleaning up the mess. *Masters, Masters!* depicts a decaying socialist enterprise and implied class system centered on several binary opposites: the educated urban elite versus the uneducated rural working class. In portraying the silent female janitor and helpless female director, the film also exposes socialist gender stereotypes and the blunt sexism of a supposedly egalitarian society.

*Masters, Masters!* and the master schools both recall the patriarchal order sustaining the master as a paternalistic father figure. European architecture's patriarchy goes back at least to patrilineal medieval masons' ordinances protecting the monopoly over their labor value. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century patriarchy had permeated the collective architectural unconscious when, as Elizabeth Wilson has written, rapid urbanization became associated with fears of rampant female sexuality.<sup>30</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century communist efforts at liberating women from the "great confinements" of motherhood and home only partially dislodged such legacies; indeed, while women often made up 50 percent of architecture undergraduates, far fewer of them joined postgraduate master workshops and their subsequent elites.

Through individual mentorship of young professionals immersed in built work, master schools pursued symbolic refinement and built work via one-on-one dialogue with and emulation of revered masters. Their high-profile cultural projects (opera houses, theaters, resorts, and expo pavilions) or collective buildings (schools, factories, housing) worthy of the communist state and Western audiences, bridged architecture and art; exhibited locally and abroad, and sometimes built, they propelled "master graduate" careers.

Despite the limitations of both education and practice in a state system that sought to achieve its political goals through mass education at technical universities, Prague's and Budapest's master schools survived and impacted the discipline beyond the fall of the Iron Curtain. Despite their prominence, however, some master schools and workshops closed temporarily or disappeared even before their sponsor states disbanded, indicating that "emulation of the master" could create fatal conflicts between architecture and the state. Nevertheless, their continuance – with their individualism and elitism – also foreshadowed the dissolution of the political, if not the personal, patriarchy of the communist world.

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30 See Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago, 1991).



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**WHEN THE STATE BUILDS.  
THE ARCHITECTURAL AGENDA  
OF THE K.K. MINISTERIUM FÜR  
ÖFFENTLICHE ARBEITEN (1908–1918), THE  
BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR HANDEL  
UND VERKEHR AND THE MINISTERSTVO  
VEŘEJNÝCH PRACÍ (1918–1938)**

**Abstract**

*Based on the architectural production of the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Public Works, founded in 1908, and on its successor institutions in the Austrian and in the Czechoslovak First Republics, this article deals with the question of the representational value and the linguistic and expressive capacity of state architecture in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Selected examples show the differentiated picture with which this state architecture presents itself to us, its stylistic plurality as a continuum across temporal and spatial boundaries, and the decisive influence of the building environment and the actors involved on form and architectural language.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

In his famous novel *The Castle*, Franz Kafka outlines a system ruled by “mysterious” authorities who are difficult to access and incomprehensible. Kafka’s main character K. strives to enter the castle and is constantly confronted with uncertainties and difficulties in understanding the system defined behind its walls. The presence and materiality of the castle stands in stark contrast to the lack of understanding of its meaning and effects. Just as Kafka’s K. sets out to enter the palace in order to gain a sense of reality, three “mysterious” ministries in three states responsible (among other tasks) for state building matters<sup>1</sup> will be presented for the first time in architectural history as authoritative institutions that were interconnected in a complex frame of reference in time, space and state: the k.k. Ministerium für öffentliche Arbeiten, the *Bundesministerium für Handel und Verkehr* of the Austrian First Republic, and the Ministerstvo veřejných prací of the Czechoslovak First Republic.

<sup>1</sup> See e. g. the “Provisorische Geschäftseinteilung für die administrativen und technischen Bauangelegenheiten im Ministerium für öffentliche Arbeiten” [Provisional Division of Business for Administrative and Technical Construction Matters of the Imperial-Royal Ministry of Public Works], especially the tasks of the Department VIII responsible for building constructions; 1908 (Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Handel, Ministerium für öffentliche Arbeiten [hereafter cited as: AVA Handel MföA], Präsidiale 6: Zl. 730-I/3b, Austrian State Archives, Vienna [hereafter cited as: OeStA]). This document also includes the change of division of business of 1909 (AVA Handel MföA Präsidiale 20: Zl. 1443-3b1, OeStA).

What results and findings can we expect if we analyse state-produced architecture (in our case of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Central Europe) not, as is usually the case in art history, from the side of outstanding architects or buildings that became significant for the development of style, for example, due to their innovative power, but from the side of the responsible administrative authorities? In other words, not as individual artistic achievements, but as the activity of several actors with different starting positions and interests in a common field of action?

First of all, we will not only be able to examine artistically or stylistically innovative things. Art history as well as the history of architecture still tend (despite all the attention now paid to “intermediate phenomena”)<sup>2</sup> to deal primarily with outstanding works. The wide range of general architectural production down to small, often seemingly insignificant building tasks for the general development of architecture (such as shelter huts for customs guards as simple wooden sheds) is rarely taken into account. But building ministries were precisely responsible for such buildings. They still present themselves as “mysterious” institutions, and we still do not know what exactly these ministries did and what architecture they created, because these authorities have never been placed at the centre of architectural historical analyses. We therefore do not have a systematic overview of the construction projects in question,<sup>3</sup> no systematic knowledge about the tasks involved in the creation of state building infrastructure,<sup>4</sup> the building types necessary for this, the styles used, the persons and institutions responsible for it, as well as the backgrounds and circumstances of state architecture. The analysis of architectural linguistic ability that has been done so far (such as Ákos Moravánszky’s studies on stylistic plurality in Central Europe or Anthony Alofsin’s “speaking buildings”)<sup>5</sup> focus on stylistically and

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2 An example of this is the now established awareness of the stylistic plurality between “tradition” and “modernity”, to which, in addition to numerous survey works and monographs on architects, the fundamental exhibitions of the DAM (Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt am Main) in particular should be mentioned here as examples: Vittorio Lampugnani and Romana Schneider (eds.), *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 1950: Reform und Tradition* [Modern Architecture in Germany 1900 to 1950: Reform and Tradition] (Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje, 1992); see also Kai Krauskopf, Hans-Georg Lippert and Kerstin Zschke (eds.), *Neue Tradition. Konzepte einer antimodernen Moderne in Deutschland von 1920 bis 1960* [New Tradition. Concepts of an Anti-Modern Modernity in Germany from 1920 to 1960] (Dresden: Thelem, 2009).

3 With regard to the situation in the German Reich: Godehard Hoffmann, *Architektur für die Nation? Der Reichstag und die Staatsbauten des Deutschen Kaiserreichs 1871–1918* [Architecture for the Nation? The Reichstag and the State Buildings of the German Empire 1871–1918] (Cologne: DuMont, 2000), 13. The opposite is the case with the municipal building administrations, which have already received a great deal of research attention, as in the case of Red Vienna, see e. g. Eve Blau, *Rotes Wien. Architektur 1919–1934. Stadt – Raum – Politik* [Red Vienna. Architecture 1919–1934. City – Space – Politics] (Vienna: Ambra, 2014).

4 By infrastructure we mean not only technical-industrial facilities, but the comprehensive concept of (structural) necessities that a state needs in order to function and which it therefore endeavours to produce, as Günther exemplifies in its broad scope with reference to the Ruhr region (Roland Günther, “Die politische Ikonographie des Ruhrgebiets in der Epoche der Industrialisierung” [The Political Iconography of the Ruhr Area in the Era of Industrialization], in *Architektur als politische Kultur. philosophica practica*, eds. Hermann Hipp and Ernst Seidl (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1996), 213–224, especially 291–220.

5 Ákos Moravánszky, *Competing Visions. Aesthetic Invention and Social Imagination in Central European Architecture, 1867–1918* (Cambridge/Massachusetts-London: MIT Press, 1998); Anthony Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak: Architecture as Language in the Habsburg Empire and Its Aftermath, 1867–1933* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

also functionally outstanding buildings such as national theatres, parliaments or town halls. Their informative value is limited insofar as they only insufficiently illuminate the structural background, the bulk of the architectural creativity of the time against which innovative developments took place.

Therefore, the study of these institutions, which primarily pursued general state interests and only secondarily artistic ones, promises to open up new perspectives for the history of architecture because it focuses on the broad range of architectural production of a period and not so much on individual phenomena, however strongly they may have influenced future artistic developments. By giving special space to these works and architectural ideas, we can relate the results of the entire architectural production of a period to one another and thus create foundations for revealing and re-evaluating potential distortions caused by contemporary architectural discourse and its reception by later architectural historical research.

If one wants to examine the architectural production of building ministries, one must first of all ask the question of the building tasks that are perceived as necessary for a state. Then there is the question of the type of building measures, because, for example, a state administration that operates economically with the available resources can also create the necessary infrastructure by adapting existing building fabric. Or it may want to send a clear signal to citizens in the form of representative new buildings, and therefore has to dig deep into its pockets to make ideological messages visible and legible. There is also the question of whether ministries intervened actively and creatively in the field of architecture or whether they retreated to the artistically passive role of approval and regulatory authority. And finally, in Central Europe in particular, the question arises of the ruptures and continuities caused by World War I, when the disintegration of a state gave rise to a large number of new nation states, which, however, did not represent a *tabula rasa* in terms of the structures and people involved.

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### THREE MINISTRIES, THEIR HISTORY AND TASKS

K. K. Ministerium für öffentliche Arbeiten (The imperial-royal Ministry of Public Works) is one such mysterious institution. Although this office is regularly mentioned by name in connection with various architectural-historical thematic complexes (in connection with individual buildings and building projects,<sup>6</sup> the *Heimatschutz* [lit. homeland protection move-

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6 E. g. with individual building projects in Graz: Antje Senarclens de Grancy, “*Moderner Stil*” und “*Heimisches Bauen*”. *Architekturreform in Graz um 1900* [“Modern Style” and “Domestic Building”. Architectural Reform in Graz around 1900] (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau, 2001); in Brno and Moravská Ostrava: Jan Galeta, “Urban Development Strategies in Brno and Moravská Ostrava,” in *A Spirit at Work. Architecture and Czech Politics 1918–1945*, ed. Vendula Hnídková (Prague: umprum, 2020), 314–374; in Vienna: Anna Stuhlpfarrer, “Der ehemalige Residenzbezirk in der Ersten Republik und im Austrofaschismus” [The Former Residential District in the First Republic and under Austrofascism], in *Die Wiener Hofburg seit 1918. Von der Residenz zum Museumsquartier* [The Vienna Hofburg since 1918. From the Residence to the Museum Quarter], ed. Maria Welzig (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2018), 26–115; Simone Bader, Katharina Hölzl et al., *Specialist School: the History of the Sculpture Building of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna* (Vienna: Schlebrügge, 2019).

ment],<sup>7</sup> the German and Austrian Werkbund,<sup>8</sup> social welfare and small housing, etc.), little attention has been paid to the institution itself and its work. Apart from administrative-historical studies,<sup>9</sup> there has been no scientific study of architectural history in relation to this ministry. Yet it was responsible for all state construction measures from Bukovina in the east to Bohemia in the West and Dalmatia in the south. In the first Austrian Republic, it continued as nothing more than a sub-department of the Ministry of Trade and Transport. That is because, on the one hand, a large number of the buildings required for state operation (such as a parliament building) already existed and, on the other hand, the area of the new state had been reduced to such an extent that there was apparently no need for a separate Ministry of Buildings. In contrast, such a ministry was newly founded in the first Czechoslovak Republic, where buildings for ministries and other offices had to be newly created and a separate parliament building did not (yet) exist. This ministry received the name Ministerstvo veřejných prací (Ministry of Public Works). Thus, it had exactly the same name as in the times of the monarchy – only the prefix “imperial-royal” was omitted, of course.

The large number of employed architects, as can be seen for example from the entries in the *Architektenlexikon Wien 1770–1945*,<sup>10</sup> the most comprehensive collection of information on architects working in Vienna to date, shows that these ministries must have been of great importance for the architectural business of the time. The wide spectrum of building tasks and the broad range of styles employed will be presented below as examples in an attempt to epistemically situate these phenomena on the basis of the people involved and the local-spatial contexts.

The Ministry of Public Works, founded in 1908, was responsible for all state construction projects in the Cisleithanian part of the Habsburg Monarchy, including road, water and bridge construction as well as structural engineering. The staff of this new authority was almost entirely taken over from the structural engineering department of the Ministry of the Interior, which until then had been responsible for state building tasks. In addition, the new

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7 *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege*, no. 43 (1989) with contributions by Friedrich Achleitner, Theodor Brückler, Géza Hajós and Andreas Lehne.

8 Astrid Gmeiner and Gottfried Pirhofer, *Der österreichische Werkbund. Alternative zur klassischen Moderne in Architektur, Raum- und Produktgestaltung* [The Austrian Werkbund. Alternative to Classical Modernism in Architecture, Interior and Product Design] (Salzburg-Vienna: Residenz, 1985); Wilfried Posch, “Die Österreichische Werkbundbewegung 1907–28” [The Austrian Werkbund Movement 1907–28], in *Geistiges Leben im Österreich der Ersten Republik*, ed. Isabella Ackerl (Vienna-Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik and Oldenbourg, 1986), 279–312.

9 Walter Goldinger, “Geschichte der Organisation des Handelsministeriums” [History of the Organization of the Ministry of Commerce], in *100 Jahre im Dienste der Wirtschaft*, vol. 1, Vienna 1961, 301–363; Walter Goldinger, “Die Zentralverwaltung in Cisleithanien – Die zivile gemeinsame Zentralverwaltung” [The Central Administration in Cisleithania – The civilian joint central administration], in: *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918 2: Verwaltung und Rechtswesen*, eds. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003), 100–189.

10 *Architektenlexikon Wien 1770–1945*, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.architektenlexikon.at/>.

ministry took over the agendas of the state building administration, the former Dikasterialgebäude-Direktion (the Dicasterial Building Directorate), from the Ministry of Finance. However, individual areas of responsibility remained with their previous ministries, such as railway construction with the Ministry of Railways or all building measures for the state monopoly enterprises of the salt works or tobacco factories with the Ministry of Finance. At the provincial level, local building authorities under the respective provincial governments, the *Statthaltereien*, were responsible for construction measures. Since it was therefore not possible to combine all building agendas in the new ministry, questions of departmental and administrative responsibility remained the subject of discussions until the end of the monarchy, which led to confusing overlaps of competences and slow business processes, so that the ministry was referred to in Reichsrat debates as the “building prevention ministry”.<sup>11</sup>

Transformed into a state office of the First Republic of Austria in 1918, the formerly independent ministry was merged with other offices and ministries and finally incorporated into the Federal Ministry of Trade and Transport in 1923, which existed until the annexation to the Third Reich in 1938. The poor economic situation in the young state meant that hardly any larger new construction projects were carried out, especially since the central state infrastructure such as ministry buildings, parliament buildings, etc. had already been built during the monarchy. One of the few exceptions was the Landhaus in Eisenstadt, built between 1926 and 1929 according to a design by Rudolf Perthen as the seat of the provincial government and parliament of Burgenland, a federal province which was newly founded from formerly Hungarian territories in 1921. New construction measures mainly concerned local official buildings and housing, especially for civil servants and above all the police. As before the First World War, the Ministry’s building tasks also included the construction of courthouses, schools, universities, customs buildings, police stations, post and telegraph offices, and hygiene and health buildings. The types of construction work ranged from completely new constructions requiring appropriate designs to the complex issue of “reuse” (including adaptations, conversions and renovations without significant changes to the exterior, which on the one hand entails the issue of reinterpretation of existing buildings and on the other hand refers to the issue of sustainability and handling of resources), as well as the acquisition of real estate, inspection activities (e.g. on hygiene issues), expert opinions and building permits, and last but not least such diverse initiatives as the protection of historical monuments or the international exhibition business. For example, the Ministry was significantly involved in the organisation of the Austrian contribution to the *Expositions internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes*, which took place in Paris in 1925, as well as in the Brussels World’s Fair of 1935 and the Paris Exposition of 1937.

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<sup>11</sup> Goldinger, “Geschichte der Organisation,” 340.



The Ministerstvo veřejných prací (the Ministry of Public Works), responsible for public construction in the First Czechoslovak Republic, was newly established on the basis of laws from 1908, and thus based on decisions that still dated from the time of the monarchy. As in the monarchy and in the Republic of Austria, there were departments for structural engineering (albeit subdivided differently than in the predecessor or in the Austrian institution into a building department for state offices and schools and one for building administration and civil servants' housing), for hydraulic engineering and for road and bridge construction, as well as for special buildings and building materials. And there were other departments devoted to, among other things, mechanical engineering, electrification, mining and nothing less than: aviation – in other words, departments that did not exist in this form in Austria.

## STYLE AS A MEANS OF STATE REPRESENTATION: PERSONNEL AND COMPETENCIES

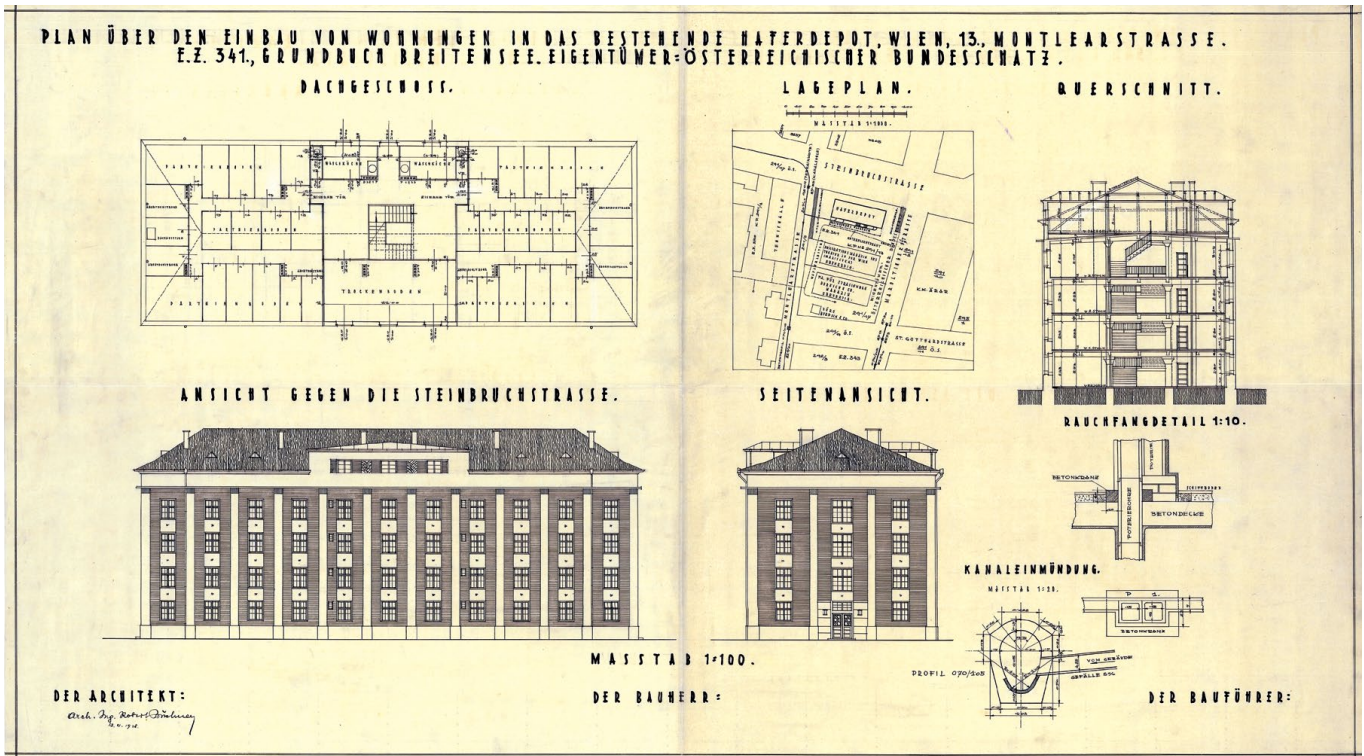
486 Focusing on the question of the perceptible appearance – style – the question arises, when the state appears as the client, whether a statement is not hidden behind the appearance of buildings, as insignificant as they may appear – especially if one takes into account discourses on the “iconography of the political” that have been thematised since Martin Warnke’s studies.<sup>12</sup> Was it about the self-representation of a state system, as the architecture of National Socialism so ostentatiously proposed? Or was it about making a state institution recognisable, as in the case of the classicist *Palais de Justice* in France? Alternatively, was it “only” about creating a functionally necessary infrastructure to satisfy the needs of the population, the economy, culture and sport, as would be the task of a performance administration (*Leistungsverwaltung*)? This question about the representational potential of state architecture inevitably brings with it the question of whether the building tasks at hand could achieve such aims. In view of the conversion of the former oat depot of the Breitensee barracks in Vienna into a police officer’s residence (**fig. 1**),<sup>13</sup> which Robert Buchner and Julius Smolik carried out in 1928/1929 and which formally hardly stands out above the general design of contemporary building production, pragmatic utilitarian thinking and economic handling of limited resources seem rather to have prevailed.

The question of whether there was a stringent concept of state architecture also touches on the area of competencies, or who was responsible for what and

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12 Martin Warnke (ed.), *Politische Architektur in Europa vom Mittelalter bis heute. Repräsentation und Gemeinschaft* [Political Architecture in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present. Representation and Community] (Cologne: DuMont, 1984); Hipp and Seidl, *Architektur als politische Kultur*; see also Klaus von Beyme, *Die Kunst der Macht und die Gegenmacht der Kunst. Studien zum Spannungsverhältnis von Kunst und Politik* [The Art of Power and the Counter-Power of Art. Studies on the Tension between Art and Politics] (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1998).

13 Architectural drawings signed by Robert Buchner and Julius Smolik from 1928/1929 (Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv Plan-, Karten- und Fotosammlung Plansammlung II [hereafter cited as: AVA PKF PS II]; A-II-c/94, OeStA).



**Fig. 1.** Julius Smolik and Robert Buchner, Conversion of the Former Oat Depot of the Breitensee Barracks in Vienna into a Police Officer's Residence, 1928/1929, ink on paper, Austrian State Archives, Vienna.

to what degree. There were numerous designers for state buildings, both civil servant architects in ministries or state authorities and freelance architects who were commissioned through public tenders and competitions. While the former often only exercised their responsibility in the form of appraisals and approvals, sometimes also of counter-designs, but mostly only of reductions, especially with regard to costs, the latter were able to take up regional tendencies, for instance. In this thematic field of the relationship between centre and periphery, on the one hand the metropolis could certainly have a modelling effect on urban centres of the “second order”, but on the other hand style could also be understood and specifically used as an expression of national or local identities. The idea of a uniform concept of “state architecture” would then probably have to be replaced by individual units that could be described, for example, with the terms “ministry architecture” for architecture produced by a central authority, “province architecture” for buildings designed at the provincial level, or “municipal architecture” in the responsibility and decision-making sphere of urban communities.

## THE IMPERIAL-ROYAL MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS: PLURALITY OF STYLE AND REFERENCES TO LOCALITIES

If one takes a brief overview of the wide range of stylistic forms that could occur in state buildings, both before and after the “caesura” of the First World War, it is not possible to identify a clear and semantically unambiguous line in the choice of style. Furthermore, it is clear how much individual personalities were decisive precisely in the choice of a stylistic stance. For example, Eduard



Fig. 2. Eduard Zotter and Karl Freymuth or Arthur Falkenau, Physical and Chemical Institute Building of the University of Vienna, between 1908 and 1915, ink and watercolour on paper, Austrian State Archives, Vienna.

Zotter (1857–1938), *Oberbaurat* in the Ministry of Public Works and head of the so-called Atelier in Department VIII, which was responsible for structural engineering, built the Physical and Chemical Institute Building of the University of Vienna between 1908 and 1915. With regard to authorship, the surviving plans (fig. 2) are signed by him,<sup>14</sup> but probably less in the function of the designer than as the responsible official. Rather, the plan bears another signature, that of the *Oberingenieur* (Chief Engineer) Karl Freymuth (1872–?), to whom we can attribute the design idea for the building.<sup>15</sup> Stylistically, the building expresses the neo-baroque tendencies that were popular in the last years of the Habsburg monarchy as the so-called Maria Theresian style, especially for state buildings (for example, Ludwig Baumann’s Ministry of War in Vienna), albeit in a reduced version in terms of the wealth of forms. However, buildings that were created under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Works did not all show the same aesthetic appearance, but could follow quite contrary styles. Thus, designs in a regional style were also created under the responsibility of the Ministry, such as the one for a workers’ settlement at the Hall salt works in Tyrol in 1916 (fig. 3), for which a “rural architectural style common in Tyrol” was to be used at the request of the Ministry.<sup>16</sup> Now, one could of course argue that, especially in the architectural conception of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a building in the countryside had to have a different appearance than one in the

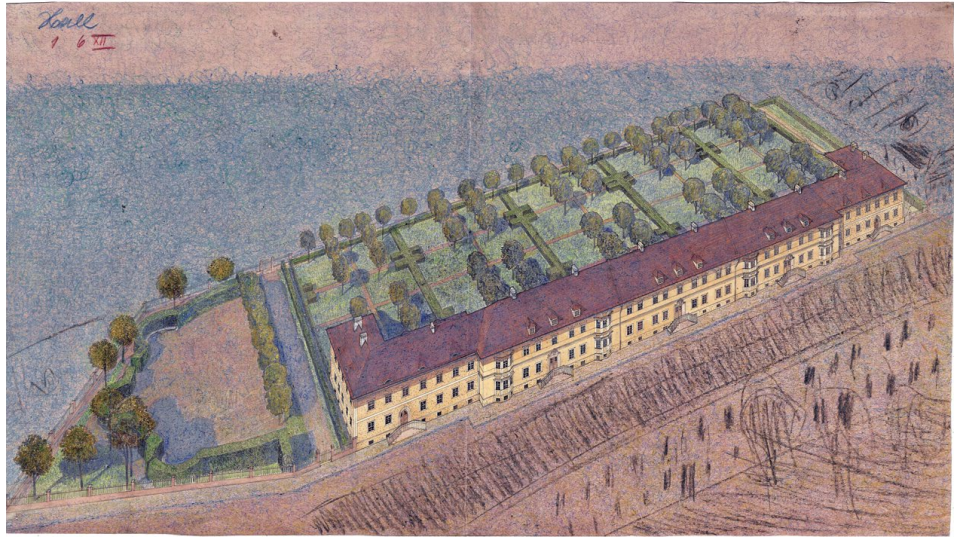
14 Architectural drawings signed by Eduard Zotter and Karl Freymuth, between 1908 and 1915 (AVA PKF PS II A-II-c/158, OeStA).

15 However, the design idea could also have come from Arthur Falkenau, at that time building adjunct of the Lower Austrian governor’s office, to whom an obituary in a daily newspaper attributes this building (*Neue Freie Presse*, December 8, 1927, 10; see also Richard Kurdiovsky, “Beyond the Ringstraße. Viennese University Buildings until the End of the Habsburg Monarchy,” in *Sites of Knowledge. The University of Vienna and its Buildings. A History 1365–2015*, eds. Julia Rüdiger and Dieter Schweizer (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau 2015), 227–255, here 242).

16 Submitter: Ministry of Finance, *Erbauung einer Arbeiterkolonie bei der Saline Hall, Verbauungsplan* [Construction of a Workers’ Colony at the Saline Hall, Development Plan], between December 1916 and January 1917 (AVA Handel MföA allgemeine Reihe Akten [hereafter cited as: allg A]: 579-VIIIc, OeStA: „in Tirol üblicher ländlicher Baustil“).



**Fig. 3.** Anonymous, Project for a Workers' Colony at the Salt Works in Hall in Tyrol, ca. 1916, ink and colour chalk on paper, Austrian State Archives, Vienna.



city. But it was precisely there that the Ministry also had to deal with the most innovative trends of the time, namely when one of the exemplars of Viennese Modernism, the extension of the Vienna Postal Savings Bank by Otto Wagner from 1910–1912, fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Works.<sup>17</sup>

The staff of the Ministry of Public Works included such striking architectural personalities as Ernst Dittrich (1868–1948),<sup>18</sup> graduate of the Technical University (then Highschool) of Vienna. His career can be described as typical and, after all, it is precisely the careers of architects who begin at subordinate posts in provincial building directorates and end in leading positions in central ministries that provide explanations for stylistic continuities across provincial, but also national borders. Initially, Dittrich joined the building department of the Lower Austrian governor's office as a trainee builder in 1894, but the following year he was already at the disposal of the structural engineering department of the Ministry of the Interior to work on the construction of barracks in Vienna.<sup>19</sup> By 1899 he had risen to the position of building *Adjunkt* and was finally taken on as *Ingenieur* directly by the Ministry of the Interior, which sent him to Feldkirch in 1902 for the pending building tasks of the district court and later the provincial finance directorate. With the founding of the Ministry of Public Works in 1908, he was taken on there as an *Oberingenieur* and rose to the rank of *Oberbaurat*. After 1918 he remained active as a civil servant architect for his former authority on building projects in Carinthia and Styria and as an expert in Burgenland. As *Oberingenieur*, he created a building of striking modernity with his design of the finance provincial directorate in Feldkirch, which was built between 1906/08 and 1915 (**fig. 4**). This building incorporated

<sup>17</sup> Fascicle on the Postal Savings Bank (AVA Handel MföA allg A 1565, OeStA).

<sup>18</sup> Gabriele Tschallener, "Ernst Dittrich (1868–1948)," in *Bau Handwerk Kunst. Beiträge zur Architekturgeschichte Vorarlbergs im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Innsbruck (Innsbruck: Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Innsbruck, 1994), 99–120.

<sup>19</sup> Also for the following: Standesausweis [personnel file] of Ernst Dittrich (Archiv der Republik, Bundesministerium für Handel und Verkehr Präsidiale: Standesausweis Dittrich Ernst, OeStA).



**Fig. 4.** Ernst Dittrich, Finance Provincial Directorate in Feldkirch (Vorarlberg), 1906/1908–1915, Wikimedia Commons (Böhringer Friedrich), accessed March 14, 2024, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Finanzlandesdirektion,\\_Schillerstra%C3%9Fe\\_2\\_Feldkirch\\_5.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Finanzlandesdirektion,_Schillerstra%C3%9Fe_2_Feldkirch_5.JPG).

the latest developments of Viennese Modernism, but especially the work of Joseph Maria Olbrich at the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt. The achievements of modernism were thus not limited to the realm of private building activity, as Dittrich’s pharmacy house Weinzierl in Feldkirch from 1905 shows, but also expressed themselves in state-public buildings. Once again, therefore, we must concede a wide stylistic range to the architectural work of the Ministry of Public Works, which even took up styles that were under strong public criticism. The language capabilities and possibilities of state building in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were thus by no means uniform or even the same in several or even all places in this state.

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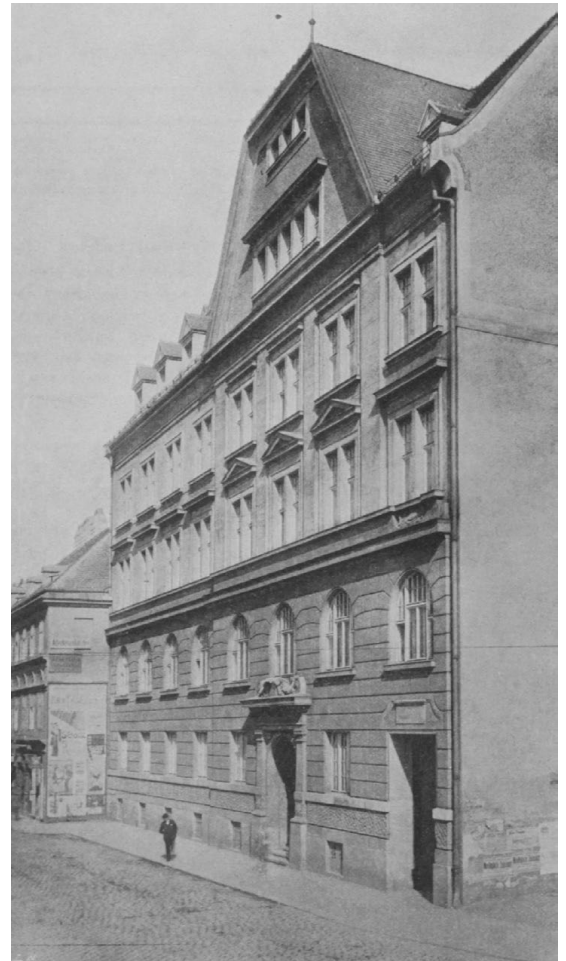
An astonishing example of the simultaneity of stylistic plurality between “modernity” and “tradition” in the Ministry’s architectural work are two courthouses, one in Riemergasse in the Inner City, i.e. the city centre of Vienna, and the other, the Margarethen District Court, in one of Vienna’s boroughs (**fig. 5, fig. 6**).<sup>20</sup> With the same construction period around 1910 and the same client, namely the Ministry of Public Works, both buildings were designed and built by the same architects, the civil servant architect Moritz Kramsall (1860–1938) and the freelance architect Alfred Keller (1875–1945), to fulfil very similar tasks. And yet, in the one, the latest motifs of modernism can be found (above all the panel cladding of the façades, visually fastened with bolts in the manner of Otto Wagner), while the other example still shows last memories of the so-called German Renaissance. With identical architects, similar building tasks, an identical construction period and the same client, very different

20 N. N. “Das neue Gerichtsgebäude, Wien, I., Riemergasse Nr. 7 von Baurat M. Kramsall” [The New Courthouse, Vienna, I., Riemergasse No. 7 by Baurat M. Kramsall], *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* no. 78 (1913), 113–116; N. N., “Amtsgebäude für das Bezirksgericht Margarethen. Architekt: Moritz Kramsall, k.k. Baurat in Wien” [Office Building for the District Court of Margarethen. Architect: Moritz Kramsall, Imperial and Royal Building Councillor in Vienna], *Der Bautechniker. Zentralorgan für das österreichische Bauwesen*, no. 31 (1911), 487–489.





**Fig. 5.** Moritz Kramsall and Alfred Keller, Courthouse in Riemergasse, Vienna, ca. 1910, in: *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, no. 78 (1913), plate 72, Austrian National Library, Vienna.



**Fig. 6.** Moritz Kramsall and Alfred Keller, Margarethen District Court, Vienna, ca. 1910, in: *Der Bautechniker*, no. 31 (1911), plate 21, Austrian National Library, Vienna.

results could thus be produced, which can best be explained by the specific building site: on one occasion the city centre and on the other an arbitrary outer district. The “modern” building in Riemergasse could establish formal relationships with buildings in the neighbourhood such as the

Postal Savings Bank and thus contribute to a certain stylistic habitus of a city district. On the other hand, in the case of the Margarethen District Court, one can imagine that the intention was specifically to take into account the local audience that was to be addressed – and to count on more traditional tastes of the middle and lower classes in the urban residential districts.

## THE AUSTRIAN MINISTRY OF TRADE IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD: IN THE SIGN OF CONTINUITY

As already pointed out by Moravánszky, we also encounter this “simultaneity of the other” during the interwar period in, for example, the work of Julius Smolik. Having worked in the civil service since 1904, first at the *Dikasterialgebäude-Direktion* and from 1908 at the Ministry of Public Works, Smolik rose to become head of the structural engineering department at the Federal Ministry of Trade and Transport in the 1920s and remained in a leading position under Austrofascism and the Nazi dictatorship. His stylistic spectrum ranges from a traditional architectural conception in the sense of *Heimatschutz* to the New Style with motifs such as cubic structures, flat roofs and ribbon windows. This stylistic spectrum is evidenced, for example, by his designs for an official building in Jennersdorf in Burgenland in the 1920s with

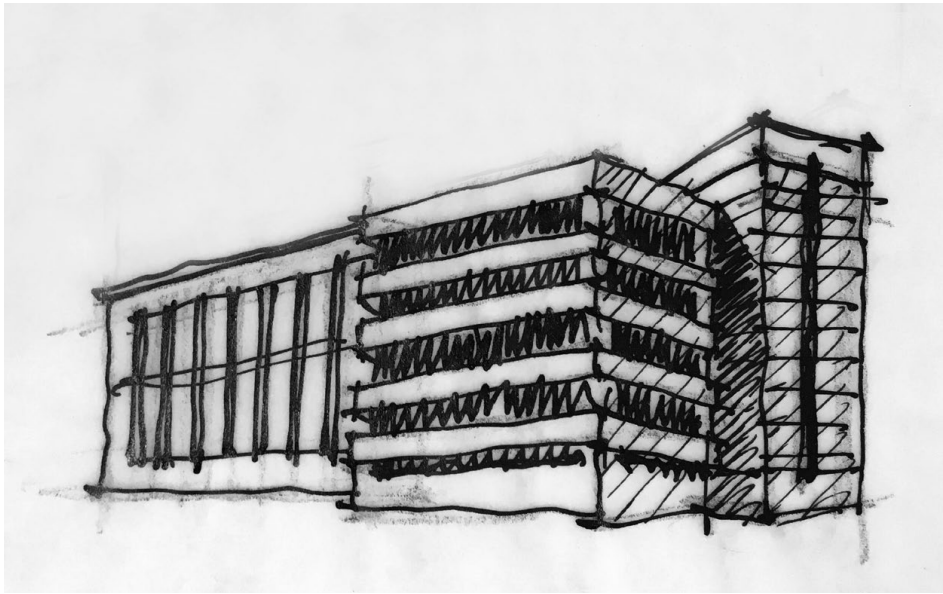


Fig. 7. Julius Smolik, Design for the Development of the Sensengasse-Spitalgasse grounds, 1930/1931, ink on paper, Austrian State Archives, Vienna.

arch motifs, a rough plaster façade and a hipped roof, as well as his “modern” designs for the development of the Sensengasse-Spitalgasse grounds in Vienna in 1930/1931 (fig. 7) or the more traditional attitude of today’s Upper Austrian Regional Library building in Linz from the same period.<sup>21</sup>

The phenomenon of stylistic pluralism in the years 1918–1938 is particularly evident in the buildings created for the Austrian Post Office, dominated by one name in particular: Leopold Hoheisel (1884–1973).<sup>22</sup> After years in the studio of Leopold Bauer and in the class of Otto Wagner at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the architect joined the Federal Buildings Administration before the First World War. In 1923, Hoheisel was appointed to the board of directors of the Postal and Telegraph Buildings Administration, and at his suggestion, this authority eventually dealt with the new construction of postal buildings in addition to its preservation tasks. Advancing technical developments as well as incomplete infrastructure led to a considerable need for new buildings, especially in rural regions, so that despite budget-related state construction measures that were reduced to a minimum, the 1928 building construction programme included a total of 35 post office buildings, eleven of which were new post and telegraph offices.<sup>23</sup>

A look at some of the post offices designed by Hoheisel in the Austrian provinces shows that the stylistic range here owes less to a development in architectural language than to adaptation to the local environment with its regional architectural styles and construction techniques. While in Eggenburg,

21 Julius Smolik, architectural drawings for an office building in Jennersdorf, between 1920 and 1929 (AVA PKF PS II: A-V-c/17, OeStA); Julius Smolik, architectural drawings for the development of the Sensengasse-Spitalgasse area in Vienna, 1930/1931 (AVA PKF PS II: A-II-c/158, OeStA); Julius Smolik, architectural drawings for the Upper Austrian Regional Library building in Linz, around 1930 (AVA PKF PS II: A-IV-c/20, OeStA).

22 Auszeichnungsantärge [award applications], 1930 (Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv Handel Post Postsonderbünde [hereafter cited as: AVA Handel Post Psb], Generaldirektion für die Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung: GZ. 52.509/1930, OeStA).

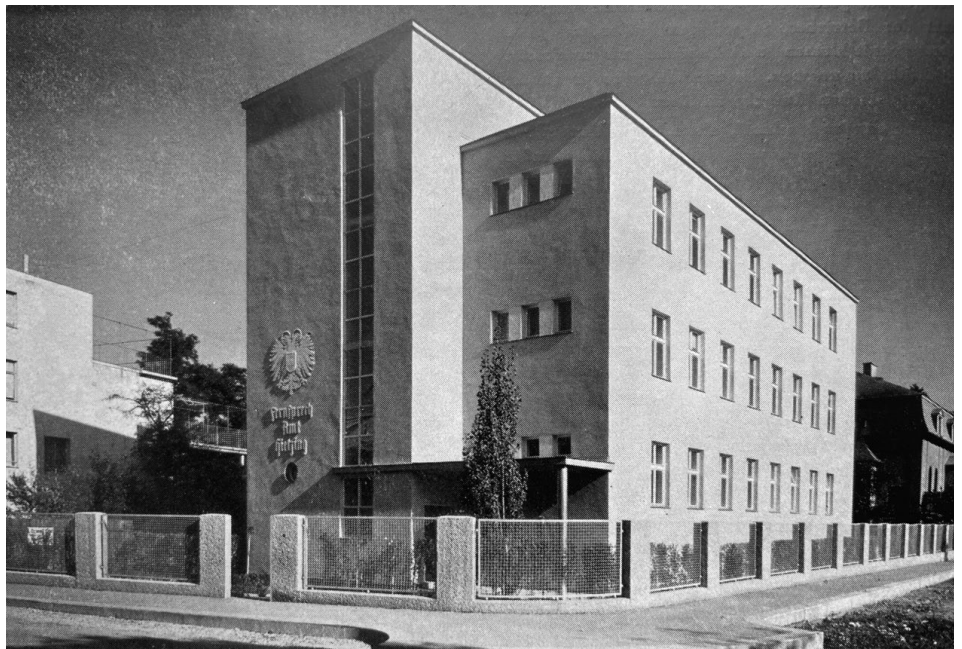
23 Hochbauprogramm für 1928 [building construction program for the year 1928] (AVA Handel Post Psb, Generaldirektion für die Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung: GZ. 11.514/1928, OeStA).



**Fig. 8.** Leopold Hoheisel, Post and Telegraph Office, Murau, 1932, Wikimedia Commons, accessed on January 17, 2022, <https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Altepostmura.jpg>.



**Fig. 9.** Leopold Hoheisel, Telephon Exchange Office, Vienna, 1934, in: *Österreichische Kunst*, no. 11 (1935), 12.



a small town in Lower Austria, which is particularly characterised by its Renaissance architecture, the post office (1931) has a striking oriel resting on brackets, the post and telegraph office (1929/1930) located in the somewhat larger town of Villach in Carinthia conveys a much more modern character with its formal language typical of the late 1920s and reminiscent of municipal buildings. These stylistic opposites from one and the same hand are most obviously illustrated by the post office in Murau, Styria from 1932 and the telephone exchange in Vienna-Hietzing, which was built only two years later (**fig. 8**, **fig. 9**). The traditional country post office with its high rustic base,

shutters and oversized gable roof was highly praised in the contemporary press for its “docile” (*gefügsam*) integration into the surroundings.<sup>24</sup> This building contrasts sharply with the telephone exchange in Vienna’s 13<sup>th</sup> district, which was not conceived for use by the public. As a neighbouring building, it stands directly next to one of the icons of Viennese modernism, the Villa Beer by Josef Frank (1929/1931), which can also be seen in the background of the photo. Once again, as with the courthouse in Riemergasse, it looks as if the credo of the state authority that a new building was supposed to “fit excellently into the local surroundings”<sup>25</sup> was taken into account even if the latest stylistic developments were also addressed. For this building, Hoheisel opted for a cubic design in keeping with modernism, a strict window structure with a vertical window band, and a simple façade design without decoration except for the post office sign. A look across the country’s borders, specifically to Bavaria with its well-known structural engineering department of the *Oberpostdirektion* headed by Robert Vorhoelzer, shows that the Austrian ministry was following an international trend.<sup>26</sup>

## MINISTERSTVO VEŘEJNÝCH PRACÍ: ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION OF MODERNITY AND PERSONAL CHOICE

494 Similar phenomena, which fit entirely into the classical narrative of the stylistic development of European architectural history, can also be found in the First Czechoslovak Republic. However, the situation of the Ministerstvo veřejných prací was different from Austria in that fundamental state projects (such as the construction of ministry buildings or the development of plans for a parliament building)<sup>27</sup> had to be tackled from scratch. The key theme for the dominant narrative of Czechoslovakia was the modernity of the state, which redefined the national perspective. There was one particularly important issue: transport, with great importance attached to technically innovative areas such as air travel. On the initiative of the Ministry of Public Works, the State Airline of Czechoslovakia was founded in 1923, arguing as its rationale that a city without its own airport would in the future be in a similar position in terms of transport as a city without rail or road links would have been at the time.<sup>28</sup>

The example of the two Prague airports underlines the assumption that the choice of style was closely linked to the personal taste of the commissioned

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24 N. N., “Einweihung des neuen Postamtes in Murau” [Inauguration of the New Post Office in Murau], *Mur-taler Zeitung*, September 17, 1932, 1.

25 Leopold Hoheisel, “Das neue Fernsprechamt Hietzing” [The New Telephone Exchange Office Hietzing], *Österreichische Kunst. Monatszeitschrift für bildende und darstellende Kunst, Architektur und Kunsthandwerk*, no. 11 (1935), 13: “in die örtliche Umgebung vorzüglich einpasst.”

26 Florian Aicher and Uwe Drepper, *Robert Vorhoelzer – Ein Architektenleben. Die klassische Moderne der Post* [Robert Vorhoelzer – An Architect’s Life. The Classical Modernism of the Post] (Munich: Georg D. W. Callwey, 1990).

27 Jakub Bachtík, Lukáš Duchek and Jakub Jareš, *Chrám umění Rudolfinum* [Temple of Art Rudolfinum] (Prague: Česká filharmonie, Národní památkový ústav and Národní technické muzeum, 2020).

28 Jan Flora, “Hospodářský a urbanistický význam zřízení letišť pro města” [The Economic and Urban Significance of the Establishment of Airports for Cities], *Zprávy veřejné služby technické*, no. 15 (1933), 8–9.

architect since the Ministry of Public Works arranged architectural competitions or appointed freelance architects.<sup>29</sup> Josef Gočár (1880–1945) opted for the National Style for the airport in Prague Kbely in 1921 and explicitly used vernacular forms and materials for his buildings, even though wood was also chosen as a building material because it was easily available at the time. Its colourfulness in particular brought the design clearly into line with the ideas of the National Style propagated at the time, even if the technical infrastructure such as the hangars were strictly rational buildings without any ornamentation. In contrast, the second airport in Prague Ruzyně, built in 1937, was a spectacular example of functionalism.<sup>30</sup> Nor was the (modern) purpose of the buildings the only influence on this stylistic choice, because, for the designing architect Adolf Benš (1894–1982) functionalism was the only architectural option for any kind of building.

## CONCLUSION

If we try to answer the questions posed at the beginning about the representational value, the linguistic and thus expressive capacity of state architecture, and whether, when the state appears as a client, a statement is automatically and immediately hidden behind the appearance of a building, we can see that the buildings presented were hardly able to provide a concise state self-representation in a homogeneous form. The stylistic range was simply too great for this, and also too varied in their architectural quality. Due to the diversity of forms, a state institution was hardly recognisable and readable in a morphologically continuous and uniform way. It was less the stylistic appearance, but rather the type of building task (official or government building, transport building such as a railway station or airport) and the associated use (or non-use) of certain architectural motifs such as symmetry, tectonics, size (up to monumentality), etc. that could convey the image of the superiority of the state. First and foremost, it was a matter of creating the functionally necessary infrastructure for the needs of the population, the economy, culture and sport. Furthermore, the reference to the specificities of location was just as crucial as personnel continuities across the historical caesura of World War I.

In any case, with regard to the question of continuities and ruptures in the historical change from one state system to another, it can be noted: the plurality of styles that we find in the period of the monarchy continues in the period of the republics. Whether the same reasons were decisive for this in the individual states (such as the retention of administrative structures and personnel) remains a desideratum of future research.

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29 Gustav Hermann (ed.), *Ministerstvo veřejných prací. Přehled činnosti za první pětiletí republiky Československé* [Ministry of Public Works. Overview of the Activities for the First Five Years of the Czechoslovak Republic] (Prague: Ministerstvo veřejných prací, 1923).

30 Dalibor Píx et al., *Umělecké památky Prahy. Velká Praha, I. M–U* (Prague: academia, 2017), 354–357.





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## EXCELLENT ARCHITECTURE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF POST-2020 ARCHITECTURE POLICIES

### Abstract

*The topic and objectives of the comprehensible and well-designed approach to the development of the new National Guidelines for the Excellence and Culture of Building, as outlined in the ApolitikA document, are exceptionally stimulating for both the profession and the general public. The existing document offers clear guidelines, specified activities and nominated actors. The present legal solutions enable design without appropriate control mechanisms, thus undermining the final result and preservation of authors' architecture. Innovative approaches to the framework and modalities that encourage simpler and more effective action within the architectural profession, as well as the availability of information, educational measures, and programmes for target groups, including a modern approach to learning and the inclusion of new content on architecture, should be ensured.*

### INTRODUCTION

Architecture policies are a part of the efforts of EU countries aimed at – through the implementation of various documents of the same type – identifying frameworks and modalities that might encourage simpler and more effective operations within the architectural profession. The drafting of such documents leads to the improvement of architectural production, and thus of the overall built environment. Almost all of the architecture policies developed and published so far in Europe have similar principal determinants, or rather goals that can be classified according to the following six principles: increasing the quality of the built environment and the awareness of its importance; the principles of sustainable development in a built environment; taking into account people and their needs as the basic benchmark in shaping a settlement; ensuring a healthy, safe and secure environment; fostering innovative technological and technical solutions; encouraging quality architectural and cultural achievements in architectural solutions.<sup>1</sup> One of the universally present topics is architectural excellence, or rather its role in creating the quality of the built environment. Examples of architectural excellence that exist in Croatia are recognised not only domestically, but also in Europe and worldwide. They are an indication of the fact that excellence is a present and lasting quality.

<sup>1</sup> For more on this topic, see *Arhitektonske politike Republike Hrvatske 2013–2020. ApolitikA. Nacionalne smjernice za vrsnoću i kulturu građenja* [Architectural Policies of the Republic of Croatia 2013–2020. ApolitikA. National Guidelines for the Excellence and Culture of Building] (Zagreb: Hrvatska komora arhitekata; Ministarstvo graditeljstva i prostornoga uređenja, 2013).

The opportunity to systematically analyse the set topics and objectives of the comprehensive and well-designed approach to drafting the new architecture policy document, *Apolitika*, was exceptionally stimulating for both the profession and the general public. Within Hrvatska komora arhitekata (the Croatian Chamber of Architects),<sup>2</sup> as well as among prominent protagonists of the architectural scene,<sup>3</sup> notions about the relationship between architecture and politics – the very issue of *Apolitika*, as we will refer to it later – took shape as early as the year 2000.<sup>4</sup>

An initiative was launched, however it took about ten years for it to be adopted by the professional public and in the Guidelines,<sup>5</sup> and subsequently in the document itself. Ministarstvo zaštite okoliša prostornog uređenja i graditeljstva (the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction)<sup>6</sup> has been a member of the European Forum for Architecture Policies (EFAP) since 2006, and until 2016 actively monitored the development and reflexes that such documents have in the countries of the European Union. One of the strategic determinants, which informed not only our architecture policies, but also all the European strategies, was summarised in the Danish Architecture Policies of 2007: “Wherever we are, our physical environment is the setting of our lives. Once it is planned and designed at its best in buildings, developments, cities, gardens, parks, landscapes and infrastructure, architecture gives us all an opportunity to be active, participate and enjoy. In brief: increased quality of life. (...) What we are building today is the cultural heritage of the future. The architecture contributes to the story of who we are and where we are headed.”<sup>7</sup>

The potential that the document entitled *Architectural Policies of the Republic of Croatia 2013–2020, Apolitika, National Guidelines for Excellence and Culture of Building* (2013) had at the time of its adoption was not fully exploited in Croatia; thus the period of implementation, 2013–2020, did not yield the desired results. Furthermore, developing public policies, in our case architectural policies, is

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2 Hrvatska komora arhitekata (the Croatian Chamber of Architects) was established in June 2009 pursuant to the *Zakon o arhitektonskim i inženjerskim poslovima i djelatnostima* [Act on Architectural and Engineering Activities in Physical Planning and Construction], *Narodne novine: službeni list Republike Hrvatske*, no. 152 (2008). It was formed from the department of architects that existed within the earlier Hrvatska komora arhitekata i inženjera u graditeljstvu (the Croatian Chamber of Architects and Engineers in Construction), which operated from 1998 to July 2009.

3 Julije De Luca, “Natuknice o temi ‘Arhitektura i politika’” [Deliberation on the topic ‘Architecture and Politics’], *Vijenac*, no. 162 (2000), accessed June 10, 2020, <http://www.matica.hr/vijenac/162/natuknice-o-temi-arhitektura-i-politika-18134/>.

4 Darko Manestar, “Arhitekti – ljudi bez utjecaja” [Architects – people without influence], *Vijenac*, no. 162 (2000), accessed June 10, 2020, <http://www.matica.hr/vijenac/162/arhitekti-ljudi-bez-utjecaja-18139/>.

5 See also Stjepo Butijer et. al., “Smjernice i kriteriji za arhitektonsku vrsnoću građenja” [Guidelines and Criteria for Architectural Quality of Building] (Zagreb: Ministarstvo zaštite okoliša, prostornog uređenja i graditeljstva, 2011).

6 Today Ministarstvo prostornoga uređenja, graditeljstva i državne imovine (the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets).

7 “A Nation of Architecture, Denmark settings for life and growth, Danish Architectural Policy 2007” (København: Ministry of Culture, 2007), accessed June 2, 2020, [https://www.ace-cae.eu/fileadmin/New\\_Upload/6\\_Architecture\\_in\\_Europe/EU\\_Policy/DK-report.pdf](https://www.ace-cae.eu/fileadmin/New_Upload/6_Architecture_in_Europe/EU_Policy/DK-report.pdf).

a matter of interest not only for the state, but also for local communities,<sup>8</sup> as well as professional and other formal and informal associations. Due to this multiple interest and the principle of creating opportunities, as well as the optimal exploitation of all social and material potentials, economic operators should be considered here as well. Instruments that might exercise an impact on public policies related to architecture are complex and linked to policies from other domains – in this case financial, social and economic, and as well as several other domains that are indirectly involved.<sup>9</sup> All of them ought to be harmonised. Credibility and expertise in conjunction with efficiency should result in greater success in the field of achieving modern European-oriented architecture policies.

## OBJECTIVES

Three main objectives established the direction in which the state and society ought to have acted: the culture of construction as a precondition for the quality of built space; the quality of built space as a basis for the well-being of each individual; and high-quality architecture as an incentive for national development and progress. The document forms a part of official policies, expressing “public interest in the quality of the overall built environment as a catalyst for the sustainable development process, as well as the care of public space and the improvement of space design based on the local specifics of each individual area of Croatia.”<sup>10</sup> The document itself offered clear guidelines, specified the activities and defined the elements – the construction and design of space, while continuing to ensure the architectural quality of the construction, promotion, and stimulation of built space, as well as the application of the principles of sustainable construction. In simpler terms, this means that all citizens are entitled to comfortable environment and high-quality architecture. “The value of the built space represents public interest and is not a result of chance, but created by a direct, conscientious, and coordinated action of architectural and other relevant professions, with a high level of social awareness.”<sup>11</sup> For this to happen, it is necessary to provide an opportunity and incentive for architects to act within their profession, that is to say, to do what they were educated for.<sup>12</sup>

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8 See also “[lok-ap] smjernice za provedbu arhitektonskih politika lokalnih zajednica: Otključajmo zaključano” [[lok-ap] Guidelines for the implementation of Architectural policies of local communities: Let’s unlock lock] (Zagreb: Hrvatska komora arhitekata, 2016), accessed May 22, 2020, [https://www.arhitekti-hka.hr/files/file/vijesti/2017/pdf/lock-ap\\_smjernice%20za%20provedbu%20lokalnih%20a\\_politika.pdf](https://www.arhitekti-hka.hr/files/file/vijesti/2017/pdf/lock-ap_smjernice%20za%20provedbu%20lokalnih%20a_politika.pdf).

9 Ivan Milonja and Andrijana Pozojević “Apolitika i stanovanje: Razgovor s dr. sc. Borkom Bobovec” [Apolitika and Housing: An Interview with Borka Bobovec, PhD], *Presjek*, no. 11 (2014): 85–92.

10 Helena Knifić Schaps and Borka Bobovec, “Apolitika – tijek i rezultati implementacije” [Apolitika – A course and results of implementation], in *Hrvatski graditeljski forum 2014*, ed. Stjepan Lakušić, (Zagreb: Hrvatski savez građevinskih inženjera, 2014), 446–455, translated by Gorka Radočaj.

11 *Ibid.*, 447, translated by Gorka Radočaj.

12 “The realization of an architect’s idea requires money that always exceeds the author’s capabilities. The architect is thus, in relation to the realization of his idea, dependent on another person. This other person is either a politician or someone dependent on politics. This conjunction may not be avoided. It can be done, but then the architect’s name remains only on paper...”, translated by Gorka Radočaj. De Luca, “Natuknice o temi ‘Arhitektura i politika’.”

Modern, postmodern and contemporary architecture architecture was created as part of complex historical-cultural processes that incorporated knowledge and experiential norms into existing cities and built spaces. Architectural works created in the second half of the last century and the first twenty years of this century hardly deserve to be called historical buildings, for which there are established rules of evaluation.<sup>13</sup> To be able to evaluate contemporary architecture and critically address the creative work and influences that each work has in creating spatial relations and affecting the life of each individual, it is necessary to collect, systematise, process and evaluate all available designs and other materials related to the architectural activity.<sup>14</sup> Often, and not only today, the question arises as to how long it may take from the moment of creation to the critical evaluation of a building or a broader urban solution.<sup>15</sup>

It takes exceptional knowledge to combine architectural forms so as to achieve a satisfactory result; this is where the talent and knowledge of each author are highlighted, which ought to be protected in the end. If we set the rules for an adequate valorisation of existing excellence, they can be used to encourage more architects in this direction in order to achieve a higher general level of quality of architectural production, and thus of the built environment. The subject matter here is not focused on high-value architectural achievements implemented in space on a one-by-one basis.<sup>16</sup> Rather, it is aimed at raising the general level of quality of built space, and thereby also the awareness of users regarding the effects that well-designed and well-built-up spaces have on the life and health of residents and users.

The fact that Croatian architects and architecture created in our region are of interest to the world's professional public became evident long ago. Many architects who studied at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb, as well as other faculties of architecture in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, are recognised as excellent architects whose achievements have shaped urban structures not only in our country, but also worldwide. The exhibition dedicated to Yugoslav architecture titled *Towards a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980* and held at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoMA) in New York,<sup>17</sup> opened up the possibility of reflecting on the importance of works by established architects and the relationships they created – not only in relation to the built-up spaces, but also the impact it exercised on the development of the society.

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13 Tomislav Premerl, "Predgovor" [Foreword], in Keneth Frampton, *Moderna arhitektura: Kritička povijest* (Zagreb: Globus nakladni zavod, 1992), 7–9.

14 Vladimir Bedenko, "Čitanje grada" [Reading the city], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 339 (1981): 24–25.

15 Sena Gvozdanić, "VI razgovori o arhitekturi u Otočcu" [6<sup>th</sup> Talks on Architecture in Otočac], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 119 (1963): 7.

16 The space as a whole needs to be well-shaped. Single excellent buildings alone are not enough. Quality as a whole is necessary, rather than merely specific interventions in urban space.

17 The exhibition *Towards a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, held from July 15, 2018 to January 30, 2019; curators: Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić.



Dealing with all of the positives and negatives in contemporary architecture, as well as with the current state of space, triggered by the analysis carried out by architects and art historians, who form a part of the wider architectural stage, can constitute a good starting point for an adequate valorisation; moreover, it can also contribute to the protection of works by established architects, by means of a systematic analysis.<sup>18</sup> The following thought expressed by architecture historian William J. R. Curtis, which fully describes the message of the exhibition, should encourage a constructive discussion regarding the need to protect works by established architects, within the architectural community, professional organizations, and line ministries: “Architecture is trapped in the processes and paradoxes of society, but capable of transforming them into its expression: it operates by parallel but still different rules.”<sup>19</sup>

An answer might be found in initiating an evaluation and creating the criteria and guidelines that would enable a simpler and more uniform evaluation, in addition to offering a publicly available list of works by established architects, which would allow architects and investors involved in projects directly influencing existing urban units to access data on the architects, who could and should be consulted regarding the interventions that are inevitable in the life course of each building. Continuous monitoring and keeping inventory, together with the establishment of a system of awards for the quality of construction and the design of space, which, in addition to professional awards for spatial planners, architects, and landscape architects, should include awards for all of the other participants in the construction process, could be exceptionally stimulating. The fact that new prizes, which are today awarded by Hrvatska komora arhitekata (the Croatian Chamber of Architects) and almost identical to those already accepted within the architectural community and traditionally awarded by Udruženje hrvatskih arhitekata (the Croatian Architects’ Association), have been added has led to inflation with regard to the value of the prize itself. Though the future adoption of the new *Ordinance on the Guidelines and Criteria for the Quality of Construction and Evaluation of Architectural Performance* might yield results on a long-term basis, provided that it is systematically applied, the current draft of legal solutions allows for design without adequate control mechanisms. The final result has therefore been put into question. Moreover, the implementation and control of the obligation to rehabilitate and improve devastated areas by infrastructure or uncontrolled construction, which has by now been legalised, is yet another instrument that has been prescribed but insufficiently implemented, if at all.

At the beginning of 2018, the last public meeting was held to discuss the issues related to the implementation of *Apolitika*.<sup>20</sup> It was stated there that more

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18 Borka Bobovec, “Djela iz fundusa Hrvatskog muzeja arhitekture HAZU predstavljena u MoMA” [Works from the HAZU Croatian Museum of Architecture holdings exhibited at MoMA], *Art Bulletin*, no. 67 (2018): 99–146.

19 William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 13.

20 The roundtable entitled *Where is Apolitika today?*, organized by the Hrvatska komora arhitekata (the Croatian Chamber of Architects) and Udruženje hrvatskih arhitekata (the Croatian Architects’ Association), was

than one half of the activities envisaged by the current architecture policies have not been implemented.<sup>21</sup> The meeting was held immediately after the adoption of the *Davos Declaration* in 2018, which was prompted by reflections on high-quality construction culture: “High quality concept *Baukultur* requires striking the right balance between cultural, social, economic, environmental and technical aspects of planning, design, building and adaptive re-use, in the public interest for the common good.”<sup>22</sup> This is extremely important in the context of the protection of works by established architects, given that in the years following the adoption of *Apolitika*, no adequate system was established through which such works of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries could have been appropriately evaluated, recorded and protected.

Copyright protection related to architectural work has been regulated by the *Copyright and Related Rights Act* (OG 167/2003). Unfortunately, the preservation of the copyrighted work in its original state has not been prescribed in relation to architecture and excellent achievements. The owner of an architectural work is merely “obliged to inform the author of destruction; (and to) allow the author, at their request, to photograph the work, as well as to hand over a copy of the design of the work. When modifying an architectural work, the interests of its owner ought to be taken into account.”<sup>23</sup> Here the legislator refers to serious reasons related to technical conditions, safety, and health, which are unfortunately often used in order to bypass the author. The law stipulates that in the case of renewal, the architect may not “object to the use of other materials if the ones from which this work was made have shown defects regarding use, if these materials cannot be obtained or can only be obtained with disproportionate difficulty or at disproportionate cost.”<sup>24</sup> The fact that in such cases, provided they are consulted, architect may require from the owner of the building to “put a note about the changes to the architectural work and the time when it was done”<sup>25</sup> along with the author’s name does not

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held on February 8, 2018 at the Hrvatski muzej arhitekture HAZU (HAZU Croatian Museum of Architecture) in Zagreb on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the document *Architectural Policies of the Republic of Croatia 2013–2020. Apolitika. National Guidelines for the Excellence and Culture of Building*.

21 “Više od polovice aktivnosti predviđenih aktualnom arhitektonskom politikom nije provedeno” [More than half of the activities envisaged by the current Architectural policy have not been implemented], *Jutarnji list*, February 9, 2018, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://www.jutarnji.hr/kultura/vise-od-polovice-aktivnosti-predvidenih-aktualnom-arhitektonskom-politikom-nije-provedeno-7017453>.

22 “Konferencija ministara kulture (Davos), Švicarska (2018.); Deklaracija u Davosu 2018” [Conference of Ministers of Culture (Davos), Switzerland (2018); Davos Declaration 2018], accessed June 8, 2020, [https://arhitekti-hka.hr/files/file/vijesti/2018/Deklaracija%20u%20Davosu%202018.\\_za%20web.pdf](https://arhitekti-hka.hr/files/file/vijesti/2018/Deklaracija%20u%20Davosu%202018._za%20web.pdf), translated by Gorka Radočaj. In addition to ministers of culture and heads of delegations from the signatory states to the European Cultural Convention, the Conference of Ministers of Culture held on January 20-21, 2018 in Davos, Switzerland, included observer states of the Council of Europe, as well as representatives of UNESCO, ICCROM, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Council of Architects of Europe, the European Council of Spatial Planners, ICOMOS International, and Europa Nostra.

23 “Zakon o autorskom pravu i srodnim pravima” [Copyright and Related Rights Act], *Narodne novine: službeni list Republike Hrvatske*, no. 167 (2003), Article 79, paragraph 4, 5 and 6, accessed June 8, 2020, [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2003\\_10\\_167\\_2399.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2003_10_167_2399.html), translated by Gorka Radočaj.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

help preserve authors' architecture, but rather the opposite. The penalty for non-compliance with these provisions is considered a violation of the moral right of the author.<sup>26</sup>

## WHERE ARE WE TODAY

Towards the end of 2019, the competent ministry commissioned a public opinion survey on space and architecture<sup>27</sup> regarding the perception of the citizens of Croatia concerning the quality and culture of construction, and their satisfaction with the quality of the space they live in, in order to analyse the existing document and define its impact on the quality of construction and the overall society. Furthermore, this research was intended to become a part of potential guidelines for drafting a new document. The research aimed at obtaining information regarding the satisfaction of residents with their immediate space and environment. An important part of this research concerned the general readiness to be involved in processes related to landscaping, and possible sources of information on architecture and the quality of building.<sup>28</sup>

In principle, the concept of architecture in Croatia is far more associated with the terms 'city' and 'building' than with the terms 'environment' or 'landscape', and even less with the terms 'culture', 'innovation' or 'technology'. Thus architecture implies 'anything that has been built', 'works intended to build a city', a 'construction site', or 'prescribed buildings'. It is almost impossible to hear architecture described as a 'unique work' or an 'author's work'.<sup>29</sup> All of these indicators are of major importance in determining the meaning of *Apolitika* after 2020 in the context of preserving works by established architects, or rather creating a system of directing the wider population towards recognising quality of construction. Research has shown that citizens are relatively satisfied with various aspects of the space they live in, and that the general belief is that their basic needs have been fulfilled in the context of their narrow housing estate. They are aware of the importance of architects through the contribution of the profession to quality and in shaping spatial relationships.

Citizens furthermore recognise buildings that are examples of quality architecture; however, they generally consider architecture in Croatia to be either at a level equal to other countries or at a lower level. At the same time, citizens inadequately engage in space-related decision-making processes, and do not take advantage of even basic information that would help their future

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26 Ibid.

27 The survey was conducted on a sample of 1,000 citizens of the Republic of Croatia and constructed as a random and stratified sample of landline and mobile telephone numbers.

28 Ipsos Agency to the Ministarstvo graditeljstva i prostornoga uređenja [Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning], Zagreb, December 13, 2019, Istraživanje javnog mnijenja o prostoru i arhitekturi [Public opinion research on space and architecture], 4–7, Archives of the Ministarstvo prostornoga uređenja, graditeljstva i državne imovine [Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets], Zagreb.

29 See Borka Bobovec, "Arhitekturom do pametnije Europe" [Through Architecture to the Smarter Europe], *Korak u prostor*, no. 68 (2019): 63–65.

involvement in the processes of improving the environment they live in. They moreover believe that the existing way of decision making related to landscaping is not transparent. General willingness to be involved in certain processes related to landscaping exists. Social networks, documentaries, lectures, and workshops have been identified as education possibilities in order to improve this situation.<sup>30</sup>

This research forms an integral part of the *Report on the Implementation of the Document*, which was completed in 2020. However, in conclusion, this report lists only the reasons, but not the proposals, for solving the issue of the absence of individual measures. The explanation for this lies in the fact that implementation for the most part depends “on the enthusiasm of individuals and the support of the institutions in which they operate.”<sup>31</sup> It should by no means be the starting point for solving problems defined by public policies, particularly not today, when *Apolitika* has finally become a part of the *National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia Until 2030* (OG 13/2021), which at the very beginning, in the *Strategic Framework and Vision of the Development of Croatia*, reads: “Croatia in 2030 is a competitive, innovative and safe country of recognisable identity and culture, a country of preserved resources, quality living conditions and equal opportunities for all.” Furthermore, appendix 4 to the document reads: “An indicative list of strategic planning acts supporting the implementation of the NRR strategic framework under order number 78 lists, inter alia, *Architecture Policies of the Republic of Croatia – Apolitika*.”<sup>32</sup>

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In its creation and duration, architecture and especially awareness of the quality of built space, ought to include educational measures at all levels, not only within the profession, but also for the general public. A successfully designed building creates conditions and brings high satisfaction to the user, which subsequently results in stronger feelings of comfort, safety, health and relaxation, as well as a greater flexibility of the space itself, aesthetic comfort and accessibility. In addition to the primary preservation of works by established architects, which contributes to the recognisability of spatial relations of a place as such, it is necessary to observe changing standards that include the protection and principles of sustainable environment, as well as instruments for choosing the most appropriate solutions, and the increasingly important social aspects.

Ensuring the necessary preconditions for life and work in a well-built space, with active promoters of works by established architects remaining

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30 Ibid., 52.

31 *Apolitika. Arhitektonske politike Republike Hrvatske 2013-2020, Nacionalne smjernice za kulturu i vrsnoću građenja, Izvješće o provedbi* [Apolitika. National Guidelines for Excellence and Culture of Building, Report on the Implementation] (Zagreb: Ministarstvo prostornoga uređenja, graditeljstva i državne imovine, 2020), 88, translated by Gorka Radočaj.

32 “Nacionalne razvojne strategije Republike Hrvatske do 2030. Godine” [National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia Until 2030], *Narodne novine: službeni list Republike Hrvatske*, no. 13 (2021), Chapter 1 and Appendix 4, accessed June 18, 2021, [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2021\\_02\\_13\\_230.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2021_02_13_230.html), translated by Gorka Radočaj.

constantly present in all segments of the society, will inevitably result in new recommendations regarding the recognition and preservation of high-quality projects, as well as recognised spatial relations, marked in the collective memory. A step further in this direction occurred in April 2021 with an international conference on architecture policies,<sup>33</sup> at which the Croatian and the European architects virtually exchanged ideas that might form the basis for urban regeneration and the possible creation of a new and better city.

## CONCLUSION

In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to ensure innovative approaches to defining the framework and the modalities of operating within the architectural profession, as well as the availability of information, educational measures and programmes for target groups, including two components of innovation – a new approach to learning, and the inclusion of new knowledge related to learning about architecture.

The aim should be to achieve interconnection among chambers, professional associations and civil society organisations, on the one hand, and academic institutions, on the other, in order to develop interdisciplinary programmes intended for the wider population. This would foster the formation of a new generation equipped with the necessary knowledge to recognise and protect works by established architects and other appropriately designed and executed spatial relationships and assemblies across the country, especially today when architectural issues are marginalised and only become a part of the public interest through specific ‘cases’.

The contribution that the drafting of the new *Apolitika* might have after 2020 has not yet been fully considered in the context of its potential, especially in light of the consequences of the Covid pandemic, and, in the domestic context, the effects of the disastrous earthquakes that hit Zagreb and its surroundings in 2020. Nevertheless, regardless of the problems that architecture is currently facing due to unfavourable circumstances, it is possible to emphasise the importance of *Apolitika* after 2020 through the preservation of works by established architects according to the following principles: 1. raising the overall quality of built space and the built environment; 2. creating standards including the protection and principles of sustainable environment; 3. preserving identity as a unified combination of historical experience and contemporary aspirations; 4. including increasingly important social aspects in the selection of the most appropriate architectural solutions; 5. ensuring the visibility of contemporary architectural excellence on the domestic and the European cultural and political scene.

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33 “European Conference on Architectural Policies, Re-use Architecture Conference (Zagreb), Hrvatska (2021),” Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets, accessed May 18, 2021, <https://mpgi.gov.hr/news/european-conference-on-architectural-policies-re-use-architecture/11718>.



As a conclusion, the thoughts of Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts member Boris Magaš will suffice:

Material testimonies of the Croatian identity are sufficient for understanding the necessity not only of preservation and protection, but also of their role as the driving spark in the development process of the contemporary architectural expression. Cultural legacy is not a dead past, but a living basis for building the future. The values of the legacy ought to be preserved, and modern possibilities and aspirations only enrich the given moment by creations of a legible identity, which becomes a lasting path of development. The confrontation between the past and the modern, the global and the regional is not a conflict, but rather an open door to new possibilities. In order for this path to be achieved, basic postulates must be defined, determining both access to architecture and its creative level and the necessity of judging the quality. In the process that allows construction, they ought to be present in all their components.”<sup>34</sup>

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34 Boris Magaš, “Identitet hrvatskog prostora” [Identity of Croatian Space], in *Arhitektonske politike Republike Hrvatske 2013–2020.*, 2013, 15, translated by Marina Denona Krsnik.

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## ARCHITECTURAL AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN IN MARIBORSKO POHORJE: BETWEEN LEISURE PLANNING AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT DURING YUGOSLAV SOCIALISM (1948–1980)

**Keywords:** Slovenian  
postwar town planning,  
leisure time areas, winter  
tourism, Ljubo Humek,  
Branko Kocmut

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### Abstract

*After World War II, Maribor, Slovenia's second-largest city, was mainly set up as an industrial center. Besides the urban plan by Ljubo Humek and Jaroslav Černigoj (1949), social housing and the partial reconstruction of the Old Town, the local administration also paid attention to planning areas for leisure and tourism. This issue, however, has not been adequately studied until now. This paper is organised in three parts: the first part outlines the earliest ski infrastructures in Mariborsko Pohorje by studying the local press, and highlights the role of the architect Branko Kocmut in particular. The second part concentrates on the master plan for the Pohorje resort, developed by Ljubo Humek, together with the skier Franci Čop, which is available in Maribor Provincial Archive. The last section is focused on the subsequent efforts made by the State and the local communities to transform Maribor into a modern winter resort, particularly after Tito's visit in 1969.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The urban and architectural history of the ski resort Mariborsko Pohorje in Maribor from 1948 until the 1980s is one of the most interesting, albeit poorly investigated, cases of architecture for winter tourism in Slovenia, as well as all in socialist Yugoslavia generally. At the same time, it shows a high level of symbiosis between local architects – almost all of whom were exclusively educated in Ljubljana, and, in various ways, put into practice the lessons of their master, professor Edvard Ravnikar (1907–1993) – and the intervention of the State and local communities to promote the Pohorje mountains both as a leisure area for workers and as a winter resort for foreign tourists.<sup>1</sup> Although it has recently been argued that the planning of Slovenian tourist settlements

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<sup>1</sup> This research was made possible thanks to study activity carried out during trips to Ljubljana and Maribor, as part of the thesis project for a PhD in the program “Architecture. History and Project” at Turin Polytechnic University, which covered travel and research expenses. For the on-site research, special thanks go to Damjana Vovk and Eva Potisek from National and University Library in Ljubljana, who continued to provide me with necessary documents and texts remotely even after my visit; to Leopold Mikec Avberšek of Regional Archives in Maribor and to the staff of the University Library in Maribor. At different stages, I also had interviews on this topic with Aleš Vodopivec, professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana, with architect Janez Lajovic, with Bogo Zupančič, architect and curator at the Museum of Architecture and Design in Ljubljana, and with Franci Lazarini, professor at the Faculty of Arts in Maribor.

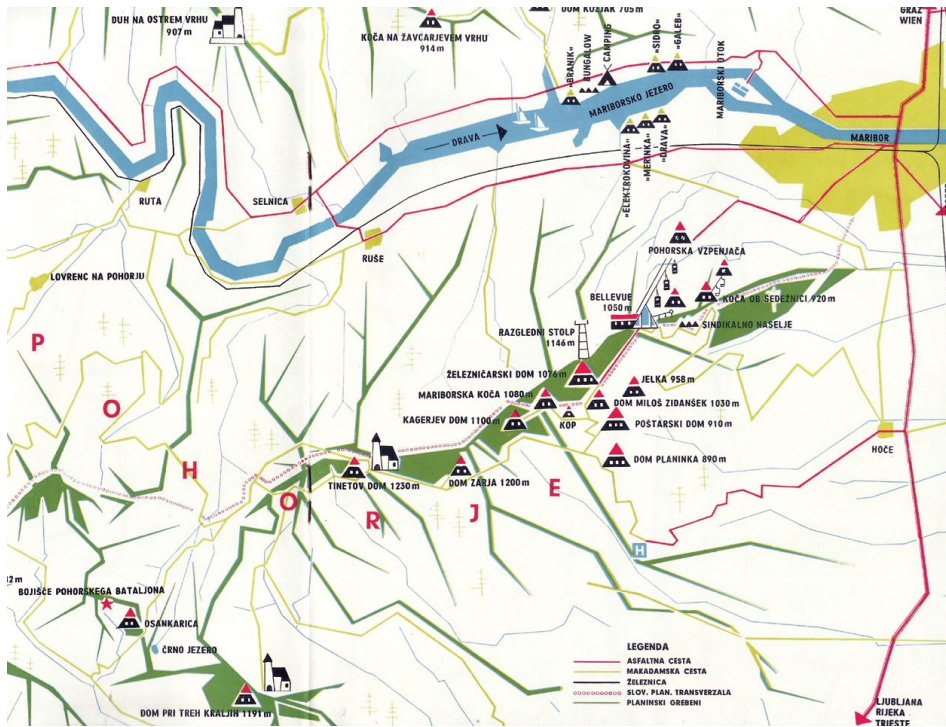


Fig. 1. Tourist map of the Mariborsko Pohorje showing lifts and huts, from a brochure published by Turistično društvo Maribor, 1963. Author's archive.

after World War II was not particularly affected by the influence of Socialism, it seems more appropriate to underline the adherence of actions in favour of tourism to the particular ideology of Yugoslav revisionist socialism, which was the ideological basis of the projects to transform Mariborsko Pohorje into a ski resort.<sup>2</sup>

Mariborsko Pohorje is the north-eastern offshoot of the Pohorje massif (fig. 1), whose highest peak is Žigartov vrh (1346 m), and extends east and north along the Dravska dolina and the Dravsko polje, ideally bordered by the ring road connecting the localities of Ruše-Limbuš-Betnava-Hoče and Areh.<sup>3</sup> As the definition attests, Mariborsko Pohorje is the part of the pre-Alpine massif stretching towards the city of Maribor, which in the history examined has had a very close relationship with the mountain. Furthermore, the geographical and tourist definition distinguishes it from Ribniško Pohorje and Lovrenško Pohorje.

The bourgeoisie of Maribor and, more generally, its residents began to show interest in the sport and recreational use of the prealpine plateau in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through the construction of several private chalets<sup>4</sup> and the

2 Živa Deu, "O urbanizmu in arhitekturi v času socialistične družbene ureditve" [Architecture and Urban Planning in Socialist Regime], *Arhitektov bilten*, no. 190/191 (2011): 52–56; Nebojša Antešević, "Arhitektura modernih turističkih objekata Jugoslavije (1930–1980)" [The Architecture of the Modern Tourist Infrastructures in Yugoslavia] (PhD diss., University of Beograd, 2021).

3 Jože Curk, *Mariborsko Pohorje* [Maribor's Pohorje] (Maribor: Obzorja, 1980), 3.

4 Jelka Pirkovič-Kocbek, *Izgradnja sodobnega Maribora: mariborska arhitektura in urbanizem med leti 1918 in 1976* [Building Contemporary Maribor: Architecture and Urbanism in Maribor between 1918 and 1976] (Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga, 1982), 50.

5 Marko Košir, *Zgodovina Pohorske vzpenjače* [The History of the Pohorje Cableway], in: Košir (ed.), *62. let Pohorske vzpenjače. Franci Čop in gondola* (Maribor: s. n., 2019).

first proposals for the construction of a rack railway or a cable car.<sup>5</sup> The most interesting developments, however, only occurred after World War II, due to the strong dynamism of the new Yugoslav State.

The city of Maribor, second in importance in Slovenia and the centre of the Styrian area of the northeast, is characterized by the landmarks of the Pohorje massif, the Drava, the Slovenske gorice and the Pannonian plain. It has been a key border town after the establishment of Austrian-Yugoslav border, with strong cultural ties both with Yugoslavia and Austria. The damage suffered during the war and the Allied bombing were heavy,<sup>6</sup> and after the Liberation, Maribor became a prominent industrial town.<sup>7</sup> In fact, consistent public efforts were directed at increasing its economic and productive potential: the hydroelectric plant of Mariborski otok was inaugurated in 1948, after which many industrial plants were developed, including the Tovarna avtomobilov Maribor – TAM (production of automobiles and trucks), Metalna (steel), Hidromontaža (engineering), Zlatorog (detergents and cosmetics), Swaty (artificial abrasives), Marles (wood), and Mariborska tekstilna tovarna (textiles).<sup>8</sup>

In this context, in 1946 – even before the Yugoslav law on town planning was approved – the People’s District Council (Okrajni ljudski odbor – OLO) of Maribor launched a consultation with the local Engineers’ Society, which culminated in the master plan being commissioned to Ljubo Humek and Jaroslav Černigoj. Humek (1913–1988) was a key figure who introduced the principles of Modern architecture and urbanism in Maribor, with a keen interest in Scandinavian trends.<sup>9</sup> Born in Krško, he graduated at the Prague Polytechnic in 1938, where he absorbed Czech functionalism, thus pursuing a different educational path compared to most local architects, who were mainly educated in Ljubljana with Jože Plečnik. His work in Maribor as an architect started as early as the second half of the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> His 1949 master plan tried to unify the uneven urban fabric by subdividing the town into the areas of Maribor-left bank, Maribor-Magdalena, the city centre, Maribor-Pobrežje and Tezno, Maribor-Studenci and Maribor-Razvanje. With his careful attention towards landscape issues, Humek planned to move the main railway station towards the right bank of the Drava, in Tabor, at the centre of the railway triangle and to shift the railway line towards Carinthia from Studenci and the areas along the Drava towards Pohorje, in order to beautify the areas along the river. He also projected green belts between the residential and industrial areas and traced a new main road connecting the two banks, joined by a new

6 Ivan Kocmut and Marko Šlajmer, “Ob dirigirane k organizirani stanovanjski gradnji” [Residential Housing from a Managerial Approach to an Organized One], *Arhitekt*, no. 14 (1954): 17.

7 Sergej Vrišer, *Maribor* (Motovun: Niro Motovun, 1984), 92.

8 Bruno Hartman, *Maribor. Mesto ob Dravi* [Maribor. Place on the Drava River] (Maribor: Obzorja, Ljubljana: Ljudska pravica, 1973), 8–10.

9 Borut Pečenko, “In Memoriam. Ljubo Humek”, *Večer*, March 10, 1988, 4.

10 Printworks “Mariborska tiskarna” (1935); mixed use urban building “Ve-Ma”, Jurčičeva ulica (1936–1938). “Plečnikova nagrada Ljubo Humek” [Plečnik Award to Ljubo Humek], *Arhitektov bilten*, no. 70/71 (1984): 7–8.

bridge and characterized by representative buildings, marked as an expression of Socialism. In addition, Humek left intact the layout of the historic centre, criticizing the options to massively demolish the heritage buildings, and also developed a circuit of parks and recreational areas in order to stimulate the contact of the inhabitants with nature.<sup>11</sup>

Such awareness of the need to integrate greenery in the new industrial city was one of the most modern points of his planning. The ideological aspect of Humek's design effort was already evident in a contribution written in 1945, on the steaming rubble of the town:

Mechanical means of transport are being perfected day by day. The development of industry goes hand in hand with the growth of traffic. This is the second fundamental factor that affects the formation of the city. It does not manifest itself only with a radically new motif in the urban image. It manifests itself (...) with a new social stratum. (...) Technological development has created a new material on the foundations of the city; this new material requires equipment that vivifies it; this new equipment requires – and will receive in the new Yugoslavia, I have no doubt – an adequate and harmonious artistic expression.<sup>12</sup>

## THE INTEREST OF SLOVENIAN ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS IN THE MOUNTAIN AND TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF MARIBORSKO POHORJE

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Slovenian identity in the era of resistance was also expressed through the formulation of symbols linked to mountains, with specific reference to the Triglav, the summit of the Julian Alps: in the spring of 1942, it was adopted as a logo by Edvard Ravnikar, who, in the midst of the war, designed the layout for the bonds to finance the National Liberation Campaign on behalf of the Slovenian Communist Party.<sup>13</sup> The association of the summit of Mount Triglav with the Osvobodilne fronte already existed in the communications of partisan groups, but the association of Slovenian architects and planners with the mountain would prove profitable and lasting.

In 1948, Branko Kocmut, a pupil of Edvard Ravnikar who was to finish his studies in Ljubljana only in the following year, published the plan for the construction of the first ski resort in the Radvanje area in *Vestnik* (**fig. 2**).<sup>14</sup>

11 Ljubo Humek, "Urbanistična problematika in regulacijske osnove mesta Maribora" [Urban Planning Problems and the Principles of the Master Plan of the City of Maribor], *Nova obzorja*, no. 4 (1950): 281–290; Ljubo Humek, "Regulacijske zasnove Maribora" [The Maribor Master Plan], *Arhitekt*, no. 15 (1954): 6–8.

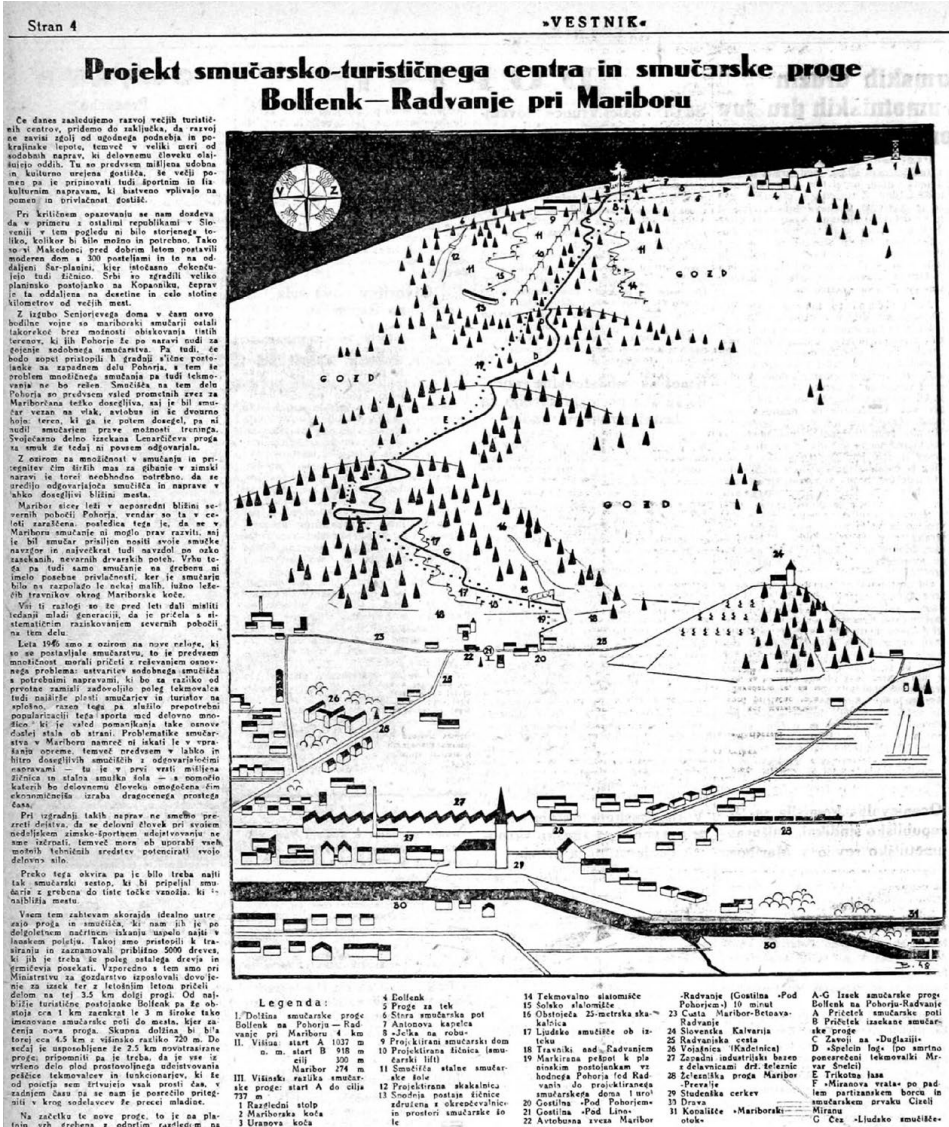
12 Ljubo Humek, "Še o regulaciji Maribora in o urbanizmi sploh" [Again on Maribor and Urbanism in General], *Vestnik*, November 24, 1945, 2. All translations are by the author.

13 Vlasto Kopač, "Edo Ravnikar, risar in grafik v vojni in obnovi" [Edo Ravnikar, Draftsman and Graphic Artist during World War II and in the Times of the Rebuilding], in *Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar: 1907–1993*, eds. Friedrich Achleitner and France Ivanšek (Ljubljana: France and Marta Ivanšek, 1995), 212–213.

14 Branko Kocmut and Franci Čop, "Projekt smučarskega turističnega centra in smučarske proge Bolfenk-Radvanje" [Project for a Ski Resort with One Slope in Bolfenk-Radvanje], *Vestnik*, November 26, 1948, 4.



Fig. 2. Branko Kocmut, project for a ski resort in Radvanje, 1948, in: *Vestnik*, November 26, 1948.



Če danes zasledimo razvoj večjih turističnih centrov, pridemo do zaključka, da vsaj do zvezi zgolj od ugodnega podnebja in pokrajinske lepote, temveč v veliki meri od ugodnih razmer, ki delavcem človeka omogočajo oddih. In so predvsem milijona udobna in kakovostna stanovanja. Če večji pomen pa je pripisovali tudi športnim in fizičnim dejavnostim, ki kakovostno vplivajo na omenjen in privlačnost gostiln.

Do kritičnega opazovanja se nam doseže da v primeru v istih republikah, ki so v tem pogledu ni bilo storjenega veliko, kolikor bi bilo mogoče in potrebno. Tako so v Makedoniji pred dobim letom postavili moderen dom v 350 posteljskih in te na oddaljeni Šar-planini, kjer istovrstno dokončajo tudi Eilatno. Sobi so zgradili veliko planinsko postojanko na Kopaoniku, seprav je ta oddaljena na desetine in celo stotine kilometrov od večjih mest.

Z izgubo Senjorovega doma v času osvojitve vojne so mariborski smučarji ostali izokrajno brez možnosti obkroževanja istih terenov, ki jih Pohorje že po naravi sodi na gojenje sodobnega smučarstva. Pa tudi, če bodo sopesi pristopili k gradnji vrtne postojanke na razpisnem delu Pohorja, s tem le problem množičnega smučarstva pa tudi tekmovalstva ne bo rešen. Smučarstva na tem delu Pohorja so predvsem našli promotorji, gre za Mariborčane težko dosegljiva, saj je bil smučar verjan na vlake, avtobus in je dnočno holoj tereno, ki ga je potem dosegljiv, pa ni mudi smučarjem prave in primarne izvedbe. Svoječasno delo iskarska Lenarčičeva proga za smuk je tedaj ni povsem odgovarjala.

Z osvojem na množičnost v smučarstvu in presegitev čim širših mas za gibanje v smeri naravi in teoretično smučarstva, da se predljo odgovarjalna smučarstva in naprave v lahko dosegljivo bližino mesta.

Maribor niso leži v neposredni bližini severnih pobočij Pohorja, vendar so ta v celoti razseljena, področja tera, ki so v Mariboru smučarje ni moglo prav razviti, saj je bil smučar pristopiti na smučarske naravnosti in največkrat tudi navzdol na ozko zasneženih, severnih dravskih poteh. Vrtu teče pa tudi samo smučarjeva na grebenu ni imelo posebnih privlačnosti, ker je smučarji bilo na razpoložljive in veliki, lahko ledišča travnikov okrog Mariborske kočje.

Vsi bi radijo se že pred leti dali misliti ljudem mladi generaciji, da je prišla a sistematično raziskovanjem severnih pobočij na tiso delo.

Letu 1946 smo z osvojem na nove razse, ki so se postavlja smučarstvo, in je predvsem množičnost smučarji pričeli v reševanju osnovnega problema: ustvarjanje sodobnega smučarstva s potrebnimi napravami, ki bo na razpisno od prvotne zamisli zadovoljilo poleg tekmovalstva tudi množice mladih smučarjev in turistov na splošno. "Časni tega pa sledila preprabljeni popularizaciji tega sporta med delovno množico, ki je valed pomatirana take novove dolgi stih ob strani. Problematika smučarstva v Mariboru namreč ni takih in v prva, katera osemna, temveč predvsem v lahko in sline dosegljivih smučarstva s odgovarjalnimi napravami - tu je v prvi vrsti milijona državljanov in starih smučarja dole - a omenjena kazalen bo delavemu človeku omogočena čim ekonomičnejša izraba dragocennega prostora časa.

Pri izgradnji takih naprav ne smemo preostati dejstva, da se delovni človek pri vsotnem medloženim športu-športem udovoljovanju ne sme izdati, temveč mora imeti uprski vrstni možnih tehničnih sredstev potencirati svoje volje aliho.

Peko tega oblika pa je bilo treba nallti tak smučarske sestop, ki bi pripajali smučarja z grebena do tiste točke vnanja, ki bi nabilnja mesta.

Vsem tem zahtevam akorajda idealno ustrezno proga in smučarstva, ki nam jih je po delopoltem načrtovanju iskavni uspelo našti v lonkem polju. Takoi smo pristopili k izrabi in izravnavanju približno 2000 dreves, ki jih je treba še poleg ostalega dreves in smučarstva postati. Vzorčno s tem smo pri Ministrstvu za gospodarstvo sprostovali dovoljenje za izsek ter a letosilim letom prideli delom na tej 3,5 km dolgi progi. Od nallitje turistične postojanke Bolfenk pa se obkroži čca 1 km zračničari je 3 m široko tako imenovane smučarske poti do mesta, kjer se začne nova proga. Skupna dolžina bo bila torej čca 4,5 km s višinsko razliko 720 m. Do sedaj je usposobljene je 2,5 km avtostrazne proge, pripomniti pa je treba, da je vse iz vrstno delo mlad prostovoljnega udovoljovanju pridice tekmovalcev in funkcionarjev, ki te od postaja sem izbravni vsaki prosti čas, v zadnjem času pa se nam je potrebnosti potegnili v krog sodelavcev že precej mladih.

Na začetku te nove proge, to je na planju, vrh grebena s odprtim razširjenm na

This plan envisaged appropriate deforestation and the installation of a ski lift up to the area of Bolfenk, so named because of the ruins of the church of sv. Bolfenk from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> Where Kocmut had planned a ski lift, just three years later the Habakuk chairlift was built. The architect argued in favour of the project, recalling the activism shown in other republics such as Macedonia and Serbia in building ski resorts, even remote locations far from inhabited centres, such as Šar-planina or Kopaonik. Maribor also deserved a modern ski area, which would develop the potential of the easily snow-covered northern slope of Pohorje and allow for a quality of skiing far superior to the amateur one practiced up to that point in the few areas available at the top. The project was carried out in collaboration with the great sportsman and organizer Franci Čop, and obtained permission from the Ministry of Forests to cut down about 5000 trees and low vegetation that prevented sports activities. Among the social reasons put forward by the architect, there was also the need to involve

15 Curk, *Mariborsko Pohorje*, 27.

the masses of workers in the popularization of skiing and winter sports, as well as for them to avoid the effort of reaching Bolfenk by feet on weekend holidays. The project also included the construction of premises for a stable ski school, a new shelter, a ski jump and competition slopes.<sup>16</sup>

Kocmut's proposal was partially accomplished with the construction of the Habakuk chairlift, inaugurated on February 11, 1951. The plant was designed by engineer Boris Pipan, but technical and sporting advice was again offered by Franci Čop and Marjan Kožuh, another promoter of sport in Maribor. It is interesting to note the "socialist" characterization of the construction of the plant, carried out with the provision of voluntary work by enthusiasts and with local recycled materials: "The whole structure was built exclusively with local materials. Among all the volunteers, the most deserving were our best skiers: Sevcnikar I and II, Cizelj, Šober and Sinkovičeva, who worked over 1000 hours."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, in the statement released in *Vestnik*, Lojze Fajdiga, president of the sports society "Polet", characterized the plant as "open to all FLRJ workers." It was considered to be "the expression of the brotherhood and unity of our nations and a decisive response to all the detractors of our country."<sup>18</sup>

In an article published in 1953 *Arhitekt* (the magazine symbolizing the aspirations of the new circle of architects designers and planners that was emerging around the master and his closest collaborators, France Ivanšek and Danilo Fürst), Edvard Ravnikar, took the opportunity to comment on a new project for Pohorje, this time of greater scope, developed in the same draft by Branko Kocmut.<sup>19</sup> Ravnikar's proposals for Pohorje followed the same far-sighted approach adopted in his projects for new settlements for Slovenia conceived in the early 1950s, such as the one for the inhabited area of the Kidričevo industrial site, in collaboration with Stanko Kristl (1950), or the master plan of the city of Kranj, of the same year: a tree model, later characteristic of Slovenian town planning until the 1960s and freely drawn from Clarence Perry's theories and Scandinavian geometric schemes.<sup>20</sup> Ravnikar's urban planning proposals aimed at an organic settlement structure, with less waste of land and less pressure on vehicular traffic, obtaining a synergy between inhabited centres and communication lines, like the new neighbourhoods

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16 Kocmut and Čop, "Projekt smučarskega turističnega centra," 4.

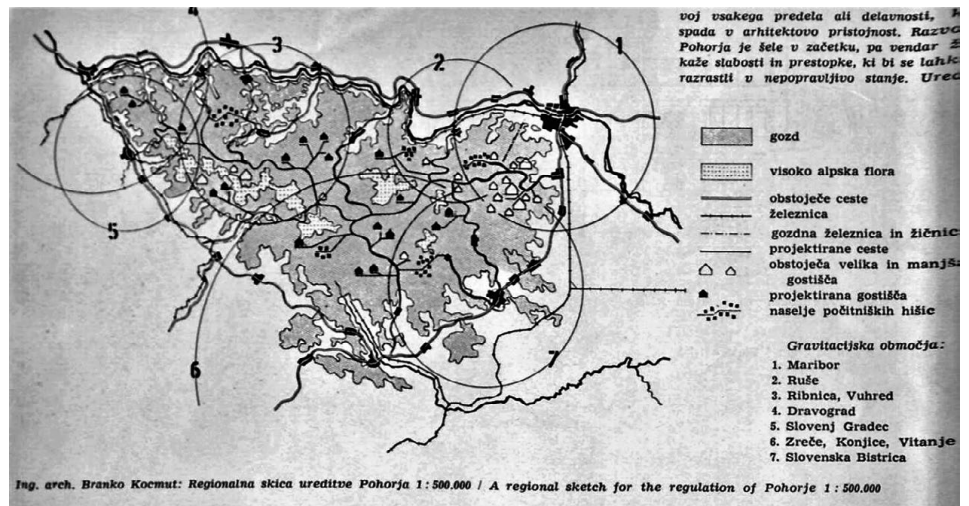
17 "Včeraj je na Pohorju stekla žičnica" [Yesterday a New Lift Ran in Pohorje], *Vestnik*, February 12, 1951, 2.

18 Ibid.

19 Edvard Ravnikar, "Pohorje, pomembno turistično področje" [Pohorje, a Vital Tourist Resort], *Arhitekt*, no. 8 (1953): 18–21.

20 Marjan Bohinec, "Problemi povojne urbanistične izgradnje v Sloveniji" [Some Issues in Postwar Town Planning in Slovenia], *Arhitekt*, no. 1 (1951): 2–5. See also: Raimondo Mercadante, "The Search for the Nordic Roots of Modernity in Slovenian Architecture of the 1950s. Edvard Ravnikar, France Ivanšek and the History of the Journal 'Arhitekt' (1951–1963)," *EDA. Esempi di architettura*, no. 1 (2023): 1–24. Clarence Perry (1872–1944) was an American sociologist and urban planner who developed the concept of the neighbourhood unit, one of the key models of Modernist architecture. Its core idea was an area requiring an elementary school with 1,000–1,200 students, which hosted a population between 5,000 and 6,000 people and offered the advantage of bringing within walking distance all the facilities needed by the families and the school. See: Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 499–503.

Fig. 3. Branko Kocmut, a regional sketch for the regulation of Pohorje, in: *Arhitekt*, no. 8 (1953).



he had proposed along the railway lines.<sup>21</sup> Ravnikar highlighted the need for careful state-oriented planning in order to remove spontaneous and chaotic interventions, potentially dangerous for the image of the Slovenian territory, which he considered to have strong potential for tourism. From this point of view, he deemed as a negative example the bad management of the Gorenjska region, whose development was already taking place in an uncoordinated way and without any precise planning criteria, in spite of the great development opportunities offered by the ski resorts Krvavec and Vogel. Mariborsko Pohorje undoubtedly had advantages from the point of view of ease of access, being close to a large city and serviced by good connections, but Ravnikar did not fail to observe how even in this context heterogeneous individual villas and chalets built in the 1930s still prevailed, without any rational approach towards the mountain area.

For this reason, Ravnikar supported the landscape plan by Branko Kocmut (fig. 3). The project allowed access to the mountain massif through six access points orthogonal to the transversal route, aligned on the way from Hočka cesta to Dravograd. In this way, Kocmut's plan would have integrated Pohorje with the entire regional hinterland of Maribor – Ruše, Ribnica, Dravograd, Zreče and Slovenska Bistrica – making it possible to enhance even lesser-known locations.<sup>22</sup>

In another section of the same article, the architect-engineer Dušan Černič presented a selection of accommodation facilities, mountain huts and private houses built not only on the Maribor side but also on Ribniško Pohorje. Already in the period of monarchical Yugoslavia, architectural interventions of considerable interest had occurred, such as the Engineers' Hut (Herbert Drogenik, 1939 and the Kovačecova vila (Saša Dev, 1936). Several structures were lost in the fires during the Liberation War, including the Senjorjev dom

21 Urša Marn, "Aleš Vodopivec: arhitekt" [Interview with Aleš Vodopivec], *Mladina*, July 1, 2018, 130.

22 Ravnikar, "Pohorje, pomembno turistično področje," 18; Pirkovič-Kocbek, *Izgradnja sodobnega Maribora*, 50.



refuge, while others had been reconfigured from private homes to shelters for the use of the Alpine Club (Planinsko društvo), such as the Engineers' Hut and Ribniška koča, built at an altitude of 1,530 m in the area of Ribniško Pohorje, as the villa of the textile industry magnate, Josip Hutter. It was renovated starting in 1947 with the firm commitment of volunteers from the association, who put their skills to good use under the guidance of the architect Herbert Drofenik: more than 30,000 working hours were needed for the members of the Alpine Club, as well as for specialized craftsmen. The inauguration was held on Republic Day, November 29, 1949, in the presence of Marijan Breclj, an important Slovenian politician and then vice president of the LRS (Ljudska Republika Slovenija, People's Republic of Slovenia) government.<sup>23</sup>

The real turning point in the history of Mariborsko Pohorje, however, came from the construction of the Radavnje-Bolfenk cable car, the first lift of this capacity in Yugoslavia – the cable car of the Medvednica massif near Zagreb and the first cable car in Kopaonik were not built until 1963.<sup>24</sup> In January 1957, the newspaper *Večer* reported on the state of funding provided by state and territorial bodies. The construction of the entire structure cost 149 million dinars. Of this sum, the companies of the district of Maribor paid about 50 million, while the cable car received 27 million from the investment fund of the Maribor OLO (Okrajni ljudski odbor, People's District Council). On the basis of the 14<sup>th</sup> competition, the cable car received another fund of 55 million from the Zvezna investicijska banka (Federal Investment Bank), guaranteed by OLO Maribor.<sup>25</sup> 19 million dinars were still missing from the project, but they were acquired quickly, since the cable car completed its first test ride already on September 5<sup>th</sup> – amid the fears of the participants, who were still not used to this type of transport<sup>26</sup> – and started operating in the autumn. It was officially inaugurated on November 24, 1957, again in the presence of Marijan Breclj, at the time Secretary of State for Commercial Mobility, and Ljubo Babić, Secretary General of the Yugoslav Tourist League, as well as more than 150 guests from all over Yugoslavia.<sup>27</sup>

Although the motors and steel ropes came from Austria, much of the structure was built by the industries of Maribor: the structures of the stations

23 [Uti], "Ribniška koča, sijajen uspeh dela mariborskih planincev" [Ribniška Koča, an Astonishing Success for Maribor Alpinists], *Vestnik*, December 14, 1949, 4.

24 Mirjana Popović, "Zelene površine u Zagrebu" [Green Areas in Zagreb], *Arhitektura*, no. 107/108 (1970): 27–29; "Početci skijanja na Kopaoniku" [The Beginnings of Skiing in Kopaonik], accessed January 25, 2021, <https://www.skijanje.rs/istorija/istorija-skijanja-u-srbiji/pocetci-skijanja-na-kopaoniku/>.

25 "Letos pa zares! Kakor vse kaže, bo Pohorska vzpenjača letos stekla – dolžina vzpenjače 2450 metrov – s kabinami 60 metrov nad zemljo – zmogljivost 400 oseb" [This Year, Really! Everything Shows that Pohorje Cableway Will Run This Year – The Length of the Lift Will Be 2450 m – The Cabins Will Be 60 m above the Ground – People Transported per Hour: 400], *Večer*, January 26 (1957), 2.

26 "Z vpenjačo na Pohorje" [In the Pohorje Cableway], *Večer*, September 6, 1957, 2.

27 "Jutri ob desetih dopoldne, Slavostna otvoritev Pohorske vzpenjače. Nad 150 povabljenih gostov. Avtobus bo jutri dalje redno vozil do spodnje postaje vzpenjač" [Tomorrow Morning at Ten. Solemn Inauguration of the Pohorje Cable Car. Over 150 Invited Guests. Beginning Tomorrow, a Bus Will Run Regularly to the Bottom Station], *Večer*, November 23, 1957, 2.

**Fig. 4.** Picture taken at the sixth meeting of the Turistična zveza Slovenije (the Slovenian Tourist Board), in: *Turistični Vestnik*, no. 4 (1960). Author's archive.



were built by the firm Metalna and the aluminium cabins were from Impol of Slovenska Bistrica.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the work represented an affirmation of the production capacity of the city and of the republic within Yugoslavia. Beyond the technical aspects of undoubted interest, the cable car was a key element in an effective campaign of tourism promotion in Slovenia, implemented with a precise political strategy, as testified by the Turistična zveza Slovenije (the Slovenian Tourist League) (**fig. 4**) and by specific publications, such as the *Turistični vestnik* (Tourist Journal).

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Marjan Breclj had an important role in the plan, and in his writings he accounted for the wider political and diplomatic framework, typical of the Yugoslav non-aligned orientation, within which tourism promotion was inserted: participation in the International Tourism Union, an organization of United Nations and Alpska komisija (the Alpine Commission), and agreements with European countries such as Italy, Austria, Greece, as well as the diplomatic activities of Yugoslavia in relation to the United States and states in Africa and Asia.<sup>29</sup> At the Slovenian level, around 1960 an important role was also played by Danilo Dougan, president of the Slovenian Tourist League but also of the Smučarska zveza (the Ski Consortium). Skiing was central to tourist exploitation projects in Slovenia: in Krvavec the first cable car went into service as early as 1958,<sup>30</sup> while other ski lifts were planned in Velika planina, near Kamnik, where the architect Vlasto Kopač had designed an original village of houses for weekends echoing the architecture of the mountain pastures.<sup>31</sup> Dougan, on

28 Košir, *Zgodovina Pohorske vzpenjače*, 8.

29 Marjan Breclj, "Jugoslavija v mednarodnem turizmu" [Yugoslavia through International Tourism], *Turistični vestnik*, no. 1 (1960): 1–2.

30 "Vzpenjača na Krvavec" [Cableway in Krvavec], *Večer*, December 31, 1958, 9.

31 Fran Vatovec, "Že poje svoj spev Velika Planina – naše največje gorsko rekreacijsko jedro" [Velika Planina Already Sings its Poem – Our Best Mountain Resort], *Turistični vestnik*, no. 1 (1960): 5–10.



the other hand, expressed the idea that investments were also needed in roads and infrastructures if the tourist economy was to be improved.<sup>32</sup> This idea was widely shared by Slovenian planners in Ljubljana and Maribor. In 1960, Boris Gaberščik, an urban planner with the Urbanistični inštitut LRS (the Town Planning Institute of the People's Republic of Slovenia) considered the Pohorje cable car as an example of an extended concept of mobility, which included not only the main roads but also infrastructures plugged into the landscape to promote tourism development.<sup>33</sup>

In his role as head of the Komuna projekt studio, Ljubo Humek worked together with Franci Čop to create a plan for the urban regulation of Mariborsko Pohorje, which was officially presented in January 1961.<sup>34</sup> The director of the Maribor Museum, Sergej Vrišer, had collaborated in the historical part of the plan, while Stanko Pahič contributed archaeological studies; Borut Belec focused on geographical issues; Marjan Kožuh addresses touristic matters; and the engineer Bogomir Ranc was the collaborator for infrastructure.

The clarity of Humek's study was based on the development of the ideas already announced by Ravnikar and Branko Kocmut about the importance of viability and the development of a relationship between the mountain massif and the surrounding region. Humek also went so far as to foresee the tourist development of the Areh sector, at a higher altitude (1250 m) and with better snow cover, as well as of other areas fitted for a different kind of tourism, such as Sedovec, which was suitable for those in search of alpine tranquillity. For tourist accommodations, Humek did not particularly focus on hotels, but rather on colonies for workers, camping and a greater availability of small accommodation facilities along the Hoče-Ruše road. In this way, he intended to safeguard the landscape from speculation – his condemnation of both pre-war bourgeois building interventions and more recent abuses was exemplary in this sense<sup>35</sup> – but at the same time he wanted to maintain the social destination of Pohorje as a recreational place for workers: “In this area a compromise should be made between forest use, so far the only known economic branch, and a new economic management of this site, i.e. an economy and trade based on air, sun and mountains as sources of health and rest and their indirect effects: the ‘RECREATION OF WORKERS.’”<sup>36</sup>

The only hotel foreseen in the Humek plan – which was to receive the prize of the “Prešeren Foundation” together with Franci Čop in 1962<sup>37</sup> – was in the

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32 Danilo Dougan, “Razvijanje turističnega gospodarstva v Sloveniji” [The Development of the Tourist Economy in Slovenia], *Turistični vestnik*, no. 4 (1960): 109–110.

33 Boris Gaberščik, “K urbanizaciji prostora glavnih cest Slovenije” [Towards the Planning of Slovenian Main Roads], *Arhitekt*, no. 4 (1960): 59–63.

34 Ljubo Humek, Hočko Pohorje, Okrajni ljudski odbor Maribor, urbanistična ureditev mariborskega Pohorja [Hočko Pohorje, District Popular Council of Maribor, Urban Planning of the Mariborsko Pohorje] January 1961, Fond Ljubo Humek, SI\_PAM/0074/033/00017, box OK/224, Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor (PAM).

35 Ibid., 64.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 17.

Fig. 5. Leaflet printed in 1970 showing the easy access from the Hotel Bellevue to the ski lifts. Author's archive.

**HOTEL BELLEVUE**  
MARIBORSKO POHORJE  
1050 m  
**MARIBOR**  
TEL. 318-05  
SLOVENIJA  
JUGOSLAVIJA

ŠPORTNE NAPRAVE NA MARIBORSKEM POHORJU  
WINTERSPORTANLAGEN AM MARIBORSKO POHORJE  
INSTALLATIONS DE SPORT D'HIVER SUR LA MONTAGNE DE POHORJE  
INSTALLAZIONI SPORTIVE INVERNALI SULLE MONTAGNE DEL POHORJE

Pohorska vzpenjača  
Pohorje Gondelbahn  
Télépherique  
Funivia

Sedežnica • Habakuk •  
Sessellift • Habakuk •  
Télésiège • Habakuk •  
Seggiovia • Habakuk •

1  
Vlečnica • Bellevue •  
Schlepplift • Bellevue •  
Monte-pente • Bellevue •  
Sciovia • Bellevue •

2  
Vlečnica • Bolfenk •  
Schlepplift • Bolfenk •  
Monte-pente • Bolfenk •  
Sciovia • Bolfenk •

Turistična smučarska proga  
Touristische (Familien)  
Abfahrten  
Pistes touristiques  
Pista turistica

Tekmovalna proga  
Alfahrtspiste  
Piste de descente  
Pista di discesa

Sankaška proga  
Rodelbahn  
Piste de luge  
Slittovia

Slalomišče  
Slalomhang  
Piste de slalom  
Pista per slalom

Cesta  
Strasse  
Route  
Strada

Parkirni prostor  
Parkplatz  
Parking  
Parceggio

517

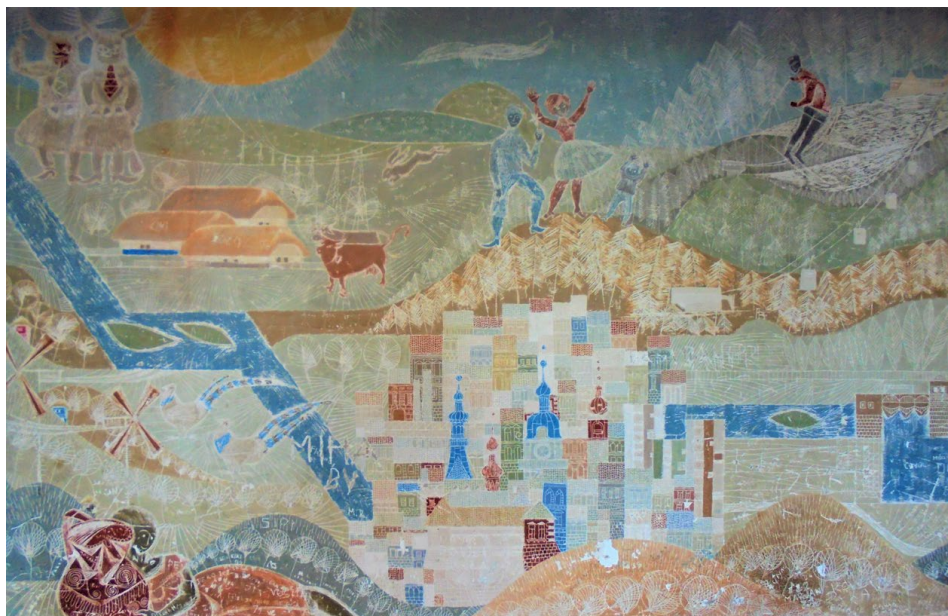
area near the top station of the cable car, and provisionally called “Bolfenk”. It later became the Bellevue Hotel, one of the masterpieces of Slovenian architecture of the 1960s, designed by the great architect Ivan Kocmut. Inaugurated on December 28, 1960, it was defined by the press as “the most contemporary hotel in Slovenia.”<sup>38</sup> The modern design of the project showed a close integration between the accommodation facility and the cable car station (fig. 5), conceived as a unit from the beginning, as can be seen from the project and the maquette.<sup>39</sup> Born as a simple restaurant, its accommodation capacity was originally limited to ten rooms with 24 beds, but it was immediately necessary to build an annex to meet the needs of tourists not only from northeastern Slovenia but also from neighbouring Austria. The company “Majolika”, which managed the structure, received credit from the Economic Bank of the Republic for the granting of federal funds for an investment of 175 million dinars.<sup>40</sup> The annex, designed by Ivan Kocmut and Vlado Emeršič,

38 “Včeraj so na Pohorju odprli najsodobnejši hotel v Sloveniji” [Yesterday the Most Contemporary Hotel in Slovenia Opened in Pohorje], *Večer*, December 29, 1960, 1.

39 The model was published in *Večer*, September 6, 1957, 2.

40 “Kredit za depandanso Bellevue. Z gradnjo bodo začeli že ta mesec – Depandansa bo imela 90 ležišč in 80 restavracijskih sedežev – Investicija velja 175 milijonov dinarjev” [Credits for the Construction of the Bellevue Annex. Work Will Begin This Month – The Annex Will Have 90 Beds and 80 Restaurant Seats – The Investment is Worth 175 million Dinars], *Večer*, November 6, 1963, 4.

**Fig. 6.** Jože Brumen and Lidija Osterc, *The Legend of the Drava*, mural painting in the dining room of the hotel Bellevue, 1960, Mariborsko Pohorje. Photograph by Raimondo Mercadante, 2020.



displayed 90 beds and space 80 more guests in the restaurant. The furnishings were by Mirko Zdovc, a designer who participated in several important works of modern architecture in Maribor, such as the Higher School of Economics and Commerce (Branko Kocmut, 1962). Inside, there was a chandelier by the sculptor Slavko Tihec, author of notable monuments such as that for the Pohorje Battalion fighters (with Branko Kocmut, 1959) near Oplotnica, and a mural painting by Jože Brumen and Lidija Osterc, *The Legend of Drava*, still visible today although severely damaged (**fig. 6**). In the Bellevue hotel, Ivan Kocmut articulated a precise vision of contemporary architecture for the mountains, which also took inspiration from the Scandinavian architects whose works were popularized in Maribor by Humek (in 1952, as a collaborator of *Arhitekt*, Humek had travelled to Switzerland, Sweden and Finland, where he even met Alvar Aalto).<sup>41</sup> Subsequently, Ivan Kocmut maintained his interest in infrastructures for winter sports, and proposed an imposing cable car for Triglav, where he planned another ski resort.<sup>42</sup>

In 1969, the Bellevue Hotel was also the destination for President Josip Broz Tito's visit to Maribor. The Marshal arrived in the city after a tour with a stop in Velenje and at the new power plant in Zlatoličje. He visited the industrial complexes and the city authorities in Maribor but also had time for a grouse hunt in the woods, and stayed in the hotel at the top of the cable car, where he offered words of appreciation for both the ski lift and the hotel.<sup>43</sup> He also met

41 Ljubo Humek, "Po Švici, Švedski in Finski" [Architecture in Switzerland, Sweden and Finland], *Arhitekt*, no. 6, (1952): 36–38.

42 Sergej Vrišer, "50 let Ivana Kocmuta" [The 50 Years of Ivan Kocmut], *Večer*, April 2, 1976, 6.

43 Gabrijel Jesenšek, "Tito pripoveduje o lovu na petelina. Danes dopoldne ob desetih se je začela v Zlatoličju svečanost, ko je predsednik Tito izročil v obratovanje največjo slovensko hidroelektrano Zlatoličje – Kako je predsednik preživel včerajšnji dan na Pohorju" [Tito Tells of Grouse Hunting. This Morning at Ten a Ceremony Begins in Zlatoličje during which President Tito Will Put the Largest Hydroelectric Plant in Slovenia into Action. The Experience of the President, Yesterday in Pohorje], *Večer*, April 26, 1969, 1.



Franci Čop.<sup>44</sup> This official visit served to anoint Mariborsko Pohorje as a top mountain resort, known throughout Yugoslavia.

## THE 1970s: MASS SKIING AND THE OPENING OF NEW SLOPES AND ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

The 1970s witnessed the evolution of Slovenian skiing as a tourist attraction, specifically on Mariborsko Pohorje. Increasing enthusiasm for winter sports, which was strengthened by the establishment of the international slalom race Zlata lisica in 1964, as well as by the increased spending capacity of the Yugoslav population and the influx of tourists from abroad, entailed new challenges. Foreign guests mainly came from West Germany; this put local tour operators at the forefront of the effort to keep the resort attractive for a more demanding public, which also required offers for *après-ski*, attention to half-board packages at the buffet, and a richer breakfast.<sup>45</sup> They responded with packages that included accommodation, board and a ski pass, but tourism trends increasingly emphasized fun and socialization besides skiing.<sup>46</sup> For example, the dilemmas of snowless winters and of crowds on the slopes first arose in 1975;<sup>47</sup> to solve this last obstacle, new slopes were built in the Areh sector that year. This project was administered by Certus TOZD, the Maribor public transport company which had taken over administration of the cable car since 1973, as well as running the ski lifts and the main hotels in Maribor such as the Slavija, the Orel and the Zamorc. In the 1975–1976 season, the Ruška ski lift was opened and the Cojzarica was planned, which would have relieved the pressure on the Bolfenk sector.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, the stylization of hotel facilities became more and more a key point of concern for the architects. Ivan Kocmut, Branko Završnik (architect of the Turist and of the Orel hotels in Maribor) and the designer Mirko Zdovc took part to a round table on the subject for *Večer*. For Ivan Kocmut, it was essential to achieve harmony between natural beauty, definitive architecture and urban layouts, but also to create an environment with attention to the smallest details, such as the graphics of the menu, in order to capture the attention of tourists and leave them with good memories.<sup>49</sup>

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44 “Franci Čop pripoveduje kako se je peljal s Titom s vzpenjačo. K divjemu petelinu še zlata lisica” [Franci Čop Tells How He Went with Tito on the Cable Car. Another Golden Fox for the Capercaillie], *Večer*, April 28, 1969, 4.

45 “Ustna propaganda odloča. Kakšna bo turistična sezona 1977? Neustrezni polpenzioni in nekakovostne storitve” [Word of Mouth was Decisive. What Will the 1977 Tourist Season Be Like? Inadequate Half Board and Poor-Quality Services], *Večer*, December 31, 1976, 10.

46 Manfred Meršnik, “Pred zima. Komentar” [Before Winter. Some Considerations], *Večer*, November 14, 1975, 11.

47 “Zimske skrbi. Pomanikanje snega povzroča potovalnim agencijam hude skrbi” [Winter Anxieties. The Absence of Snow Causes Serious Concerns to Travel Agencies], *Večer*, January 24, 1975, 11.

48 “Na Arehu novi žičnici” [New Lifts at Areh], *Večer*, December 12, 1975, 3.

49 Manfred Meršnik, “Arhitektura in turistična politika” [Architecture and Tourist Politics], *Večer*, May 7, 1970, 9.



Fig. 7. Postcard (1987) showing the new developments of winter tourism in Mariborsko Pohorje in the 1970s: the new cable-car, Hotel Habakuk, Hotel Areh. Author's archive.

Two important achievements may be referred to in relation to this approach (fig. 7): the Sport Hotel Areh and the Habakuk Hotel. The Sport Hotel Areh completed the development of tourism in Areh and was a good example of the aesthetic and functional research of the 1970s: it was designed by a student of Ravnikar, Tomaž Medvešček, later a brilliant exponent of postmodern architecture. Built by the Gradis firm,<sup>50</sup> the building was raised on pillars, and included a basement with a shop, equipment rental services, a cloakroom and a garage for sleds, which opened directly onto the slopes. The original shape of the roof was obtained in wooden ribs and pursued the disposition toward organic architecture of that era (see, for instance, Janez Bizjak, Marko Cotič and Dušan Engelsberger, "Joža Ažman" Cultural Center, Bohinjska Bistrica, 1978–1979). The work also enjoyed influence outside Slovenia.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, today it is in a state of neglect. The Habakuk Hotel, inaugurated on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1974, was designed by Ivan and Magda Kocmut and was supposed to offer a luxury hotel experience. Originally equipped with 75 beds for 40 rooms, it boasted a sauna and a bowling facility; the interiors were the work of designer Tone Šegula.<sup>52</sup> From an architectural point of view, it was the Styrian declination of the brilliant regionalism expressed by architects such as Janez Lajovic in Kranjska gora and Bovec. While Hotel Prisank in Kranjska gora harmonized, albeit on a different scale, with the Gorenjska huts, and Hotel Kanin in Bovec took up the motif of the alpine landscape in an architectural structure, the

50 "Kaj in kako gradimo?" [What and How Do We Build?], *Stavbar, glasilo delovneve kolektiva Gp Stavbar*, no. 2 (1975): 8.

51 Ivica Mladenović, *11 istaknutih arhitekata Jugoslavije 4* [11 Prominent Yugoslav Architects] (Beograd: Studio linija A), 1989, 33–36.

52 "Habakuk je odprla vrata" [Habakuk is Now Open], *Večer*, December 6, 1974, 8.



Habakuk recalled the sloping roofs of Old Maribor. Unfortunately, the hotel was completely altered between 1993 and 1995.<sup>53</sup>

The final act of the renovation work undertaken for the Pohorje massif was the replacement of the cable car cabins, in 1978. In this instance, too, the date chosen for the reopening was the day of the Republic, November 28<sup>th</sup> and occurred in the presence of important guests and institutions, such as the vice president of the executive council of the Republic.<sup>54</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Urban and regional planning and the architecture of mountain resorts were seriously addressed in Slovenia after World War II. This can be further attested by several works in the field by Ravninar's students, such as France Ivanšek's ambitious degree project (1955), a regional plan for the Upper Sava valley, including Kranjska gora.<sup>55</sup> Retracing the history of regulatory plans and accommodation facilities for Slovenian winter resorts shows an intersection between the architecture of the "Ljubljanska šola" and the role of local and Yugoslav political-institutional actors. Further research could further embed this study within the planning of mountain resorts throughout the other Yugoslav republics and investigate the influence of neoliberal trends after 1980, and beyond.

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53 Zora Kužet, "Ali ima arhitekt Kocmut prav?" [Is the Architect Kocmut Right?], *Večer*, August 3, 1993, 8.

54 "Praznik v belem" [National Holiday in White], *Večer*, December 1, 1978, 1.

55 France Ivanšek, "Regionalni načrt Gornjesavske doline" [Regional Plan for the Higher Sava Valley], *Arhitekt*, no. 16 (1955): 4–11.



# Art

and

**the State**

in Modern Central Europe  
(18th – 21st Century)

# The City as a Political Canvas

**Carmen-Ionela Sârbu**

ARCHITECTURAL IMAGE AND STATE  
POWER: BUCHAREST'S PREPARATION TO  
HOST THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE 1953  
WORLD YOUTH AND STUDENT FESTIVAL

**Sandi Bulimbašić**

ARCHITECTURE COMPETITIONS IN  
INTERWAR SPLIT: THE STATE AND THE  
IDENTITY OF THE CITY

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**Keywords:** architecture,  
1953, communism,  
propaganda, power,  
Bucharest, power-knowledge

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## ARCHITECTURAL IMAGE AND STATE POWER: BUCHAREST'S PREPARATION TO HOST THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE 1953 WORLD YOUTH AND STUDENT FESTIVAL

### Abstract

*Communism subordinates architecture to ideology, like any other totalitarian regime. It imposes control over both education and practice in this field, thereby transforming it into a propaganda tool for a new social order. Bucharest, the capital of Romania, was massively affected by the imposition of the Communist project in different phases of its post-World War II history. We refer here to the Stalinist epoch in Romanian Communist architecture (1948–1957), 1952 being crucial for the reassertion of Socialist Realist guidelines in architecture and the adoption of a plan for the Socialist reconstruction of the capital city. The Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students, which was to take place in Bucharest in August 1953, created the opportunity for initiating this project, concentrating all available resources on it. The festival represented a huge propaganda operation overseen by the Soviet Union, with the aim to gain the sympathy and adherence of the largest possible number of participants, under the slogan of peace and friendship among peoples. Besides carrying out some urban development projects, new structures were built in support of the Festival agenda: Bazilescu Summer Theatre, the movie hall Fraternity of Peoples, the 23<sup>rd</sup> August Stadium, and the National Opera House. Since the festival itself was a means of propaganda, all of these constructions were meant to serve a specific purpose. The present study analyses the relationship between architecture and state power in the context described above, in particular, the use of architecture as a means of propaganda for projecting the image of a vibrant developing country. The 1952–1953 issues of *Arhitectura*, the official publication of the Union of Romanian Architects, and Michel Foucault's theory of the power-knowledge binomial, will guide our inquiry.*

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### INTRODUCTION

If the interwar period in Romania is characterized by great cultural momentum and an innovative modern spirit, the same cannot be said for the post-World War II period. Once the totalitarian Communist regime conquered Romania – closely monitored by the Soviet Union – matters changed radically, including the domain of architecture. The entire architectural system was monopolized by the politics and ideology of Stalinist Socialism.

Approximately three periods can be identified in the communist architecture of Romania. The first period, the Stalinist, which is the focus of this paper,



began after the war, when the Communists took over in 1948, and lasted until 1957, when architectural practices began to develop in new directions under the influence of Khrushchev's famous speech in 1954. The second period was characterized by a certain cultural openness and by political changes in opposition to the Soviet Union, which is why it is also known as "the Thaw". This term became popular due to Ilia Ehrenburg's novel, *The Thaw* (1954). This phase lasted until 1971, when new measures were adopted. The last period was defined as a period of radical re-Stalinization<sup>1</sup> under the influence of the cult of the dictator's personality. It ended only in 1989, with the collapse of the Communist regime.

As already mentioned, the Stalinist period is the focus of this essay, a time of most drastic control, coercion and censorship, which seriously limited cultural perspectives, while imposing Socialist Realism. The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between state power and architecture in the context of the preparations that took place in Bucharest in 1953 to host the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students and the Third World Congress of Youth. The analytical method for this approach is the Foucauldian power-knowledge binomial with reference to the issues of *Arhitectura* magazine published in 1952 and 1953. I employ Foucault's concept of power-knowledge to explain how the newly established power, Communism, generated discourse and produced the built environment, and to understand the political status that knowledge assumes, as well as the instrumentalization of all means, including architecture, in generating the "truth" of the new regime.

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## NEW ARCHITECTURE FOR A NEW SOCIETY

When the Communists came to power in 1948, the first measures taken were to centralize the economy according to the Stalinist model. These measures profoundly affected the domain of architecture by transferring private property to state ownership, by assimilating the architects employed in institutions of design, thus removing any possibility of free practice, and by ideologizing architectural education and practice.

The year 1952, in particular, witnessed pivotal decisions that directly impacted the domain of architecture and urbanism. This transformative moment was announced by Hotărîrea Comitetului Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Român și a Consiliului de Miniștri al Republicii Populare Române (The Decision of the Central Committee of the Romanian Labour Party and of the Council of the Ministers of the Romanian People's Republic), which stipulated the socialist reconstruction of Bucharest, the construction of the metro railway in the capital, the construction or reconstruction of cities and the organization of activity in the domain of architecture.<sup>2</sup> Regarding

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1 Nicolae Lascu and Irina Tulbure Moldovan, "Arhitectura modernă și contemporană în România" [Romanian Modern and Contemporary Architecture] (Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism, 2018), 69.

2 "Comunicat" [Communiqué], *Arhitectură și Urbanism*, no. 11 (1952): 1.

institutional measures, Comitetul de Stat pentru Arhitectură și Construcții, CSAC (The State Committee for Architecture and Constructions) was established in order to “perform state control and leadership over the activity of various organizations and institutions, regardless of their departmental subordination, in the domain of architecture,”<sup>3</sup> according to the articles in *Arhitectură și Urbanism* (Architecture and Urbanism) magazine no. 11, from 1952. At the same time, Institutul Științific de Arhitectură (The Scientific Institute of Architecture) and Uniunea Arhitecților din Republica Populară Română (The Union of Architects of the Romanian People’s Republic) were founded for the purpose of research and ideologization “in order to make a major contribution to the work of building socialism.”<sup>4</sup> By adopting these measures, state control over architectural activities became absolute. At the same time, hosting the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students and the Third World Congress of Youth in the year following the adoption of these measures was meant to encourage their application.

The World Festival of Youth and Students was periodically organized by the World Federation of the Democratic Youth, an organization controlled by the Soviet Union. Most of these festivals were organized in socialist countries, and functioned as an extraordinarily effective Soviet propaganda instrument in the context of the tensions of the Cold War, or, more precisely (in this context), what was called the Cultural Cold War.<sup>5</sup> The participants also included young people from non-communist countries with different political views. The presence of many of them was not a matter of their political beliefs, but due to the desire to interact with other young people, to travel and have fun. This was precisely the Soviet strategy: to lure as many young followers as possible through propaganda disguised in universally accepted slogans and values, such as peace and friendship. In addition, it was highlighted that the festival was open to everyone, regardless of their religion, nationality, ethnicity, or political views.<sup>6</sup> This strategy was probably responsible, in part, for the success of the event, with the exception of the 1959 and 1962 editions in Vienna and Helsinki, respectively, which lacked the political support of their host states.

Following the last minute withdrawal of Poland, Romania had to host the fourth edition of the Festival. The limited time left for preparation, just a few months, put extra pressure on a country that was not in the least prepared to host an event of such magnitude, which involved staggering levels of

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3 “Hotărârea Comitetului Central al P.M.R. și a Consiliului de Miniștri al R.P.R. cu privire la construcția și reconstrucția orașelor și organizarea activității din domeniul arhitecturii” [The Decision of the Central Committee of P.M.R. and of the Council of the Ministers of R.P.R. Regarding the Construction and Reconstruction of Cities and Organization of Activity in the Field of Architecture], *Arhitectură și Urbanism*, no. 11 (1952): 2. All the translations of the quotations are made by the author.

4 *Ibid.*, 3.

5 For more on this topic, see Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabendam, eds. *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945–1960* (London: Frank Cass Publisher, 2003).

6 Pia Koivunen, “The World Youth Festival as a Soviet Cultural Product during the Cold War,” *Quaestio Rossica*, vol. 8, no. 5, (2020): 1614.

investment and (re)construction. These obligations would be reflected in what was called “the Festival hunger” due to lack of food and resources. The project of reconstructing Bucharest was all the more important because one of the aims of the Festival was to show the whole world that young people from Socialist countries enjoy the best living and personal development conditions.

As a means of manifesting power, architecture became a state problem, and all professionals were called upon to design a new architecture, with a new repertory of ideas. The appeal was mandatory and urgent. The urgency was the need to combat the old order and bourgeois influences, such as cosmopolitanism and formalism, and the implementation of a new order, a new architecture, for the New Man. With the help of architecture the Communist regime aimed at “the liquidation of the remnants of the old order, and the building of the new society.”<sup>7</sup> As Marcel Locar wrote at the time, “The process of architectural creation, as an integral part of the cultural revolution that is taking place in our country, has an active role in the Communist education of the masses; the new, Socialist architecture, the aspiration of many, must actually contribute to the raising of the patriotic consciousness of our people (...) to stimulate the working people in their fight for Socialism, for peace.”<sup>8</sup>

Architecture, which in Locar’s rhetoric was presented as part of the cultural revolution, thus became an active tool of Communist propaganda and the indoctrination of the masses. This new Stalinist architecture, adapted to the tradition of Romanian architecture was defined as “Socialist in content, national in form.”<sup>9</sup> Soviet architecture magazines and books were translated to clarify the ideology of architectural creation. In addition, the plan to transform Bucharest into a Socialist city was expressly modelled on the transformation of Moscow.

In January 1953, the Decision of the Council of Ministers<sup>10</sup> provided construction plans for a variety of sports buildings and assembly halls, which were to be inaugurated on the occasion of the “great celebration of peace and friendship,”<sup>11</sup> the Festival. Work began in February 1953, with an established deadline of only a few months. However, even this tight timeline was reinterpreted to favour Socialist propaganda as “a new proof of the strength and vitality of our regime of popular democracy,”<sup>12</sup> as B. Gheorghiu noted in the *Arhitectura* magazine of RPR.

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7 Marcel Locar, “Pe drumul unei noi arhitecturi în R.P.R.” [Towards a New Architecture in R.P.R.], *Arhitectură și Urbanism*, no. 1-2, (1952): 4.

8 Ibid.

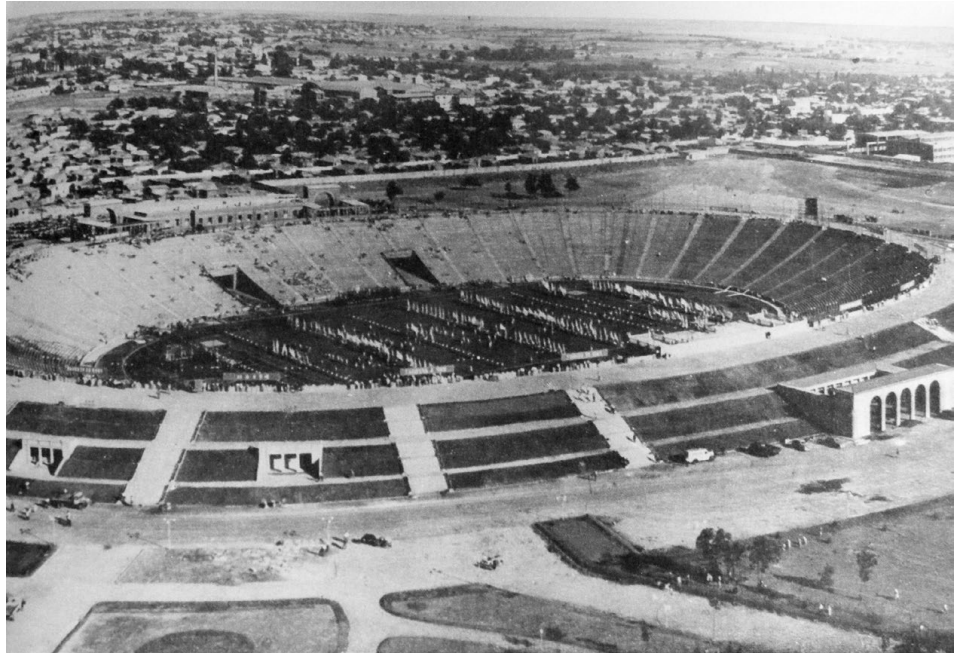
9 Ibid.

10 “Hotărîrea Comitetului Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Român și a Consiliului de Miniștri al Republicii Populare Române cu privire la planul general de reconstrucție socialistă a orașului București” [The Decision of the Central Committee of the Romanian Labour Party and of the Council of the Ministers of the Romanian People’s Republic Regarding the General Plan for the Socialist Reconstruction of Bucharest], *Arhitectură și Urbanism*, no. 11 (1952): 4–7.

11 B. Gheorghiu, “Noi construcții culturale și sportive pentru oamenii muncii” [New Cultural and Sports Constructions for working people], *Arhitectura RPR*, no. 1 (1953): 13.

12 Ibid.

Fig. 1. 23<sup>rd</sup> August Stadium, 1953–2007, in: *Arhitectura RPR*, no. 1 (1953): 21.



Bucharest's Socialist reconstruction plan targeted housing, industry, public buildings and transportation. The buildings were designed and erected in an extremely short time, as they represented "a dignified and appropriate framework for the great manifestations of the world youth that took place on this occasion,"<sup>13</sup> again in the words of B. Gheorghiu. Neighbourhoods with a dense working population were also targeted, such as 23 August and Grivița Roșie (Red Grivița), which were considered to be neglected in the past. Thus, an attempt was made to diminish the contrast between the city centre and the outskirts, which was actually one of the Communist Party's long-term strategic objectives.

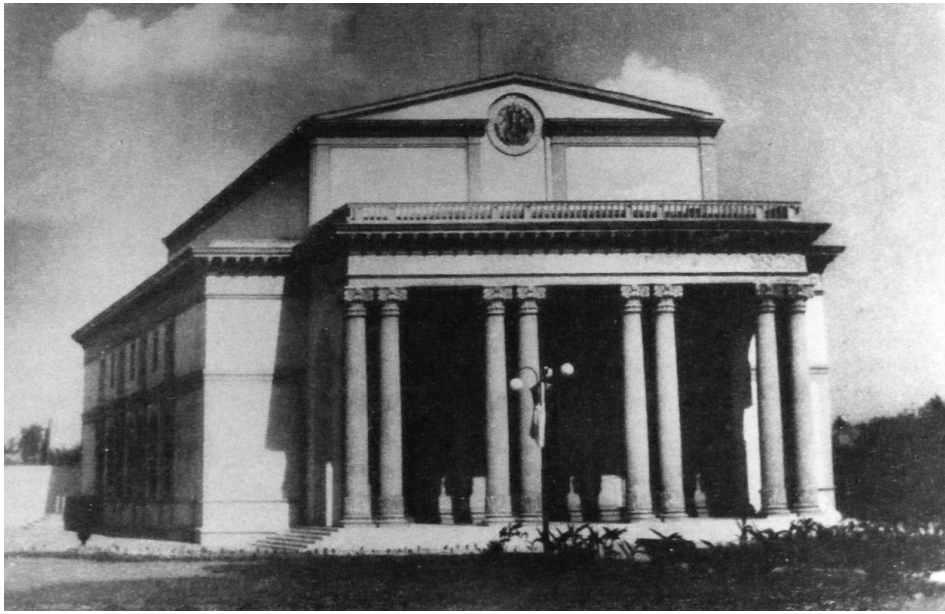


Fig. 2. The Skydiving Tower, 1953. Photograph by Cristian Eduard Drăgan.

Restaurants, housing, cultural and sports complexes were built. The projects for these structures were designed by the Institutul Proiect-București (Project-Bucharest Institute). The 23<sup>rd</sup> August Cultural and Sports Complex included the Stadium (fig. 1), the Summer Theatre, and the Skydiving Tower (fig. 2). The 23<sup>rd</sup> August Stadium was built after the model of the Kirov Stadium in

13 Ibid.





**Fig. 3.** The Fraternity of Peoples Cinema, 1953, in: *Arhitectura RPR*, no. 1 (1953): 24.



**Fig. 4.** Bazilescu Summer Theater, 1953. Photograph by Carmen Sârbu.

Leningrad (Saint Petersburg), with the grandstands made in the shape of an earthen slope, a solution that was necessitated by the overall time pressure. At the same time, this solution was highlighted as very economical.<sup>14</sup>

Înfrățirea între popoare (The Fraternity of Peoples) Cinema (**fig. 3**) was built on Bucureștii Noi (New Bucharest) Boulevard, a project designed by the architects Nicolae Porumbescu, Dan Bacalu and Traian Stănescu. The inclusion of ornamentation inspired by the architecture of Romanian tradition is a notable example of the application of the principles of the new architecture intended as “national as a form, Socialist in content.”<sup>15</sup> The movie theatre formed the focal point of a complex that also included blocks of flats characteristic of similar Soviet projects. The Bazilescu Summer Theatre (**fig. 4**) was designed by the

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>15</sup> Locar, “Pe drumul unei noi arhitecturi în R.P.R.,” 4.



Fig. 5. The National State Opera, 1953.  
Photograph by Carmen Sărbu.



architect Paul Miculescu and his collaborators Victor Agent, Virgil Marinescu, while the building of the National State Opera (**fig. 5**) was designed by the architect Octav Doicescu. All of these constructions were meant to meet the needs of the New Man, the dignified representative of the working class.

The magazine *Arhitectură și Urbanism*, trumpeted and praised each achievement (construction, landscaping and parks). This magazine was the official publication of the Union of Architects. As of 1953, the name has changed to *Arhitectura RPR* (RPR Architecture). Today the publication is simply called *Arhitectura* (Architecture). In addition to its professional informative role, the review also served as a means of political propaganda, like all communication channels infused with Communist ideology. Here is a relevant excerpt:

The enthusiastic work of thousands of young brigadiers, who worked day and night with momentum and love, enriched – before the deadlines – the capital of our country with new cultural and sports buildings, designed to meet the cultural needs of the constantly increasing number of working people. These buildings – which quickly became known to the citizens of the capital – were visited by tens of thousands of spectators during the artistic performances of the Festival. They are important achievements in terms of architectural creation and will have to be discussed and analysed during the creative meetings of the Union of Architects.<sup>16</sup>

In reality, the Festival was a difficult test for the country due to lack of resources and food, followed by a period of famine, known as “the Festival hunger.” To make matters worse, “the enthusiastic work of thousands of young people”<sup>17</sup> was actually unpaid compulsory labour. However, the Festival was

16 Gheorghiu, “Noi construcții culturale și sportive pentru oamenii muncii,” 26.

17 Ibid.

an extraordinary event for the young Romanians of that time, due to the opportunity to interact with foreign generational peers, and anticipate “the Thaw” after a forced isolation of five years.

## ARCHITECTURE, “TRUTH” AND POWER

Michel Foucault’s philosophy often intersects with architecture as a space to exert power. In *Power/Knowledge*<sup>18</sup> Foucault describes the reciprocal relationship between power and knowledge. Power determines knowledge, and knowledge establishes “truth” as a product of power. Power and knowledge are in a mutual dependence, which means that power is based on knowledge, and generates knowledge and truth. Truth is understood here as a reference to the criteria of knowledge established by the power. From this perspective, each power determines and imposes its own regime of truth. The truth is fabricated and spread through economic and state apparatuses such as institutes of education and research, the media, and so forth. As Foucault emphasizes, “‘Truth’ is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. “‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it. A ‘regime’ of truth.”<sup>19</sup>

Defining power as repression does not suffice, according to Foucault. Rather, power must be understood through its effects, as a network that runs through the entire social body, inducing behaviours, generating knowledge, and ultimately shaping lives: “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body.”<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, from a Foucauldian perspective, the control, censorship, and constraints imposed by the Communist regime implied a productive aspect, a form of knowledge. Once installed, a new power requires consolidation, affirmation, and visibility. Architecture becomes an instrument to strengthen power, to generate power relations. Architecture should assist power in its attempts to legitimize and impose itself. By converting some features of traditional Romanian architecture into political propaganda, the new style of Socialist realism searched for a false national root as a form of legitimation, while any bourgeois influence was plucked out from the start. The Western influence, which was highly valued in the interwar period and continued in the years of reconstruction after the war, was suddenly interrupted by the

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18 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

19 Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” in *The Foucault Reader. An Introduction to Foucault’s Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984), 74.

20 *Ibid.*, 61.

imposition of a new style and new principles. The truth of the bourgeoisie was entirely annulled; the new regime instituted new knowledge and a new truth, to be imposed as soon as possible, through all channels of dissemination. Power as a productive network that saturates the entire social body, as Foucault asserted, was reflected through the manufacturing of the architectural environment, along with the discourse of political propaganda and the construction of the Socialist system. Architecture served the state as a means of production and, consequently, of political propaganda, materializing its ideology. Consequently, architectural production became a way to hide and, simultaneously to show off. To hide reality and to display a new image and a new truth.

On the other hand, the newly founded institutes of design were centres of power-knowledge, part of the network through which power was manifested via the centralization of the architectural profession, disciplinary training, and ideological imposition. This network produces knowledge, because it “leads,” (...) “guides,” (...) “analyses,” (...) “decides,” (...) “approves projects,” (...) and “exercises state control.”<sup>21</sup> In this way, architectural discourse is altered by political discourse, or becomes an instrument of the latter in issuing the official “truth.” The truth of the new regime was produced and disseminated through state apparatuses. Truth often takes the form of scientific discourse and is disseminated by authoritative institutions such as universities and research institutes.

Architects, engineers and construction workers, together with thousands of young people called to complete the construction work for the Festival, became actors in this network or, in Foucault’s words, “vehicles of power.”<sup>22</sup> They all engaged in the accomplishment of the new Stalinist ideology and, therefore, in the consolidation of power. This process could be compared to a kind of ideological contamination of the entire social and professional body.

Power-knowledge relations in this context must also be viewed from the perspective of the information gathered by the security apparatuses, through which the state acquires more power and control over citizens, reflected in all aspects of social and professional life.

## CONCLUSION

The relationship between state power and architecture is an exemplary formation of power-knowledge, especially in the context described above. The architectural projects of the Stalinist period in Romania acquired a political dimension through the ideological functions they embodied. The grandeur of Communist dictatorial power was manifested by relying on classical principles of composition in the design of these buildings and by foregrounding their

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21 R. Laurian, “Reconstrucția socialistă a orașului București” [Socialist Reconstruction of the City of Bucharest], *Arhitectură și Urbanism*, no. 12 (1952): 2.

22 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 98.

monumental aspect. On the occasion of the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students in 1953, Bucharest became an embodiment of the ideal-type of Communist propaganda, a large-scale experiment in total political control of urban space.

Coincidentally or not, some of the structures built during the Festival are either missing or abandoned today. On the one hand, this reflects that the power at the time wanted so much to hide, the pathetic reality behind the gilded façade of propaganda. The “construction economy”<sup>23</sup> and the very short time allowed for the execution of the works prevented their durability. At the same time, this process indicates the very low degree of acceptance that the new formation of power-knowledge of so-called capitalism in present-day Romania has towards Communist (as well as other) architectural heritage.

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Adriatic Lighthouse, the  
Littoral Banovina building,  
the Serbian Orthodox  
Church

## ARCHITECTURE COMPETITIONS IN INTERWAR SPLIT: THE STATE AND THE IDENTITY OF THE CITY\*

### Abstract

*This paper analyses the influence of the state and state authorities in creating architectural and urban identity in interwar Split. After World War I, because of its privileged position as the main state port in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the town flourished in terms of infrastructure, construction, and town planning, based on the Regulation Plan from 1924. Furthermore, it hosted as many as 29 architecture competitions. Selected examples are competitions for the Maritime Museum (1928), the Oceanographic and Biological Institute (1930), the Adriatic Lighthouse (1935); the administrative building of the Littoral Banovina (1936–1937) and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has remained unfinished up to the present day. The influence of state authorities is analysed through various aspects of architecture competitions and realizations.*

### INTRODUCTION: INTERWAR SPLIT AND TOWN PLANNING

Based on five selected examples of architecture competitions and their realizations, this chapter analyses the influence of the state, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and state authorities in creating architectural and urban identity in interwar Split. In that period, the town hosted as many as 29 architecture competitions (27 realized, five announced at the international level), which is a very large number, compared to the number of 39 competitions in Zagreb and a total of about 120 interwar architecture competitions in Croatia as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

After World War I, Split was a devastated, neglected town with dusty streets and impoverished people, while Italian warships and the Allied fleet

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<sup>1</sup> In the last few decades, interest in the interwar period in ex-Yugoslavia, its history, architecture, and visual arts, has grown in general. The first thorough research on the topic of this article was a book on interwar architecture competitions in Split: Darovan Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu 1918–1941* [Architecture Competitions in Split 1918–1941] (Split: Društvo arhitekata, 1994). For more on this topic, see Vedran Duplančić, “Obalni pojas grada Splita u urbanističkim planovima, projektima i studijama u razdoblju od 1914. do 1941. godine” [Coastal Strip of Split in Urban Plans, Projects, and Studies between 1914 and 1941], *Prostor: znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam*, vol. 12, no. 1/27 (2004): 111–121; Stanko Piplović, *Izgradnja Splita između svjetskih ratova* [The Construction of Split between the World Wars] (Split: Društvo prijatelja kulturne baštine, Društvo arhitekata Splita, 2008); Stanko Piplović, “Urbani razvitak Splita između dva svjetska rata” [Urban Development of Split between the Two World Wars], in *Vladan Desnica i Split 1920.–1945. Zbornik radova s Desničinih susreta 2014.*, eds. Drago Roksančić and Ivana Cvijović Javorina (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, FF-press, 2015), 41–72. On interwar architecture competitions in Zagreb: Tamara Bjažić Klarin, *‘Za novi, ljepši Zagreb!’ – arhitektonski i urbanistički natječaji međuratnog Zagreba, 1918.–1941.* [For a New, More Beautiful Zagreb! – Architecture and Planning Competitions of Interwar Zagreb, 1918–1941] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2020). Relevant sources for the research were periodicals published in interwar Split and the Archive of Conservation Department in Split.



were docked in the port because of Italian attempts to occupy Dalmatia. Very soon, because of its privileged position as the largest state port, along with Sušak, Split developed at a faster pace than other cities in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes / Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup> Ivo Tartaglia, the prominent mayor of Split for ten years (1918–1928) and later Ban/Governor of the Littoral Banovina<sup>3</sup> was very influential, in good terms with the Yugoslav Royal Family Karađorđević, who used to spend their summer vacations in Split and in nearby Kaštela. The town flourished in terms of infrastructure (it got electricity in 1920, and a railroad connection with the inland and Zagreb in 1925); construction and town planning were based on the Regulation Plan from 1924. This basic document, written by the young German architect Werner Schürmann, came into force in 1928. It was the basis for the city's expansion, mostly to the east and west along the sea. The urban matrix created then is recognizable even nowadays. Locations and terms for most architecture competitions in interwar Split were based on this plan.

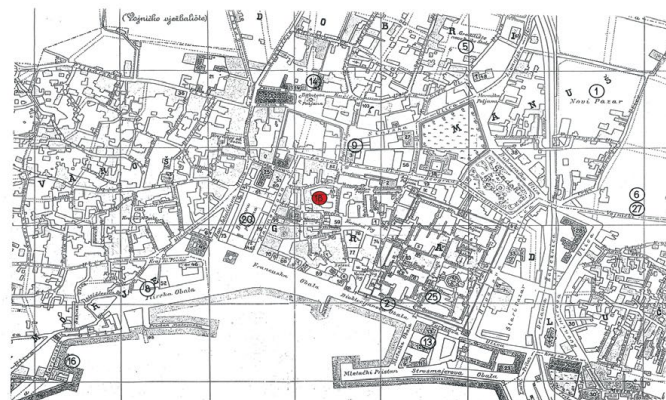
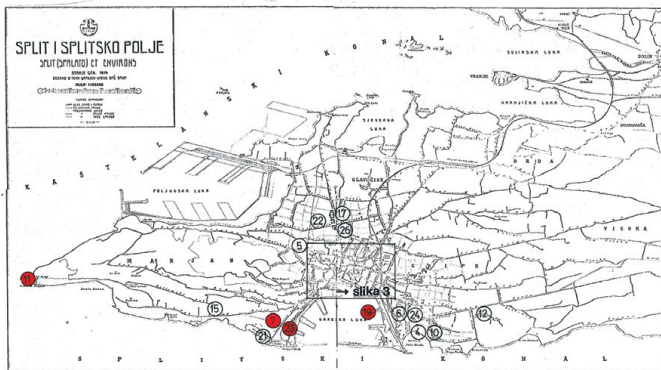
Competitions included buildings for the administration government, health care, welfare, culture, education, science, catering, and economy. There were also politically influenced architectural and sculptural competitions glorifying King Alexander I Karađorđević after his violent assassination in Marseilles in 1934. In most cases, first prize was not awarded, and competition projects were often redesigned afterwards. Frequent members of competition juries were Ivo Tartaglia,<sup>4</sup> architect Kamilo Tončić, painters Emanuel Vidović and Angejo

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2 Rijeka, Pula and Zadar were under Italian rule at that time. For more about Split in interwar period, see Branislav Radica, *Novi Split: monografija grada Splita od 1918.–1939. godine* [The New Split: Monograph of Split between 1918 and 1941] (Split: Branislav Radica, 1931); Duško Kečkemet, “Skica za sliku Splita između dva rata” [A Sketch for the Picture of Split between the Two Wars], *Mogućnosti*, no. 8-9-10 (1992): 636–642; Zdravka Jelaska Marijan, *Grad i ljudi: Split 1918.–1941.* [The Town and Its People: 1918–1941] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest, 2009); Aleksandar Jakir, “O nekim značajkama razvoja Splita u međuratnom razdoblju” [Certain Characteristics of the Development of Split in the Interwar Period], in *Vladan Desnica i Split 1920.–1945.*, eds. Rokсандić and Javorina, 13–25.

3 The Littoral Banovina was an administrative unit in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It was established in 1929 and existed until 1939, when it was reorganized based on the Cvetković-Maček Agreement and merged with the Banovina of Sava and several other smaller areas into the Banovina of Croatia. The Littoral Banovina included the largest part of southern Croatia, specifically Dalmatia (except for the Dubrovnik area, which was in the Zeta Banovina, and Zadar, which was under Italian rule), as well as western Herzegovina, central Bosnia, and the Livno and Duvno regions. It got its name because it included the largest part of the seacoast of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The capital of the Littoral Banovina was Split and the first Ban Ivo Tartaglia (1929–1932) was from Split. Consequently, the development of Split as a privileged city in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was guaranteed. However, sometimes it meant that the implementation of the state policy decisions in town planning was unnegotiable. Tartaglia was succeeded by Josip Jablanović (1932–1935), born in Makarska, and the third Ban was Mirko Buić (1935–1939) from Split.

4 Tartaglia was often the president of competition juries until the beginning of 1930s. Ivo Tartaglia was born in Split in 1880 and he grew up in a noble family of Dalmatian Italian roots. He was a lawyer, politician, entrepreneur, and publicist. Tartaglia was the mayor of Split from 1918 to 1928 and the Ban of the Littoral Banovina from October 1929 to June 1932. He was a very influential politician in interwar Split and in many ways, as a mayor and later a Ban, he was responsible for the prosperity of Split, in terms of infrastructure, the building of the Lika railway and many important civil and public buildings in Split. He also started a series of projects in the Littoral Banovina, building hospitals, draining wetlands and improving the agriculture. He was also known as a patron, art lover, collector, and art critic. His collection of artworks was the largest one in Dalmatia. In June 1948, Tartaglia was put on trial in Split, on charges of having expressed pro-Karađorđević and pro-Italian sentiments and otherwise undermining the government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He was sentenced to seven years of hard labour, the loss of his civil rights for two years after that, and his property was confiscated. He died in 1949 at the Lepoglava prison. For more about Tartaglia, see: Norka Machiedo Mladinić, *Životni put Ive Tartaglia* [The Life Path of Ivo Tartaglia] (Split: Književni krug Split, 2001); *Ivo Tartaglia:*



**Fig. 1.** Map of Split by Petar Senjanović, 1914, with marked positions of buildings erected as the result of 27 realized and five selected architecture competitions in interwar Split: the Maritime Museum (No. 7), the Oceanographic and Biological Institute (No. 11), Serbian Orthodox Church (No. 18), the Adriatic Lighthouse (No. 19), the Littoral Banovina (No. 23). First published in: Darovan Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu 1918–1941* [Architecture Competitions in Split 1918–1941] (Split: Društvo arhitekata, 1994), n. pag.

Uvodić, sculptor Ivan Meštrović: prominent protagonists of the Medulić Association (1908–1919), who were actively involved in decision-making and implementation of the state policy in those days.<sup>5</sup> Since the Split Municipal Archive was destroyed in a fire, documentation of competitions is insufficient in most cases.

Selected examples of competitions in interwar Split are competitions for buildings affirming the maritime orientation of the privileged port city in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: the Maritime Museum (1928), the Oceanographic and Biological Institute (1930), the Adriatic Lighthouse, (1935), the administrative building of the Littoral Banovina (1936–1937) and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has remained unfinished up to the present day (**fig. 1**). They all demonstrate architecture and architecture competitions in service of state politics and ideology. The examples of inadequate realizations, the Littoral Banovina building and particularly the Orthodox Church, testify to the abuse of competitions even today. The influence of the state authorities will be analysed through various aspects of architecture competitions: selection of the location and purpose of the buildings to be erected, preservation of cultural heritage, competition participants (competitors, members of the jury and city commissions), and extensive, sharp polemics on competitions and realizations published in the daily newspapers.

## THE MARITIME MUSEUM, 1928

Jadranska straža (The Adriatic Guard), which was founded in 1922, announced the competitions for the Maritime Museum and the Adriatic Lighthouse. The aim of the organization was the promotion of national characteristics and the Adriatic orientation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The organisation issued a representative magazine under the same name, richly equipped with texts and

*politikar i intelektualac, Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa "Ivo Tartaglia i njegovo doba"* [Ivo Tartaglia: Politician and Intellectual, Proceedings from the International Conference 'Ivo Tartaglia and His Time'], eds. Aleksandar Jakir and Marijan Buljan (Split: Književni krug Split, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> For more on this topic, see Sandi Bulimbašić, "Medulić, the Association of Croatian Artists in the Context of Central European Artistic and Political Aspirations: The Myth and the Nation," in *Art and Politics in the Modern Period*, eds. Dragan Damjanović, Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić, Željka Miklošević and Jeremy F. Walton (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, FF-press, 2019), 243–254.

photographs.<sup>6</sup> The Executive Committee of the Adriatic Guard presided over by Ivo Tartaglia announced the competition for the Maritime Museum in June 1928. The first submission deadline of September 1, 1928, was extended for three months (to December 1, 1928) because only five projects were received during the summer months, and the jury concluded that none of the projects met the competition terms and conditions. This, of course, was against the competition rules, and provoked a protest from the Association of Yugoslav Engineers and Architects. After the extension, 33 projects were received.

The location for the Maritime Museum building was bought by the Split Municipality in the Meje district, opposite the Sustipan peninsula, in 1927. Architects approved of this location, not far from the coast, but some participants in the competition objected that the main facade of the cadastral parcel was too narrow. The commissioner took the responsibility of exploring the possibility of an additional land purchase. The competition programme included a two-story building with a basement, which would include both the museum and the offices of the Adriatic Guard. Members of the jury were appointed by Ivo Tartaglia. Along with the members from the Adriatic Guard, he invited renowned architect Jože Plečnik from Ljubljana, who declined the invitation, and a distinguished architect from Zagreb, Edo Schön, who accepted the invitation. The first prize was not awarded.<sup>7</sup> However, the cash amount for the first prize was equally divided between four participants: Aleksandar Freudenreich and Pavao Deutsch from Zagreb, Branislav Kojić from Belgrade, Josip Costaperaria from Ljubljana, and Juraj Neidhardt from Zagreb, who submitted two variants of the project and won a purchase prize although a purchase was not mentioned in the competition rules. The second prize was awarded to Dujam Granić from Belgrade, and the third prize to Herman Hus from Ljubljana. An exhibition of the competition projects was held at the Galić Art Salon in Split.

Due to the lack of finances, the building of the Maritime Museum only occurred several years after the competition. The project was redesigned, and two separate buildings were built – the boarding house for student excursions

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6 Norka Machiedo Mladinić, *Jadranska straža 1922.–1941*. [The Adriatic Guard 1922–1941] (Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2005). The first president of the organisation was Juraj Biankini. After his death, Ivo Tartaglia became the president in 1928. Both Biankini and Tartaglia were prominent protagonists of the Medulić Association, which promoted the national idea and the union of Yugoslav nations before World War I and stopped its activities in 1919. The logo of the organisation was the mace of Prince Marko turned upside down, evoking Ivan Meštrović and his Cycle of Prince Marko, the symbol of struggle in the period before World War I, when the idea of the union of Yugoslav nations still seemed unattainable.

7 In 1930s this became a common practise. Competition participants were indignant due to such unjust decisions of the jury. There is no one precise reason why a first prize was not awarded on this and other architecture competitions in interwar Split. We can say that in some cases the decision was made based on political, national, or religious reasons. In other cases, the reason was rivalry between some members of the jury and participant(s) in the competition. In still other cases, the projects were too modern for the members of the jury and their notions about the building design. This is the reason why many awarded competition projects were redesigned afterwards. In most cases of architecture competitions in interwar Split, most of the jury members were politicians, not architects or engineers, and therefore were not competent enough to make quality decisions about the first prize. The discussion on this topic is complex and extensive.

**Fig. 2.** Anonymous, Opening ceremony of the Maritime Museum in Split, photograph, December 1933, in: *Jadranska straža*, no. 1 (1934): 28.



and the museum. The author of the post-competition project from 1930 remains unknown.<sup>8</sup> The construction of the Maritime Museum started in summer 1931 and lasted until February 1932. In 1933 the building was extended, and the Maritime Museum got its temporary premises. The opening of the Museum in December 1933 marked the ten-year anniversary of the Adriatic Guard (**fig. 2**).

Split Maritime Museum still does not have its own building. Paradoxically, it is situated far from the sea, in the Austrian barracks inside the baroque Gripe fortress.

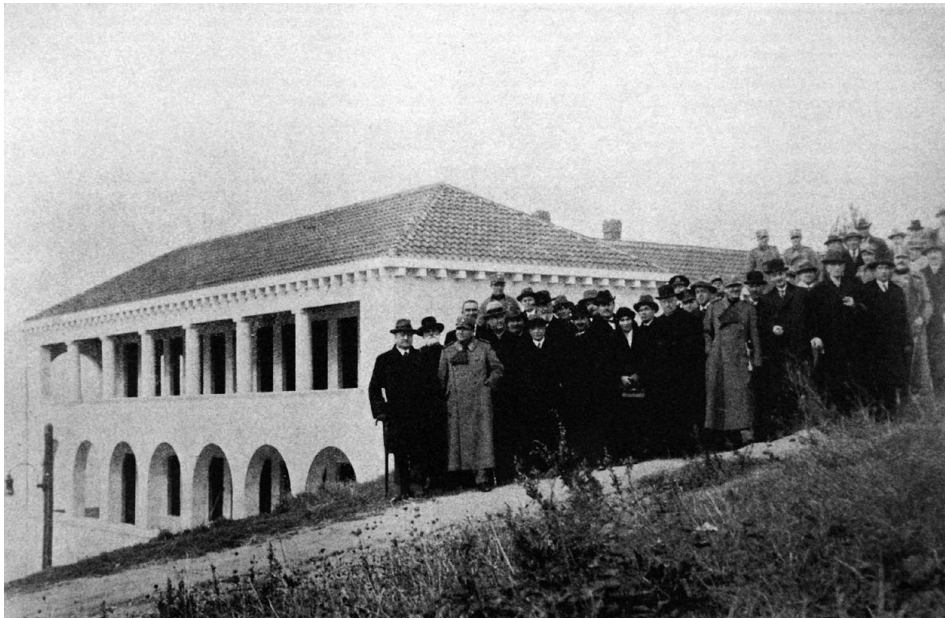
## THE OCEANOGRAPHIC AND BIOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, 1930

Competition for the Oceanographic and Biological Institute was launched in 1930, with a submission deadline of May 3, 1930. The commissioner was Yugoslav Academy of Science and Arts in Zagreb and Serbian Royal Academy in Belgrade. A special commission appointed by the Academy chose Split instead of Dubrovnik for the location of this important scientific and research institution. The location was at the cape of Marjan hill. It was an invitational Yugoslav competition. Architects were invited from the four centres of the Kingdom: Bogdan Nestorović from Belgrade, Edo Schön from Zagreb, Ivan Vurnik from Ljubljana, and Fabijan Kaliterna from Split. Josip Kodl from Split was, at his own request, allowed to be excused “out of the competition”,<sup>9</sup> because he designed the first project, before the competition was launched. His project was later abandoned. The competition programme included the Institute building, a harbour for research ships, and a residential building for the director. One of the competition requirements defined the design and style of the building as: “a

<sup>8</sup> For more about the competition, see Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 49–51.

<sup>9</sup> It was the new rule of architecture competitions. See Bjažić Klarin, *‘Za novi, ljepši Zagreb!’*, 33.





**Fig. 3.** Anonymous, Opening ceremony of the Oceanographic and Biological Institute in Split, photograph, December 1933, in: *Jadranska straža*, no. 1 (1934): 29.

scientific institution of calm and serious exterior, adjusted to the maritime type of the building, local prices and local materials.”<sup>10</sup> The members of the jury were the academic architects Martin Pilar and Ćiril Iveković from Zagreb, academic biologists Vale Vouk, a Croat of Slovenian origin, and Aleksandar Đorđević from Belgrade. According to the jury none of the submitted five works met the terms and conditions of the competition.<sup>11</sup> Analysing the projects of the invited architects, it’s obvious that the decision of the jury was based primarily on the architectural style of the projects. Nestorović proposed a classical monumental building, Vurnik’s idea was a radical rounded tower, projects by Kodl and Schön were in the contemporary style of modernism, and Schön’s project was in the best tradition of the Zagreb school of architecture.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the jury decided to accept the project by Fabijan Kaliterna, with necessary changes. Kaliterna was invited to Zagreb, where members of the jury gave him guidelines for modifications to his project. The final project was realized in cooperation with a Norwegian professor, Hjalmar Brock, who was appointed Director of the Institute.<sup>13</sup> Kaliterna changed his project several times, particularly the most exposed southern facade.<sup>14</sup> Construction started in 1933. The residential building was built first, and finished in March 1933. The main building of the Institute was built in December 1933 (**fig. 3**), but the interior design was late, with many delays, and the Institute moved to its new building only in 1941.<sup>15</sup>

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10 See Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 60. My translation.

11 There were reactions to the implementation of the competition because of its organization in secrecy and the lack of an exhibition of competition projects. Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 61.

12 Ibid., fig. 33–36, n. pag.

13 Kaliterna’s competition and post-competition project: Ibid., fig. 37, 38, n. pag.

14 Kaliterna’s sketches and various realizations of the Institute building are kept in the Archive of Fabijan Kaliterna, property of the Bošković family, Split.

15 Until 1941, the Institute was situated in the boarding house Schiller, which is today known as Vila Dalmacija. On competition for the Oceanographic Institute see: Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 60–62; Marija Bošković, Robert Plejić, “Biološko-oceanografski institut u Splitu arhitekta Fabijana Kaliterne” [The Institute



**Fig. 4.** The Oceanographic and Biological Institute in Split, 2017. Photograph by Sandi Bulimbašić.



The Oceanographic Institute is one of Kaliterna's most notable projects, an effective compromise between traditional and modern architecture, characterised by harmonious proportions, superior performance of the stone façade with loggias and situated in a beautiful surrounding near the coast. It is certainly one of the distinguished works of the Split interwar architecture (fig. 4).

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## THE ADRIATIC LIGHTHOUSE / MEMORIAL LIGHTHOUSE DEDICATED TO KING ALEXANDER I KARADORĐEVIĆ, 1935

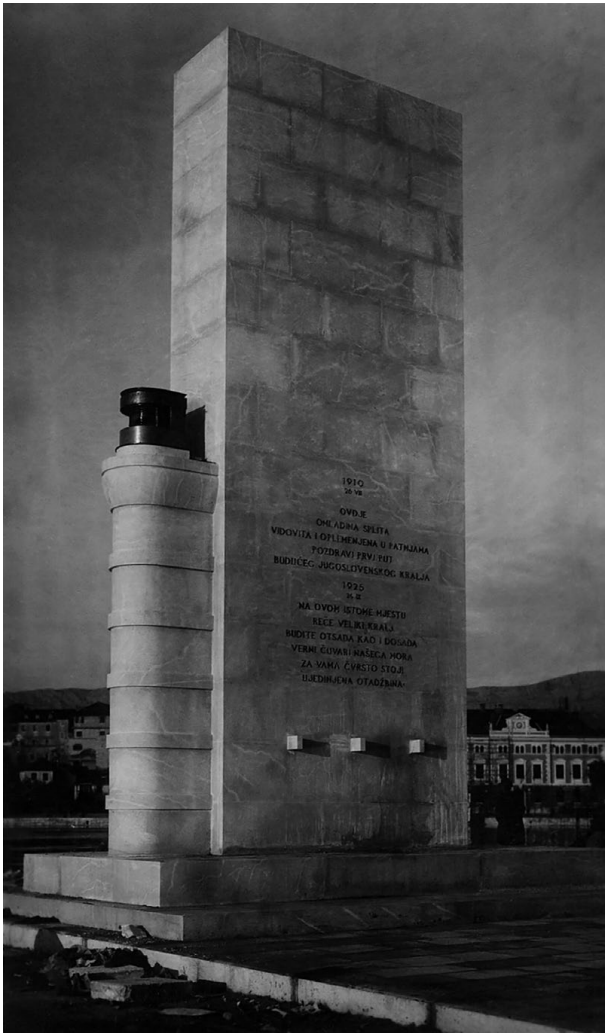
After the assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia in Marseilles, in October 1934, and a memorial service held in Split, the Adriatic Guard District Committee decided to build a memorial lighthouse dedicated to the King on the pier in the town port.<sup>16</sup> The competition was local in character: only architects, engineers and sculptors with a permanent residence in the territory of Split could participate. It was launched on July 27, 1935, with only ten days before the deadline for the submission, a rather short period for making a conceptual

of Sea Biology and Oceanography in Split Designed by the Architect Fabijan Kaliterna], *Prostor: znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam*, vol. 23, no. 2/50 (2015): 250–263.

<sup>16</sup> At that time it was called the Pier of Major Stojan. For more about the competition see Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 84–85.

<sup>17</sup> The announcement of the competition was published in the local newspaper *Novo doba*. Ibid., 84.

<sup>18</sup> The members of the jury were Josip Jablanović, Governor of the Littoral Banovina, Mihovil Kargotić, the mayor of Split, Budislav Stipanović, Director of the Directorate for Transport, Ivo Stalio, president of the District Committee of the Adriatic Guard in Split, Vorih Matković, president of the Working Committee for the Memorial Lighthouse, engineer and architect Danilo Žagar, and painter Emanuel Vidović. Deputy members were Ljubo Karaman, Josip Kodl, Dinko Fabio, Rikard Visin, Hranko Smodlaka, Mirko Karlovac and Čiro Čičin-Šain. See Ibid., 84.



**Fig. 5.** The Adriatic Lighthouse / Memorial lighthouse dedicated to King Aleksandar I Karadorđević, 1935, postcard, Archive of the Conservation Department in Split.

sketch for “the national-symbolic Adriatic lighthouse.”<sup>17</sup> The monetary rewards were low in comparison to other competitions at the time: 300 dinars for the third prize, 700 for the second prize and 1,000 dinars for the first prize. However, seven projects were submitted, exclusively by architects although it was architectural and sculpture competition. The jury had seven members, including high-ranking politicians, the city mayor, engineers, architects, and a well-known painter, Emanuel Vidović. Seven deputy members of the jury were also appointed.<sup>18</sup> First prize was awarded to Prosper Čulić, an architect and engineer from Split, whose sketch was published in *The Adriatic Guard*.<sup>19</sup> Second prize was awarded to architect Ante Škare, and third prize to a renowned architect from Split, Emil Ciciliani. The jury also recommended awarding another third prize to Niko Armanda. Three other works won a purchase prize, but they have remained unknown.<sup>20</sup>

The construction of the lighthouse started soon after the competition, thanks to the voluntary contributions collected from the citizens of Split. The ceremonial opening was held on December 8, 1935, marking the ten-year anniversary of the Adriatic Guard, and the first anniversary of the memorial service held for King Alexander in Split (**fig. 5**). After World War II the lighthouse was demolished for political and ideological reasons.

## SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, 1935

The competition for the Temple of St. Sava in Split was preceded by contention over the building site. The Ministry of Finance in Belgrade exchanged the lot near the Bishop’s Seminary for the site of the Benedictine Convent of St. Mary de Taurello for an insignificant amount.<sup>21</sup> The convent, whose construction lasted from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century, was mainly pulled down in 1937 to make way for a monumentally conceived Orthodox Church. Vaulted porticoes in the courtyard and a restored renaissance stone portal from the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Domaldova Street still remain from this old convent.<sup>22</sup> The idea was

<sup>19</sup> *The Adriatic Guard*, no. 1 (1935), 470.

<sup>20</sup> Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 85.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 82–83. The swap was executed in secret and without consultation with the Catholic Church, which for centuries was the real owner of the convent. See: Tomislav Đonlić, Josip Dukić, “Prijeponi oko zemljišta za gradnju katoličke katedrale i pravoslavnog hrama sv. Save u Splitu 1920-ih i 1930-ih godina” [Contentions over the Building Site for Catholic Cathedral and Orthodox Temple of St. Sava in Split in 1920s and 1930s], *Crkva u svijetu*, no. 2 (2013): 209–235.

<sup>22</sup> For more about the convent, see Zdeslav Perković, “Istraživanje samostana Sv. Marije de Taurello” [Research on the Convent of St. Mary de Taurello], *Kulturna baština*, no. 11-12 (1981): 46–64.

to demolish the whole complex of the convent and form a square around a new orthodox church.

The Committee for the Construction of the Orthodox Church was founded early, in 1921. When Split became the centre of the Littoral Banovina and the eparchy in 1928, the idea of the construction was actualized. According to some sources, the first project was made in the middle of 1933.<sup>23</sup> However, on January 30, 1935, the Church Municipal Council in Split announced the competition. The submission deadline (April 1<sup>st</sup>) was extended for 20 days (to April 20, 1935). The programme of the competition defined the design of the church as an “orthodox temple without a bell tower,” built from the local white stone in Serbian-Byzantine style, with the main entrance on today’s Obrov Street, and with a capacity of around 1,200 people.<sup>24</sup> The jury met on May 8, 1935. There were seven members of the jury: Mihovil Kargotić and Vorih Matković, engineers from Split, Milan Zloković, an architect from Belgrade, Ljubo Karaman, a conservator from Split, Jovan Klicov, President of the Split Church Municipal Council, Sergije Urukalo, a parish priest, and Sava Bibić, a merchant from Split.<sup>25</sup> The jury procedure caused dissatisfaction among the members of the Association of Yugoslav Engineers and Architects. The Split section of the Association invited their members to refuse to participate in the work of the jury. Furthermore, they wanted the Association to ban its members from participating in the competition. Remarks referred to the insufficient number of architects on the jury, low monetary rewards, a short competition deadline, and the insufficient quality of the programme especially regarding the historical valuation of the construction site. The commissioner of the competition did not consider most of these criticisms.<sup>26</sup>

Fifteen works were submitted; one was disqualified because it was not received on time. Unlike many competitions at the time, the first prize was awarded to Aleksandar Deroko, an architect and university professor from Belgrade. His project design of a circular floor plan building, extended with a semicircle, is lost.<sup>27</sup> Second prize was awarded to two architects from Split, Helen Baldasar and Emil Ciciliani. One of the participants was a young architect from Split, Lovro Perković, in collaboration with Ksenija Grisogono.<sup>28</sup> Two anonymous works were awarded purchase prizes. In July 1935, the Committee of the Orthodox Church accepted Deroko’s final project. However, in the middle of 1939 construction began based on a modified project by Baldasar and Ciciliani: “in Serbian-Byzantine style, with four domes on the sides, and

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23 Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 82.

24 *Ibid.*, 82–83.

25 For the deputy members of the jury, all of them engineers and architects from Split, see: *Ibid.*, 82.

26 Felix Šperac, one of the jury deputy members, resigned. *Ibid.*

27 It was described as a reminiscence of an early Christian church: *Ibid.*, 83 (*Jadranski dnevnik*, no. 108, May 9, 1935).

28 On the project by Perković, see Sandra Uskoković, *Lovro Perković: estetika prostora i senzibilitet konteksta* [Lovro Perković: Spatial Aesthetics and Context Sensibility] (Zagreb: Ex libris, 2015), 163–167.





the big one in the middle.”<sup>29</sup> The exhibition of the competition projects took place in May 1935 in the hall of the Chamber of Trades and Crafts. World War II interrupted the construction works, and only the walls of the ground floor were erected (**fig. 6**). The question of heritage preservation became important and the idea of destroying the whole medieval complex of buildings in order to form a square around a Neo-Byzantine building started to seem unreasonable.<sup>30</sup>

The idea of a church with a central dome about 28 meters high in the medieval core of Split, an area that is now under UNESCO protection, has always been against the principles of heritage preservation. The church has remained unfinished up to the present day because the eparchy authorities rejected recommendations by experts (conservators) to adjust its style to the surrounding built environment or to change the location. The Conservation Department in Split suggested that the church should be finished with a tiled roof, like the houses in Split’s historic centre, but the Orthodox Church authorities still insist on a dome (**fig. 7**).

The competition for the Serbian Orthodox Church is an example of the abuse of the competition model which resulted in an inadequate architectural realization in the historic centre of Split, causing polemics and conflicts that

**Fig. 6.** Aerial view on the unfinished building of Serbian Orthodox Church in the historic centre of Split, Archive of the Conservation Department in Split. Photograph by Ivica Pleština.

29 Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 83 (*Novo doba*, no. 109, May 10, 1939). My translation.

30 *Ibid.*, 83.

**Fig. 7.** The main portal and walls of the unfinished Temple of St. Sava in Split, 2021. Photographs by Sandi Bulimbašić.



have persisted until the present time.<sup>31</sup> It demonstrates what happens when the influence of the state and the state/church authorities becomes more important than urban planning, architectural values, expert opinion, cultural heritage, and its preservation.

### THE LITTORAL BANOVINA, 1936–1937

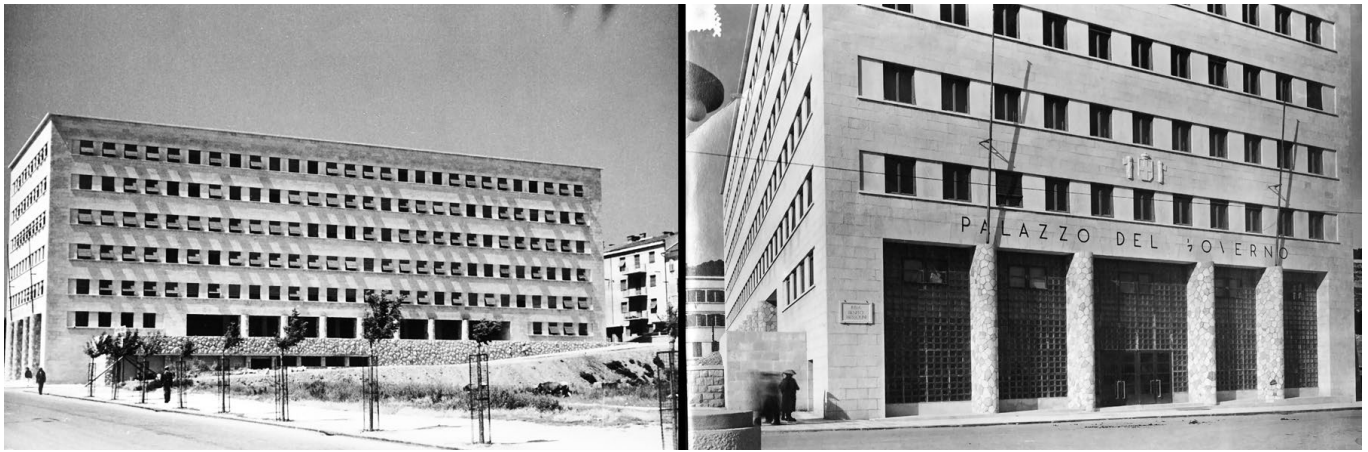
The Littoral Banovina building on the west section of Split's port is another example of an inadequate realization, which in many ways influenced future architecture and urban competitions in Split. The choice of the location was determined in 1936, and there were immediate complaints regarding its distance from the town historic core, since the cadastral parcel was very large, and according to the Regulation Plan, the competition programme defined a five-story building. It included the Ban's apartment, an office for the Ban and his assistant, offices for different administrative departments, a ceremonial hall, and a hall for Ban's Council. The Regulation Plan included a series of large residential and public buildings along the coast, which explains the massiveness of the Littoral Banovina building. However, the plan wasn't realized, and other buildings along the shore were built according to the architectural and urban competition of 1957.<sup>32</sup>

The competition, which had a Yugoslav character, was launched on November 28, 1936. The commissioner was the Royal Ban's/Governor's administration in Split. The submission deadline was January 1, 1937, and it was extended to February 26, 1937. The jury decided on the awards on March 9, 1937. The jury had seven members and, except for Stjepan Hribar, the Head of the Regulation Department of the Zagreb City Council, most of them were

31 On the relation between the state, nationalism, and architecture of the temple after World War II, see Vjekoslav Perica, "Dva spomenika jedne ere. Političke konotacije izgradnje pravoslavne crkve i katoličke konkatedrale u Splitu", 1971.–1991. [Memorials of an Era: The Politics of Church Rebuilding in the Former Yugoslavia. The Case of Constructions of an Orthodox Church and Catholic Cathedral in Split, Croatia, during Late Communism and Pre-war Crisis, 1971–1991], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 1 (1999): 93–126; Željko Primorac, "Kopija beogradskog hrama Svetog Save u Splitu" [A Copy of the Belgrade Temple of St. Sava in Split], accessed June 15, 2022, <http://www.hrsvijet.net/index.php/kolumna-zeljko-primorac/52489-zeljko-primorac-kopija-beogradskog-hrama-svetog-save-u-splitu>.

32 See *URBS 1959.–1960.*, no. 11 (1961). The same texts in: *Regulacija zapadne strane gradske luke Split* [Regulation of the Western Part of the Split City Harbour] (Split: Savjet za urbanizam Narodnog odbora Općine Split, 1961).





**Fig. 8.** The Littoral Banovina building as Palazzo del Governo, 1943, photograph, Archive of the Conservation Department in Split.

from Split and employees at the Technical and Architecture Department of the Split City Council: engineers Lucijan Stella, Dinko Buić, Dane Matošić, and architects Fabijan Kaliterna, Prosper Čulić, Ante Barač. The monetary rewards were high; 20,000 dinars for the third prize and a purchase prize, 25,000 for second prize and 35,000 dinars for first prize. Fifteen competition works were submitted. First and the second prize were not awarded. The third prize was awarded to Zoja Dumengjić and Selimir Dumengjić from Zagreb. An additional third prize was awarded to Milorad Družeić and Boris Katunarić from Split. There were five purchase prizes; one was awarded to architects from Zagreb, Nikola Despot, Vladimir Turina, and Vid Vrbanić, and there were four other anonymous purchase prizes. Most of the competition participants avoided a single building and suggested two or three buildings accommodating all of the required facilities. Furthermore, most projects suggested a separate building for Ban's apartment. The exhibition of the competition projects was organized in the City Hall on March 11, 1937.

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The Littoral Banovina building was built according to a purchase award project by Despot, Turina and Vrbanić. The project included two buildings: a smaller object for Ban's residence, the building with a long façade parallel to the shore, and a huge six-storey building for other facilities, with a shorter facade parallel to the shore, in the form of a closed block with a central hall through all the floors. The construction works started in February 1938, followed by sharp polemics about the inadequate size, design, and location of the building.<sup>33</sup> The construction of the administrative building was completed in 1940. The smaller building for the Ban was not realized.<sup>34</sup> During World War II, the purity and massiveness of the building attracted Italian Fascists, who appropriated it for the administrative centre of their government (April 1941 – September 1943) (**fig. 8**).

<sup>33</sup> Petar Senjanović, an engineer and architect from Split, insisted that the members of the jury, not architects, were to blame. On Senjanović, see *Petar Senjanović, splitski graditelj i planer: iz ostavštine u Sveučilišnoj knjižnici u Splitu* [Petar Senjanović, Split Builder and Planner: From the Legacy at the University Library in Split], eds. Robert Plejić, Darovan Tušek, Dražen Pejčković, Ana Grgić and Mihaela Kovačić (Split: Sveučilišna knjižnica u Splitu, Društvo arhitekata Splita, Grad Split, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Banovina Hrvatska had been founded at that time and there was no need to build a separate building for the Ban. For more about the competition and tendering see Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 97–100.

Today the Littoral Banovina building houses the city administration.<sup>35</sup> However, according to the General Town Planning Scheme, it will be repurposed as a hotel.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Town planning in Split based on the Regulation Plan from 1924 defined the locations for most interwar architecture competitions. The willingness of the state government to accept the legislation of architecture competitions and the professional opinion of the Association of Yugoslav Engineers and Architects was important. However, the implementation of the competitions and decisions of the juries were often in contrast with competition requirements. In most cases first prize was not awarded, competition projects were redesigned afterwards, and there were more politicians than architects and engineers in the juries. This caused indignation among competition participants and reactions on the part of the Association in order to protect professional rights of its members. The influence of the state authorities can also be seen in decisions about construction sites, the purpose of buildings, and the context of the preservation of cultural heritage.

Competitions for the Maritime Museum, the Adriatic Lighthouse and the Oceanographic and Biological Institute were announced in order to promote the Adriatic orientation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the development of Split as the main state port. The memorial lighthouse dedicated to the deceased Yugoslav king also had symbolic and political meaning. The massiveness of the Littoral Banovina building stood as a symbol of the state itself. The unfinished Temple of St. Sava in the medieval historic centre of Split demonstrates the implementation of political and religious decisions at the expense of town planning and cultural heritage preservation values.

The selected examples, among 29 architecture competitions, have in many ways defined the architectural and urban identity of interwar Split, but also the city today. Adequate or inadequate realisations testify that architecture competitions were often implementations of state policy and national and political interests, rather than expressions of urban or architectural values.

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<sup>35</sup> The name "Banovina" has been in common use among the citizens of Split up until today.



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in Modern Central Europe  
(18th - 21st Century)



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