

# Monuments for World War II: Memory and Oblivion in the Balkans and Central-East Europe

Edited by  
Areti Adamopoulou / Anna Maria Droumpouki





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This volume contains the edited papers presented at the International Conference “Monuments for World War II: Memory and Oblivion in the Balkans and Central-East Europe” held at the B. & M. Theocharakis Foundation for Fine Arts and Music in Athens on 23-24 November 2023. The conference and this publication are a partial fulfilment of the obligations arising from the research project “WaRs: War and Resistance Monuments in Greece: Documentation of and Historical Approach to Public Monuments, 1945-today”, carried out at the University of Ioannina, Greece, by Areti Adamopoulou, Alexandros Teneketzis, Anna Maria Droumpouki, Kostas Korres and Konstantinos Argianas.

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Edited by Areti Adamopoulou and Anna Maria Droumpouki  
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Layout-Graphic Design: Jason Faulter

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**Edited by** Areti Adamopoulou / Anna Maria Droumpouki

Organizing committee:

Professor **Areti Adamopoulou**, Department of Fine Arts & Art  
Sciences, University of Ioannina, Greece

Assistant Professor **Alexandros Teneketzis**, Department of History  
and Archaeology, University of Patras, Greece

Dr **Anna Maria Droumpouki**, Senior Research Associate, Institute of  
Eastern and South Eastern European History, Department of History,  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

Dr **Konstantinos Argianas**, Lecturer, Post-doc Researcher,  
Department of Fine Arts & Art Sciences, University of Ioannina, Greece

**Kostas Korres**, PhD Candidate, Department of Primary Education,  
University of the Aegean, Greece

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## More than a Museum? The Role of Memorial Museums in the Culture of Remembrance of World War II in Yugoslavia

### Abstract

The cult of remembrance played an important role in Yugoslavia after WWII. Since the years of occupation were also marked by a civil war fought in the country, the newly established communist government was aware of how significant monuments were for collective memory and nation-building. After initially erecting several modest monuments, large complexes were built in the 1960s and 1970s. Monuments were integrated into larger thematic areas designed to create a comprehensive experience for visitors. Museums were one of the key elements of these memorial parks and complexes. The main focus of this article is on the role of memorial museums in the complex culture of remembrance in socialist Yugoslavia.

### Apstrakt

Kult sećanja je igrao značajnu ulogu u Jugoslaviji posle Drugog svetskog rata. Pošto je građanski rat takođe obeležio godine okupacije u zemlji, novoustanovljena komunistička vlast je bila svesna značaja spomenika za građenje koleksymbolisedanja i nacionalnog identiteta. Posle velikog broja skromnijih ostvarenja, veliki kompleksi su počeli ga se grade tokom šezdesetih i sedamdesetih godina. Spomenik je postao deo većeg područja sa pejzažem posebno dizajniranim da stvori iskustvo za posetioca. Jedan od ključnih elemenata memorijalnih parkova i kompleksa su bili muzeji. Glavni fokus ovog rada biće da se ispita uloga muzeja u okviru kompleksne kulture sećanja u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji.

**Vladana Putnik Prica** is a Senior Research Associate at the Art History Department, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Her field of research is the history of architecture in Serbia and former Yugoslavia in the twentieth century. She defended her PhD thesis "Architecture of Sokol Halls in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia" in 2014 and published it in 2015. Her book *Residential Architecture of Belgrade (1918–1941)*, published in 2021, received an award from the Belgrade Salon of Architecture.



## Introduction

During WWII, a very effective antifascist resistance movement developed in occupied Yugoslavia. Due to the numerous battles and offensives and the exterminations in the numerous concentration camps spread across the Independent State of Croatia and the territories under Third Reich occupation, it is estimated that Yugoslavia lost 10.8% of its population during WWII.<sup>1</sup> The end of the war brought a new political establishment, the Kingdom ceased to exist and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia came to power after the elections. The newly-formed political system needed to “invent their tradition”, with remembrance of the victims of WWII playing an important part in the regime’s cultural and political propaganda.<sup>2</sup> War events were transformed into a powerful instrument for educating society about the values of socialism, communism and antifascism.<sup>3</sup> The heroes and the victims of war were commemorated in numerous memorials, finding their place in the collective memory of the Yugoslav people. As an expression of remembrance of the State’s monumental history and Revolution, the monuments would help shape both collective memory and collective oblivion.<sup>4</sup> Despite consensus in the Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia that the remembrance of WWII should be nourished as an essential part of Yugoslavia’s nation-building, the situation was far from simple and the strategies on how to approach the recent past often varied from one republic to another. Heike Karge considered this one of the most controversial aspects of Yugoslavia’s identity politics.<sup>5</sup>

The importance of successfully constructing a specific Yugoslav identity greatly influenced the memorial sculpture and architecture of that period.<sup>6</sup> At first, the monuments were based on the Soviet model; however, after the Tito-Stalin split of 1948, Yugoslavia quickly fell into political and economic disarray. Soviet Socialist Realism was no longer a desirable model for future monuments and Yugoslavia gradually turned towards the West and western-style memorial culture. Yugoslav artists were awarded scholarships to study abroad and many Western artists, such as Henry Moore (1898–1986) and Le Corbusier (1887–1965), held exhibitions in Yugoslavia during the 1950s.<sup>7</sup> These developments sparked an outburst of artistically bold and creative ideas for memorials, some of which did materialise.

Memorials were not limited to mapping places of significant historical events. They were also expected to have a didactic dimension and to spread propaganda by educating future generations about the value system of the Communist Party, whose tenets included anti-fascism, socialism, and gender and class equality.<sup>8</sup> This was one of

<sup>1</sup> Aleksandar Ranković, “Dosadašnji rad i naredni zadaci boračkih organizacija” [The Work so Far and Future Tasks of the Fighters’ Organisations], in *Kongres Saveza udruženja boraca Narodnooslobodilačkog rata Jugoslavije* [Congress of the Federation of Associations of Fighters in the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia], ed. Dragi Milenković (Belgrade: Vojno štamparsko preduzeće, 1961), 44.

<sup>2</sup> Erik Hobsbom, “Masovna proizvodnja tradicija: Evropa, 1870–1914” [Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914], in *Izmišljanje tradicije* [The Invention of Tradition], ed. Erik Hobsbom and Terens Rejndžer (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Max Bergholz, “Među rodoljubima, kupusom, svinjama i varvarima: spomenici i grobovi NOR 1947–1965. godine” [Among the Patriots, Cabbage, Pigs and Barbarians: Memorials and Tombs of NLW 1947–1965], *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* 14, nos 1–3 (2007): 76–79.

<sup>4</sup> Mariela Cvetić, “Monumentalna memorijalna politička skulptura” [Monumental Memorial Political Sculpture], in *Istorija umetnosti u Srbiji XX vek* [Art History in 20th-century Serbia], ed. Miško Šuvaković (Belgrade: Orion Art, 2012), 305–306.

<sup>5</sup> Hajke Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu – okamenjeno sećanje?* [Remembrance in Stone – Petrified Remembrance?] (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2014), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Vladana Putnik, “Second World War Monuments in Yugoslavia as Witnesses of the Past and the Future,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 14, no. 3 (2016): 207.

<sup>7</sup> Vladana Putnik Prica, Nenad Lajbenšperger, “On the Wings of Modernity: WWII Memorials in Yugoslavia,” *Docomomo Journal* 59, no. 2 (2018): 76.

<sup>8</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/II-107.

the main reasons why so many memorial museums were constructed in the most significant places of remembrance. The first museums dedicated to WWII opened as early as 1945 in Sarajevo and Zagreb.<sup>9</sup> The network of museums dedicated to the National Liberation Fight and the Revolution in Yugoslavia was particularly branched,<sup>10</sup> but this paper will focus specifically on museums and memorial houses that are integral to memorial parks and complexes. Locations such as Tjentište, Kadinjača, Sremski Front, and Šumarice all saw the construction of different forms of memorial museums. Some were more modest—e.g. the memorial house in Tjentište designed by architect Ranko Radović (1935–2005)—while others were monumental in size and form, such as the memorial Petrova gora, created by Vojin Bakić (1915–1992) and Berislav Šerbetić (1935–2017). The museums were always a coherent and integral part of the memorial complexes and used the specific terrain of the often-desolate areas where battles had once been fought to emphasize the dramatic landscape. The conceptual dimension of such museums will be explored, as well as the manner in which they differed from other, typologically similar buildings, and how their content and exhibitions helped build the official narrative about WWII. For this research, seven case studies were chosen as the most representative and telling examples of the richness of architectural approaches and understandings of how tragic war events could be memorialised. The buildings' stylistic and architectural development will also be analysed, as well as their relationship with the monuments, the landscape, and the audience. Finally, a comparison will be drawn with the present-day function of the museums, in the post-socialist and post-Yugoslav eras.

### Between a Museum and a Memorial

A museum is considered the most common place of staged (and curated) memory.<sup>11</sup> Bearing that in mind, memorial museums are considered the places where historical narratives are created and cultural patterns are manifested.<sup>12</sup> Memorial museums can also be interpreted as state-produced places of pilgrimage, in need of continuous activation.<sup>13</sup> Paul Williams (b. 1974) defines a memorial museum as a “specific kind of museum dedicated to a historic event commemorating mass suffering of some kind”.<sup>14</sup> Since the 1950s building museums as essential parts of memorial complexes gradually became a more common solution. The issues related to the erection of museums dedicated to the National Liberation War were first addressed in 1953 with the establishment of a special department for museums and monuments for that period, while in 1956 the Institutes for the Protection of Historic Monuments organised a meeting to discuss

<sup>9</sup> Davor Stipić, “Predstavljanje Holokausta i ratnih zločina u muzejima socijalističke Jugoslavije” [Representation of Holocaust and War Crimes in Museums of Socialist Yugoslavia], in *80 godina od izbijanja Drugog svetskog rata na prostoru Jugoslavije i stradanja grada Kragujevca: novi pomaci ili revizije istorije* [80 Years from the Outbreak of the Second World War in Yugoslavia and Suffering of the Town Kragujevac: New Advances or Revisions of History], eds DMITAR TASIĆ, LELA VUJOŠEVIĆ (Kragujevac, Beograd: Centar za naučnoistraživački rad Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti i Univerziteta, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2021), 85.

<sup>10</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/II-107.

<sup>11</sup> Milica Božić Marojević, *(Ne)željeno nasleđe u prostorima pamćenja. Slobodne zone bolnih uspomena* [(Un)wanted Heritage in the Spaces of Memory. Free Zones of Painful Memories] (Belgrade: Centar za muzeologiju i heritologiju, 2015), 46.

<sup>12</sup> Ljiljana Radonić, “Post-communist Invocation of Europe: Memorial Museums' Narratives and the Europeanization of Memory,” *National Identities* 19 (2017): 271.

<sup>13</sup> Marija Đorđević, “Performance of Commemorating / Performing Heritage. Roles of Remembering and Heritagization of World War II,” *Glasnik Entografskog instituta SANU* 65, no. 1 (2017): 150.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007), 8.

the management and activity of National Liberation War museums.<sup>15</sup> A report on memorial production in the 1950s opined that memorial buildings should not be solely functional but unique and visually original venues. A more complex approach was advised, which advocated for the use of alternative artistic mediums to achieve a clear concept. A particularly telling comment on the topic of memorials came from Dragi Milenković: “Only with the synthesis of architectural and artistic elements can a work of art be produced, that will be not just functional but something more –a genuine cultural monument dedicated to the fight and Revolution”.<sup>16</sup>

This change of perception happened after the Fourth Congress of the Association of Fighters of Yugoslavia in 1961, when the focus shifted from the war to the post-war generation.<sup>17</sup> By then, most locations already had a modest memorial, but it was decided that memorial sites were in need of “rebranding” and “repurposing”.<sup>18</sup> This goal was pursued by building a more intricate network of memorial parks that would not only serve the commemoration of the dead but also serve as places of education, recreation and celebration of life. As architect Bogdan Bogdanović (1922–2010) stated, it was necessary to show that life conquered death.<sup>19</sup> Memorial museums were typically designed in a way that was particularly sensitive to their environment and the “sanctity” of the soil on which they were erected. Although their architecture followed contemporary approaches —such as the International style, Critical Regionalism, Brutalism and Structuralism—most of them were designed in a manner intended to not outshine, but complement the main monument. The collections hosted in those museums mainly consisted of historic artefacts and theme-inspired artworks created by artists or even children, but also included books and various documents that were all carefully employed and curated to create an alluring experience for visitors.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most significant places of remembrance was the Jasenovac Concentration camp, where thousands perished in the hands of the Ustaše who operated the camp. After the war, Jasenovac would be eventually recognised as a place of great interest for collective memory and the first initiative to erect a monument there can be traced back to 1952. Since Jasenovac was a rather delicate topic for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the committee approached it tactfully. The decision-making process was therefore slow, and it was not until 1963 that architect Bogdan Bogdanović finally completed the design for the monument. As an interim solution, an improvised museum was placed in a barracks.<sup>21</sup> Architect Petar Vovk (1926–2020) was put in charge of designing the museum and within only 16 months the building was erected on the demolished grounds of the former concentration

<sup>15</sup> Dragi Milenković, ed., *Kongres Saveza udruženja boraca Narodnooslobodilačkog rata Jugoslavije* [Congress of the Federation of Associations of Fighters in the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: Vojno štamparsko preduzeće, 1961), 114–118.

<sup>16</sup> Milenković, *Kongres Saveza udruženja boraca*, 123.

<sup>17</sup> Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu*, 29.

<sup>18</sup> Nenad Lajbenšperger, “Memorijali Drugog svetskog rata u službi dnevno-političkih potreba socijalističke Jugoslavije” [Memorials of Second World War in the Service of Daily Political Needs of Socialist Yugoslavia], in *Prostori pamćenja: Arhitektura* [Spaces of Memory: Architecture], eds Aleksandar Kadrijević and Milan Popadić (Belgrade: Odeljenje za istoriju umetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2013), 297; Vladana Putnik, “Les parcs mémoriaux dans l’espace yougoslave et post-yougoslave” [Memorial Parks in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Space], *Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest* 46, no. 4 (2015): 103.

<sup>19</sup> Bogdan Bogdanović, *Glib i krv* [Mire and Blood] (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2001), 204.

<sup>20</sup> Olga Manojlović Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja: Spomenici i identiteti u Srbiji 1918–1989*. [Archaeology of Remembrance: Memorials and Identities in Serbia 1918–1989] (Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, Čigoja, 2014), 320.

<sup>21</sup> Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu*, 198–210, 215.

camp, in an effort to recreate its original ambience.<sup>22</sup> Vovk chose the then-dominant International style for the building, which is hence nonornamental and monochromatic. (Fig. 1) Its architecture was based on contrasting and combining horizontal and vertical elements. However, the museum also features classical influences, especially in the design of the spacious atrium placed next to the entrance. This is one of the earliest examples of a memorial museum that avoided outshining the local monument already in place, in this case the “Stone Flower” by Bogdanović. On the contrary, its architecture is markedly toned down, giving the impression of a minimalist intervention at the site where one of the region’s largest concentration camps once stood. The first exhibition of the Memorial Museum in Jasenovac was organised by Ksenija Dešković and designed by Đuka Kavurić (1903–1976), opening in 1968.<sup>23</sup> A sculpture named “To the Victims of Fascism in Jasenovac” by Dušan Džamonja (1928–2009) was placed on the front wall of the exhibition area.<sup>24</sup> The sculpture “Dead Camp Prisoner” by Stanko Jančić (1932–2018) was instead part of the museum’s exterior.<sup>25</sup> The question of how to represent the delicate issue of the Ustaša atrocities in Jasenovac was placed in a broader context for the exhibition. Aspects of Fascism and explicit photographs of the atrocities were not displayed, exhibiting items depicting life in the concentration camp instead.<sup>26</sup> The ethnic and religious conflict was deemphasised and interpreted as ideological. The members of the Communist Party were showcased as the purported main victims of fascist crimes. The official narrative tried to represent Jasenovac as a concentration camp where members from all ethnicities in Yugoslavia had perished, and could therefore become a universal place of remembrance for the entire country.<sup>27</sup>

Civilian victims were not honoured only at the sites of former concentration camps but also at the locations of mass executions often perpetrated by the Wehrmacht. One of the most heinous mass executions took place in Kragujevac, where many children were taken from school and massacred along with their teachers and other civilians. Such a momentously tragic event was significant for the memorialisation of WWII. After the memorial park “Šumarice” in Kragujevac was completed, a second development phase started in the 1970s, with the museum being the first to be built on site.<sup>28</sup> The museum was erected at the entrance to the memorial park as its centrepiece.<sup>29</sup> After their success with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, Ivan Antić (1923–2005) and Ivanka Raspopović (1930–2015) were assigned to design the Museum “21st October” in 1976. Unlike the sleek design of the Belgrade Museum, this building consists of 33 brick cubical towers of varying height.<sup>30</sup> The lack of windows or any visibility from the road make the museum resemble a fortress (Fig. 2). The towers symbolise the 33 mass graves on the grounds of the memorial park. Each tower has a glass top, thus creating a zenithal natural light in the



Fig. 1. Petar Vovk, Memorial Museum in Jasenovac, 1968. Jasenovac. Photo: Donald Niebyl/Spomenik Database.



Fig. 2. Ivan Antić and Ivanka Raspopović, Memorial Museum “21st October” in Šumarice Memorial Complex, 1968–1975. Kragujevac. Photo: Vladana Putnik Prica.

<sup>22</sup> Nataša Mataušić, “O koncentracionom logoru Jasenovac” [About the Concentration Camp Jasenovac], *Informatica museologica* 31, no. 1–2 (2000): 109; Ana Kršinić Lozica, “Između memorije i zaborava: Jasenovac kao dvostruko posredovana trauma” [Between Memory and Oblivion: Jasenovac as a Doubly Mediated Trauma], *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 35 (2011): 305.

<sup>23</sup> Nataša Jovičić, “Jasenovac Memorial Museum’s Permanent Exhibition – the Victim as an Individual,” *Review of Croatian History* 2 (2006): 295.

<sup>24</sup> Nataša Jagdhuhn, *Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums. Reframing Second World War Heritage in Postconflict Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2022), 181.

<sup>25</sup> Kršinić Lozica, “Između memorije i zaborava,” 299.

<sup>26</sup> Jovičić, “Jasenovac Memorial Museum’s Permanent Exhibition,” 295.

<sup>27</sup> Stipičić, “Predstavljanje Holokausta,” 96–97, 101.

<sup>28</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-209.

<sup>29</sup> Putnik, “Les parcs mémoriaux,” 102.

<sup>30</sup> Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, Central registry, ZM3; Marija Martinović, “Exhibition Space of Remembrance: Rhythmanalysis of Memorial Park Kragujevački oktobar,” *Serbian Architectural Journal* 5 (2013): 318; Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu*, 159.





Fig. 3. Ranko Radović, Memorial House in Tjentište, 1971. Sutjeska National Park. Photo: Donald Niebyl/Spomenik Database.

museum. This was a deliberate attempt to create a feeling of unease and desperation. By creating a dark interior with dramatic lighting, the architects tried to produce a psychological effect of despair in the face of certain death as an integral part of the museum experience; an addition to the exhibition was dedicated to the civilian victims of the war.<sup>31</sup> Three decades later, architect Daniel Libeskind (b. 1946) adopted this concept in his design of the Jewish Museum in Berlin. However, unlike Libeskind's museum, which is often described as a self-standing monument to the Holocaust, the "21st October" Museum is designed in a way that makes it an appropriate venue for hosting exhibitions. Apart from the exhibition space, the building also features a projection room and offices. Its interior was designed by architect Branko Hajdin, who chose to incorporate sculptures by Nandor Glid (1924–1997) and Oto Logo (1931–2016).<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the museums dedicated to the victims of fascism, many memorial museums were also erected to honour the partisans who had participated in the National Liberation Fight. One such example is the Memorial Centre or House within the Memorial Park Tjentište, which was erected to honour the 5,000 soldiers who died during the Fifth Offensive and the Battle of Sutjeska in 1943.<sup>33</sup> Since 1965 this project was considered one of broader national interest and was therefore financed from the federal budget. Among the committee members was the national hero and writer Rodoljub Čolaković (1900–1983).<sup>34</sup> The complex consisted of a series of memorials integrated into the landscape, later complemented by a hotel (built in 1959), an Information Centre (1962) and the Memorial Centre built between 1969 and 1972.<sup>35</sup> The original design for the hotel complex included the administrative building that would also serve as a small museum.<sup>36</sup> The location of the memorial centre was carefully chosen so as to minimise intervention in the landscape.<sup>37</sup> Like the Alley of Heroes designed by Miodrag Živković (1928–2020) commemorating the heroic breakthrough of the Partisans, architect Ranko Radović wanted the Memorial Centre to be built in a way that would capture the unique natural and historical landscape of the area and become an integral part of the Sutjeska National Park (Fig. 3). His method was based on exploring the *genius loci* to preserve the legends of a nation through architecture.<sup>38</sup> This was Radović's first realized project, one that allowed him to demonstrate a new method for constructing a museum-type building that could also serve as a memorial.<sup>39</sup> He modelled the project on an archaic form of a traditional vernacular mountain house, in order to reinterpret the former village in

<sup>31</sup> Vladimir Kulić, Maroje Mrduljaš and Wolfgang Thaler, *Modernism In-Between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia* (Berlin: Jovis 2012), 224.

<sup>32</sup> Dijana Milašinić Marić, Igor Marić, *Arhitektonično: arhitekta Ivan Antić* [Architectonic: Architect Ivan Antić] (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 2023), 52–57.

<sup>33</sup> Spomen dom.

<sup>34</sup> Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu*, 152, 157–158.

<sup>35</sup> Ranko Radović, "Spomen-kuća bitke na Sutjesci" [Memorial House of the Battle of Sutjeska], *Arhitektura* 158–159 (1976): 65; Manojlović Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja*, 169; Maja Milić Aleksić and Marina Radulj, "Savremena interpretacija tradicije u arhitekturi Ranka Radovića i Zlatka Ugljena u okviru Nacionalnog parka Sutjeska" [Contemporary Interpretation of Tradition in the Architectural Work of Ranko Radović and Zlatko Ugljen in the Sutjeska National Park], in *Graditeljsko nasleđe i urbanizam* [Architectural Heritage and Urban Planning], ed. Rade Mrleš (Belgrade: Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture grada Beograda, 2021), 336.

<sup>36</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-82.

<sup>37</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-81.

<sup>38</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-81.

<sup>39</sup> Ljiljana Blagojević, "Raskršća savremene arhitekture: Ranko Radović i diskurs postmodernizma" [Intersections of Contemporary Architecture: Ranko Radović and the Discourse of Postmodernism], *Kultura* 134 (2012): 190–191.

the area built “in the national spirit of Bosnian masons”.<sup>40</sup> The motifs of the double-sloped and four-sloped roofs were intended to create a specific visual, structural, and functional building, underpinned by the idea of potentially creating a “Yugoslav expression in architecture”.<sup>41</sup> However, he did not just imitate the folkloristic style of vernacular architecture, but rather used that heritage as an inspiration.<sup>42</sup> Like Živković’s monument, and in keeping with the mountain landscape, the building is varied and dynamic. The grey colour of the concrete resembles the traditional wood shingle used to cover the roofs in the traditional style seen in the mountain regions of the Balkans. The open, flexible interior was left in raw concrete and was highly minimalistic, but, as Maja Milić Aleksić (b. 1971) and Marina Radulj (b. 1978) have noted, it resembled a temple.<sup>43</sup> The clever use of natural light dramatically emphasises this effect. As Radović commented, the idea was to create a sense of dignity, silence and unobtrusiveness, and invoke an austere atmosphere.<sup>44</sup> As in Kragujevac, the interior was eventually designed by Branko Hajdin.

The centre’s main purpose was to operate as a small museum presenting an exhibition about the Fifth Offensive.<sup>45</sup> Originally, the exhibition was meant to chronologically present the events of the battle of Sutjeska, with audiovisual effects, thematic art, artefacts, and models.<sup>46</sup> However, instead of such a typical exhibition, artist Krsto Hegedušić (1901–1975) was commissioned to paint in fresco and secco techniques the most significant events of the Battle of Sutjeska.<sup>47</sup> From 1971 to 1973 Hegedušić painted 13 frescoes depicting themes from the Fifth Offensive.<sup>48</sup> Hegedušić has recounted how challenging the project was and how he felt a great responsibility, adding however that he had received help from historian Dušan Plenča.<sup>49</sup> In addition to Hegedušić’s frescoes, the ground floor has an inscription naming the 6,508 fighters killed in the Battle of Sutjeska.<sup>50</sup> While the ground level was reserved for Hegedušić’s murals, the lower level consisted of an exhibition and a projection room.<sup>51</sup> The Memorial Centre was officially opened on July 27, 1975.

Even though Radović’s approach attracted attention and positive reactions, it did not find imitators. On the contrary, other architects would use very different approaches in their designs of memorial museums dedicated to battles. The Memorial Centre of the Battle of Neretva River in Jablanica is a case in point. The competition was held in 1977, and the winners were architects Zdravko Dunđerović and Branko Tadić.

<sup>40</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-85.

<sup>41</sup> Ranko Radović, “Nagrada *Borbe* za arhitekturu” [Borba Award for Architecture], *Arhitektura urbanizam* 59 (1969): 11.

<sup>42</sup> Radović, “Spomen-kuća bitke na Sutjesci,” 68.

<sup>43</sup> Milić Aleksić and Radulj, “Savremena interpretacija tradicije,” 338–339.

<sup>44</sup> Radović, “Spomen-kuća bitke na Sutjesci,” 68.

<sup>45</sup> OMN, “Informativni centar Tjentište” [Informative Centre Tjentište], *Arhitektura urbanizam* 38 (1966): 11–12.

<sup>46</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-81.

<sup>47</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-85.

<sup>48</sup> *The Occupier, The Refuge, The Mountain Without Mercy, Typhus Fever Carriers, A Row of Fighters, Wounded, Impasse, Tito’s “Forward”, Sutjeska, Children and Dogs, Ljuba’s Grave, Breakthrough and The Dance of Death*. See: “Sutjeska na freskama Krste Hegedušića” [Sutjeska in the Frescoes of Krsto Hegedušić], *Čovjek i prostor* 223 (1971): 30.

<sup>49</sup> Miroslav Krleža, Vladimir Maleković and Darko Schneider, *Krsto Hegedušić* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1974), 135–137; Donald Niebyl, *Spomenik Monument Database* (London: Fuel, 2018), 176.

<sup>50</sup> Ljubo Mihić, *Sutjeska: kulturnoistorijski spomenici i centri za rekreaciju* [Sutjeska: Cultural and Historical Monuments and Recreational Centers] (Tuzla, Tjentište: Univerzal, Nacionalni park Sutjeska, 1978), 704; Manojlović Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja*, 169.

<sup>51</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, Society of Union of Associations of Fighters of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia Fund, 297/I-85.



Fig. 4. Zdravko Dunderović and Branko Tadić, Museum “Battle for the Wounded on Neretva”, 1977–1978. Jablanica. Photo: Donald Niebyl/Spomenik Database.

The museum consisted of a basement, a ground level and an upper floor. The utility rooms were located in the basement, while the ground floor was reserved for the exhibition rooms and a cafe. The upper floor housed a library, a conference hall, and office spaces. In their design for the museum, Dunderović and Tadić were very respectful of the location, where one of the most significant battles in occupied Yugoslavia had been waged. The main memorial place is the destroyed bridge over the Neretva River. Their design accommodated the cliff overlooking the river, thus rendering the historic remains of the bridge that had been blown up in the battle fully visible from the premises of the Centre. Large glass windows were purposefully placed to allow museum visitors to remain in constant connection with the bridge. The architects cleverly used water and a moat in one of the entrances of the building to subtly refer to the historic crossing of the Neretva River. A vast plateau with an open scene was left in front of the centre for hosting events and commemorations.<sup>52</sup> Unlike earlier projects, the architects did not opt for the widely popular style of critical regionalism, instead making use of the exquisite location to create a dynamic structuralist building with postmodernist elements (Fig. 4). However, many of their ideas had to be abandoned in the construction phase due to budget restrictions.<sup>53</sup> Despite these setbacks, the Memorial Centre opened in 1978. As Saša Levi stated: “The Memorial Centre in Jablanica, at this historic place where the breakthrough of the offensive and the decisive battle of the National Liberation Fight took place, should serve as a long-lasting record, an architectural, spatial and visual testimony, more enlightening than all the words in the unopened books lying on the dusty shelves of libraries.”<sup>54</sup> Ljubo Mihić (1929–1989) thought the museum’s architecture reflected the mountainous landscape and the difficulties of the Fourth Offensive. The exhibition also highlighted this aspect, with the curators using models and sound and light effects to recreate the historical battle.<sup>55</sup>

An exceptional example of well-designed architecture within a memorial complex was the Reception Centre by architect Aleksandar Đokić (1936–2002) in Kadinjača.<sup>56</sup> The memorial complex was dedicated to the 300 fighters who had died during the First Offensive, protecting the military hospital in their retreat. A first rather modest memorial was erected in 1952, however, by the 1970s, it was clear that a more elaborate approach to this historic site was required.<sup>57</sup> After decades of failed attempts to erect a more ambitious memorial, the Assemblies of Titovo Užice and Bajina Bašta accepted the proposal for a memorial complex submitted by sculptor Miodrag Živković and

<sup>52</sup> Ljubo Mihić, *Bitka za ranjenike na Neretvi. Kulturnoistorijski spomenici i centri za rekreaciju* [Battle for the Wounded on Neretva. Cultural and Historic Monuments and Centres for Recreation] (Prozor, Jablanica: Skupština opštine Prozor, Skupština opštine Jablanica, IGTR “Univerzal”, 1979), 547–549.

<sup>53</sup> Zdenko Kolacio, “Spomenik na Maklenu i spomen-muzej u Jablanici – dva značajna memorijala” [Monument on Makljen and the Memorial Museum in Jablanica – Two Significant Memorials], *Arhitektura* 168–169 (1979): 78.

<sup>54</sup> Saša Levi, “Spomen-dom bitke na Neretvi u Jablanici” [Memorial Centre of the Battle of Neretva in Jablanica], *Čovjek i prostor* 312 (1979): 12–14.

<sup>55</sup> Mihić, *Bitka za ranjenike na Neretvi*, 552.

<sup>56</sup> Prihvatni centar.

<sup>57</sup> Vladana Putnik, “Estetika i uloga memorijalnih parkova u Jugoslaviji na primeru spomen kompleksa Kadinjača” [Aesthetics and the Role of Memorial Parks in Yugoslavia on the Example of Memorial Complex Kadinjača], in *Prostori pamćenja: Arhitektura* [Spaces of Memory: Architecture], eds Aleksandar Kadijević and Milan Popadić (Belgrade: Odeljenje za istoriju umetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2013), 294–295; Nemanja Obradović, Goran Novaković and Nevena Pantić, *Memorijalni kompleks Kadinjača: 40 godina od otkrivanja spomenika* [Memorial Complex Kadinjača: 40 Years since the Opening of the Monument] (Užice: Narodni muzej Užice, 2019) 3–6.

architect Aleksandar Đokić.<sup>58</sup> The Reception Centre (also known as the Memorial House) was designed as an integral part of the Kadinjača Memorial complex.<sup>59</sup> It is located on the area's south side and integrated into the existing natural terrain. Đokić designed it in a way that would make it well-adapted to the landscape's natural beauty. It appears as if it was moulded from the existing hill, without disturbing the natural environment. Đokić therefore chose two-sloped roofs and visible wooden beams to create the effect of vernacular, traditional mountain architecture.<sup>60</sup> He stated that he intended to create a warm space with varied but interconnected contents.<sup>61</sup> Since Kadinjača was 14 km away from the town of Užice, the Reception Centre was designed to accommodate a larger number of tourists for longer periods.<sup>62</sup> The centre had three levels, housing an informational exhibition, a conference hall with a capacity of 200 people, a souvenir shop, a restaurant and 50 beds.<sup>63</sup> Architect Slobodan Bibić was in charge of the centre's interior design. The complex was inaugurated in 1979 by Josip Broz Tito.<sup>64</sup> Živković and Đokić were nominated for two highly prestigious awards in Yugoslavia: the October Prize and the Borba Prize.<sup>65</sup> By 1980, an initiative was taken to expand the insufficient accommodation capacity of the Reception Centre in order to meet increasing tourist demand.<sup>66</sup> The permanent exhibition about the Battle of Kadinjača opened in 1985. The project was assigned to Lieutenant Colonel Milan Marinković and architect Milan Bojer. In addition to the permanent exhibition, the Centre has organised numerous temporary exhibitions over the years.<sup>67</sup>

One of the longest-lasting and most complex projects transcending the typological division between architecture and sculpture was the Memorial dedicated to the people's uprising in Kordun and Banija in Petrova Gora (**Fig. 5**). Petrova Gora was considered an important part of the National Liberation War narrative and symbolised the fight against the occupation.<sup>68</sup> In 1965 the Institute for Urban Development in Zagreb designed a development project for Petrova Gora. Architect Ante Marinović Uzelac (1930–2015) headed the team.<sup>69</sup> At the time, there were already studies available about the touristic potential of Petrova Gora.<sup>70</sup> In 1970 a competition was held for the monument, which would also serve as a memorial centre, complete with a viewpoint over the surrounding beech forest.<sup>71</sup> The results were announced the



**Fig. 5.** Vojin Bakić and Berislav Šerbetić, Memorial in Petrova Gora, 1974–1981. Petrova Gora. Photo: Donald Niebyl/ Spomenik Database.

<sup>58</sup> Katarina Dogandžić Mićunović, "Memorijalni kompleks *Kadinjača*: ideološki potencijal, inicijativa za izgradnju i odlike arhitektonsko-skulptoralne celine" [Memorial Complex Kadinjača: Ideological Potential, Initiative for Construction and Features of Architectural-Sculptural Complex], in *Propaganda i javni narativi u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji* [Propaganda and Public Narratives in Socialist Yugoslavia], eds Bojana Bogdanović and Kristijan Obšust (Novi Sad; Belgrade: Arhiv Vojvodine, Etnografski institut SANU, 2021), 59–60.

<sup>59</sup> "Spomenički kompleks Kadinjača" [Memorial Complex Kadinjača], *Arhitektura urbanizam* 85 (1980): 9.

<sup>60</sup> Aleksandra Jevtović, "Arhitekta Aleksandar Đokić" [Architect Aleksandar Đokić] (PhD diss., University of Belgrade, 2018), 250–252.

<sup>61</sup> Dogandžić Mićunović, "Memorijalni kompleks *Kadinjača*," 74.

<sup>62</sup> Jevtović, "Arhitekta Aleksandar Đokić," 250–251.

<sup>63</sup> Aleksandra Jevtović, "Tourist Objects of Aleksandar Đokić, an Architect: National and International Style Characteristics," *Biz Info* 9, no. 2 (2018): 16–17; Obradović, Novaković and Pantić, *Memorijalni kompleks Kadinjača*, 13.

<sup>64</sup> "Spomenički kompleks Kadinjača," 9; Jevtović, "Arhitekta Aleksandar Đokić," 246.

<sup>65</sup> Jevtović, "Arhitekta Aleksandar Đokić," 37, 254.

<sup>66</sup> Dogandžić Mićunović, "Memorijalni kompleks *Kadinjača*," 74–75.

<sup>67</sup> Obradović, Novaković and Pantić, *Memorijalni kompleks Kadinjača*, 21.

<sup>68</sup> Ante Marinović Uzelac, "Memorijalni park Petrova Gora" [Memorial Park Petrova Gora], *Arhitektura* 104 (1969): 38.

<sup>69</sup> Boro Pavlović, "Memorijalni park Narodnooslobodilačke borbe Petrova Gora" [Memorial Park of National Liberation Fight Petrova Gora], *Arhitektura* 155 (1975): 24.

<sup>70</sup> Marinović Uzelac, "Memorijalni park Petrova Gora," 38.

<sup>71</sup> Zana Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori – prilog istraživanju i revalorizaciji" [Monument at Petrova Gora – Contribution to Research and Reevaluation], *Anali Galerije Antuna Augustinčića* 32–35 (2012–2015): 387–388.



following year, and architect Igor Toš was proclaimed the winner. His concept leaned heavily towards the spacious plasticity of the ambience. He envisioned two concrete fractured rocks emerging from the ground and rising towards the viewpoint at 30 meters above ground level. The rocks symbolised the difficult path towards freedom.<sup>72</sup> In 1974, a second competition, more limited in scope, was held to further explore the proposed designs from the previous project. Only the awarded artists were invited to participate. Igor Toš declined and the first prize was awarded to sculptor Vojin Bakić.<sup>73</sup> As originally intended, Petrova Gora became both a monument and a memorial centre, housing a conference room, an exhibition gallery, a library and a rooftop offering a panoramic view.<sup>74</sup> Bakić gave it a wavy form to symbolise a flag fluttering in the sky, a concept he had already explored in his design for the Monument in Kamenska. The greatest challenge for him was how to integrate a museum into a monument that was essentially a large-scale sculpture. Bakić was not an architect, but a sculptor, so his main concern was to preserve the structure of the interior as an inverted form, a negative, so to speak, of the monument. Architect Berislav Šerbetić was put in charge of transforming Bakić's sculpture into architecture. He decided to place the conference room and utilities in the basement, while the entire overground space was reserved for the museum.<sup>75</sup> A circular ramp took visitors to the upper levels and the unity of the interior resembled Frank Lloyd Wright's (1867–1959) Guggenheim Museum in New York.<sup>76</sup> Bakić chose to cover the surface of the 37-meter-tall monument with steel panels, allowing the surrounding landscape to be reflected on it, just like in Kamenska.<sup>77</sup> The monument opened in 1982 with an exhibition about Tito in the Karlovac and Kordun regions.<sup>78</sup> The rest of the interior spaces has remained undeveloped and unfortunately there are no plans to change this. The monument was supposed to also house a library and offices. After it opened, Petrova Gora became a popular destination for school excursions.<sup>79</sup>

One of the last memorial complexes realised in socialist Yugoslavia was the Sremski Front, dedicated to the soldiers who died there in the last year of the war.<sup>80</sup> Although a first initiative to build a memorial had originated as early as 1952, the competition was held more than twenty years later, in 1974. The fact that the largest battle fought on Yugoslav soil had remained without a memorial for such a long time was highly controversial.<sup>81</sup> The location chosen for the memorial complex was the place where the front had been broken by the Yugoslav army, near the village of Adaševci and the river Bosut. The proposals submitted envisioned a memorial and complex capable of accommodating 50,000 visitors during important celebrations and events, with an information centre and a museum.<sup>82</sup> Twenty design proposals entered the competition, with sculptor Dušan Džamonja winning the first prize and sculptor Miodrag Živković and architect

<sup>72</sup> Igor Toš, "Idejno rješenje spomen objekta na Petrovoj Gori" [Initial Design for the Memorial at Petrova Gora], *Arhitektura* 151 (1974): 64.

<sup>73</sup> Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 395.

<sup>74</sup> Sanja Horvatinčić, "Memorial Sculpture and Architecture in Socialist Yugoslavia," in *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia 1948–1980*, eds Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018), 106.

<sup>75</sup> "Spomenik Revoluciji na Petrovoj gori" [Monument to the Revolution in Petrova Gora], *Arhitektura* 176–177 (1981): 4–6.

<sup>76</sup> Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 402.

<sup>77</sup> Putnik, "Les parcs mémoriaux," 105.

<sup>78</sup> Niebyl, *Spomenik Monument Database*, 140.

<sup>79</sup> Dragičević, "Spomenik na Petrovoj gori," 399–400.

<sup>80</sup> Vojislav Subotić, Miro Čavaljuga and Zoran Panović, *Spomen obeležje Sremski front* [Memorial Landmark Srem Front] (Belgrade SUBNOR Srbije, 2004), 5.

<sup>81</sup> Putnik, "Les parcs mémoriaux," 106; Predrag Vajagić, "Kultura sećanja – Sremski front" [The Culture of Remembrance – Sremski Front], *Vojno delo* 3 (2017): 419.

<sup>82</sup> Fedor Wenzler, "Natječaj za spomenik pobjede na Sremskom frontu" [Competition for the Monument to the Victory at the Sremski Front], *Čovjek i prostor* 268 (1975): 8–9.

Aleksandar Đokić the second one.<sup>83</sup> However, the project was shelved due to the economic crisis that had engulfed Yugoslavia in the 1970s.<sup>84</sup> Since Džamonja requested an honorary payment equal to 10% of the budget for the monument's construction, it was decided to reject his proposal.<sup>85</sup> Sculptor Jovan Soldatović (1920–2005) eventually designed the memorial, architect Miroslav Krstonošić (b. 1932) the memorial museum, and Božidar Milinković the interior.<sup>86</sup> The construction of the memorial complex started in 1985 and it was officially inaugurated in 1988.<sup>87</sup> Like many other examples from the late 1960s and 1970s, the complex also consisted of three parts: a gathering place, an Alley of Honour and a museum.<sup>88</sup> The entire complex was designed in a way that evoked a battle row and mimicked the harsh conditions under which the soldiers were fighting, with the museum building resembling both a circular bunker and an early Christian martyrrium (Fig. 6).<sup>89</sup> One part of the complex was left for visitors who wanted to plant a tree.<sup>90</sup> The museum building is circular, with a central round-shaped courtyard displaying a composition made of enemy weapons. Soldatović is also the designer of a site-specific audiovisual installation consisting of sculptures placed in the interior and depicting the horrors of war.<sup>91</sup> The displayed works of art are complemented by a carefully curated audiovisual project created by Vera Crvenčanin Kulenović (1920–2013) and Vuk Kulenović (1946–2017). The left wing of the museum is reserved for the historical exhibits depicting the events from 1944 to 1945, the time when the Sremski Front was active.<sup>92</sup>



Fig. 6. Jovan Soldatović and Miroslav Krstonošić, Memorial Museum “Sremski Front”, 1985–1988. Adaševci. Photo: Vladana Putnik Prica.

### Preserving the Narrative in the post-Yugoslav Era

The 1980s in Yugoslavia were marked by an economic and political crisis, which also affected memorial production. As Sanja Horvatinčić has noted, many of the ambitiously designed memorial complexes suddenly faced the effects of the gradual collapse of the self-managed socialist system.<sup>93</sup> Most memorial complexes required larger budgets to remain self-sufficient.<sup>94</sup> The changing political atmosphere in the country also influenced some shifts in the way memorial museums functioned and the exhibitions they displayed. For example, due to the criticism it attracted, an exhibition at the Memorial Museum in Jasenovac was replaced by a new one in 1988 that presented a very different account of the atrocities that had occurred in the camp.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Dušan Džamonja, “Spomenik boraca, spomen slobodi” [A Monument to the Fighters, a Memory to Freedom], *Arhitektura* 155 (1975): 59–61; Wenzler, “Natječaj za spomenik,” 9; Horvatinčić, “Memorial Sculpture,” 106.

<sup>84</sup> Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku* [History of Yugoslavia in the 20th Century] (Belgrade: Clio, 2013), 314–316.

<sup>85</sup> Vajagić, “Kultura sećanja – Sremski front,” 420.

<sup>86</sup> Subotić, Čavaljuga and Panović, *Spomen obeležje Sremski front*, 5–6.

<sup>87</sup> Subotić, Čavaljuga and Panović, *Spomen obeležje Sremski front*, 5–6; Vajagić, “Kultura sećanja – Sremski front,” 423.

<sup>88</sup> Sabiralište, Aleja časti. See: Subotić, Čavaljuga and Panović, *Spomen obeležje Sremski front*, 6.

<sup>89</sup> Putnik, “Les parcs mémoriaux,” 106.

<sup>90</sup> Subotić, Čavaljuga and Panović, *Spomen obeležje Sremski front*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Mladenko Kumović, “Stalne postavke na temu NOR-a i Revolucije u Vojvodini” [Permanent Exhibitions about National Liberation War and Revolution in Vojvodina], *Informatica museologica* 3–4 (1989): 21.

<sup>92</sup> Subotić, Čavaljuga and Panović, *Spomen obeležje Sremski front*, 7.

<sup>93</sup> Sanja Horvatinčić, “Between Creativity and Pragmatism: A Structural Analysis and Quantitative Survey of Federal Competitions for Yugoslav Monuments and Memorial Complexes (1955–1980),” in *Modern and Contemporary Artists’ Networks. An Inquiry into Digital History of Art and Architecture*, eds Ljiljana Kolešnik and Sanja Horvatinčić (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2018), 133.

<sup>94</sup> Dogandžić Mićunović, “Memorijalni kompleks Kadinjača,” 81.

<sup>95</sup> Jovičić, “Jasenovac Memorial Museum’s Permanent Exhibition,” 295; Kršinić Lozica, “Između memorije i zaborava,” 299–300.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s brought drastic social, political and ideological changes that influenced the perception of WWII memorials in the public sphere.<sup>96</sup> The civil war that tore the country from 1991 to 1995 also caused a rise of negative perceptions and even hatred towards the socialist heritage. Symbolic erasure and deliberate oblivion were accompanied by the vandalism and defecation of memorials which became targets of violent acts.<sup>97</sup> The Museum in Jasenovac was devastated during the civil war in Yugoslavia (1991–1995) and remained closed until 2006.<sup>98</sup> When it reopened to the public, the new exhibition had the character of a typical Holocaust museum, even though far more victims were Serbs rather than Jewish. The deliberate omission of these facts was problematic and concern was expressed regarding the clarity of the message of the exhibition.<sup>99</sup> During the civil war, the Memorial in Petrova Gora was converted into a military base and hospital, sustaining extensive damage.<sup>100</sup> Unlike the Museum in Jasenovac, Petrova Gora remained abandoned and was gradually dismantled by locals and visitors.<sup>101</sup> The Museum “Battle for the Wounded on Neretva” ceased its operation during the war, to house soldiers and refugees. After the war, the local authorities decided to strip the museum of its original purpose, renaming it the Museum of Northern Herzegovina.<sup>102</sup> In Tjentište, Hegedušić’s frescoes in the Memorial House were vandalised during the war, since the army of Republika Srpska was stationed there.<sup>103</sup> However, memorial museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina have mostly remained a “frozen memory”, without any major interventions disrupting the original exhibitions.<sup>104</sup>

The memorial complex Sremski Front was also looted and devastated in 1992, during the civil war. The first initiative to renovate it originated from the veterans of the Sremski Front in 1994, and the complex was fully restored in 1998.<sup>105</sup> However, the building suffered from maintenance issues from the start (such as roof leakages). Despite its substandard management, new religious iconography was added in 2007, housed in a new chapel. Memorial museums in modern-day Serbia were more fortunate, avoiding large-scale devastation, and most are still operating.<sup>106</sup> Although memorial complexes were less visited compared to the socialist era, they were adequately maintained, and since the 2010s the number of visitors, especially foreign tourists, has been on the rise. Nevertheless, Kadinjača’s Reception Centre had leaking roofs for years before it was finally renovated in 2015–2017,<sup>107</sup> although its condition remains far from ideal. The conference room is hardly ever used and the restaurant only occasionally works as a cafeteria.<sup>108</sup> The most successful case is the Memorial Park “21st October” in Šumarice, Kragujevac, which has been renovated and

<sup>96</sup> Milica Božić Marojević, “Mesta stradanja kao mesta sećanja: od prepoznavanja nasleđa do kreiranja zajedničke baštine” [Sites of Suffering as Spaces of Remembrance. From Recognizing Inheritance to Creating a Common Heritage], in *Kulturna baština i kriza: heritološki i arhitektonski aspekt* [Cultural Heritage and Crisis: Heritological and Architectural Aspect], ed. Aleksandar Kadijević (Belgrade: Univerzitet u Beogradu – Filozofski fakultet, 2021), 46.

<sup>97</sup> Putnik, “Les parcs mémoriaux,” 108.

<sup>98</sup> Niebyl, *Spomenik Monument Database*, 63; Radonić, “Post-communist Invocation of Europe,” 272.

<sup>99</sup> Kršinić Lozica, “Između memorije i zaborava,” 302; Radonić, “Post-communist Invocation of Europe,” 275–276; Jagdhuhn, *Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums*, 93, 178–194.

<sup>100</sup> Dragičević, “Spomenik na Petrovoj gori,” 400–401.

<sup>101</sup> Kulić, Mrduljaš and Thaler, *Modernism In-Between*, 225; Putnik, “Les parcs mémoriaux,” 110.

<sup>102</sup> Jagdhuhn, *Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums*, 89–90, 114.

<sup>103</sup> Jagdhuhn, *Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums*, 97–98.

<sup>104</sup> Jagdhuhn, *Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums*, 89.

<sup>105</sup> Vajagić, “Kultura sećanja – Sremski front,” 429.

<sup>106</sup> Jagdhuhn, *Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums*, 118.

<sup>107</sup> Jevtović, “Arhitekta Aleksandar Đokić,” 255.

<sup>108</sup> Dogandžić Mićunović, “Memorijalni kompleks Kadinjača,” 81.

maintained, with the museum functioning without any major interruptions or issues.<sup>109</sup> However, this memorial park also received an addition, the chapel of New Martyrs of Kragujevac, with the previously undesirable religious dimension being thereby introduced in the memorial space.<sup>110</sup>

After that turbulent decade, the beginning of the new millennium brought new transformations in the political systems of post-Yugoslav countries along with a change in the perception of the socialist past. The issue of interpretation is still debated, with no consensus on how this difficult heritage should be presented.<sup>111</sup> In the past decade, there has been a rise of awareness, both in academia and among curators, about the significance of dissonant heritage, in this case the post-Yugoslav and post-socialist one.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, the lack of openness is a typical characteristic of cultural politics in most post-Yugoslav countries.<sup>113</sup> This is especially evident in the case of the legacy of antifascism, which is deliberately marginalised by politicians, a tendency reflected on official memorial ceremonies and strategies.<sup>114</sup>

## Conclusion

Museums dedicated to the victims of WWII in Yugoslavia were part of a broader network of collective memorial topography. They were designed as more than just museums, intended to serve also as memorials, as integral parts of their respective historic locations. Like the monuments, they too served to glorify not only the past but also the present, thus forging a specific politics of remembrance, but also of oblivion.<sup>115</sup> As Sanja Horvatinčić has aptly remarked, they served to further institutionalise the culture of commemoration.<sup>116</sup> The memorial complexes were used as settings for numerous events dedicated to collective remembrance and the education of a new generation of Yugoslavs.<sup>117</sup> Museums were powerful agents in the construction of the official narrative about the collective memory of the Yugoslav nation. They often supported the performative and didactic role of memorials, preserving the memory of tragic and difficult events from WWII. As integral parts of the memorial topography, museums performed a complex role, being places of remembrance, monuments in their own right, as well as places of carefully curated narratives meant to shape public opinion and strengthen collective memory. All the case studies examined here have been recognised and listed as historic monuments.<sup>118</sup>

Their architecture reflected a specific understanding of the sanctity of the landscape that they complemented in many ways. Some architects chose critical regionalism to achieve harmony with the cultural and

<sup>109</sup> Putnik, "Second World War Monuments," 4; Jagdhuhn, *Post-Yugoslav Metamuseums*, 162.

<sup>110</sup> Đorđević, "Performance of Commemorating," 157.

<sup>111</sup> Božić Marojević, *(Ne)željeno nasleđe u prostorima pamćenja*, 66.

<sup>112</sup> Milica Božić Marojević, "Izazovi nove muzeologije u prezentaciji i interpretaciji disonantnog nasleđa" [Challenges of New Museology in Presentation and Interpretation of Dissonant Heritage], *Kultura* 144 (2014): 42.

<sup>113</sup> Milica Božić Marojević, "Rat sećanja – (zlo)upotrebe disonantnog nasleđa u političke svrhe" [Memory War – (Ab)uses of Dissonant Heritage for Political Purposes], *Kultura* 152 (2016): 156.

<sup>114</sup> Božić Marojević, "Rat sećanja," 162; Đorđević, "Performance of Commemorating," 159–160.

<sup>115</sup> Cvetić, "Monumentalna memorijalna politička skulptura," 303; Božić Marojević, *(Ne)željeno nasleđe u prostorima pamćenja*, 30–35.

<sup>116</sup> Horvatinčić, "Memorial Sculpture," 111.

<sup>117</sup> Manojlović Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja*, 320.

<sup>118</sup> Spomen park "Kragujevački oktobar" u Šumaricama (*Službeni glasnik Socijalističke Republike Srbije* No. 14/79); Dolina heroja na Tjentištu (*Službeni glasnik Republike Srpske* No. 121/12); Muzej "Bitka za ranjenike na Neretvi," Memorijalni kompleks Bitka na Neretvi, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.muzej-jablanica.com/ba/memorijalni-kompleks>; Spomen kompleks "Kadinjača" (*Službeni glasnik Socijalističke Republike Srbije* No.14/79); Spomen kompleks "Sremski front" (*Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije* No. 16/90); Spomen područje Jasenovac (Lista zaštićenih kulturnih dobara, Z-3411).

natural heritage of the locations, finding inspiration in vernacular architecture. Illustrative examples are Ranko Radović and Aleksandar Đokić, two prominent figures of Yugoslav postmodernism. Other architects, such as Zdravko Dunđerović and Branko Tadić, chose a different approach in their design of the memorial museum of the Battle of Neretva. But for them, too, the landscape served as the main source of inspiration and the focal point around which the entire complex was built. The reflection of the surrounding area was explored with vigour by Vojin Bakić, most notably in his Memorial in Petrova Gora. Whereas the dramatic natural beauty of the landscape influenced many architects and sculptors, architect Miroslav Krstonošić had to seek inspiration in the plains of Srem for his recreation of the fighting at the Sremski front. He accordingly opted for a stylised form of battle rows and bunkers to recreate the dreadful conditions under which soldiers had to fight. A similar, notably successful attempt to recreate the grim atmosphere through architecture was that by Ivan Antić and Ivanka Raspopović in their design for the Memorial Museum in Šumarice. It is safe to conclude that in all the aforementioned cases the location and historic importance of the event commemorated played a pivotal role in the final design. Even though the memorial museums often followed different styles, they were all rooted in the same concept, that of triggering a feeling, of recreating a past event and connecting with visitors on an emotional level. In all these cases, the architects and sculptors managed with their architectural and exhibition design choices to emphasize the importance of space and to explore the potential of spatial effects as a means to enhance audience experience. As Paul Williams has noted, in the performative spaces that museums have been transformed into, “the total physical environment becomes the attraction”.<sup>119</sup>

We can therefore suggest that in today’s cultural and political atmosphere, it is vital to adequately curate this part of the dissonant socialist heritage, in order to overcome the challenges of historical revisionism and nationalism, as well as the hatred towards other ethnic groups.<sup>120</sup> It seems that today, even more so than in the past, the role of memorial museums dedicated to WWII as significant generators of dialogue, education and critical thought, should be recognised.

<sup>119</sup> Williams, *Memorial Museums*, 77, 97.

<sup>120</sup> Božić Marojević, *(Ne)željeno nasleđe u prostorima pamćenja*, 45.



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