

Yugoslav Monuments Associated with the First World War (1918–1941)

Symposium, Ljubljana, 18–19 October 2018

The First World War monuments produced in interwar Yugoslavia are today usually discussed separately, within the context of the successor state to which they belong. The symposium will attempt to present a picture of this production that is as comprehensive as possible, outlining not only the common features of these works but also their differences, which to a large degree were conditioned by very diverse local traditions of commemoration and memorial creation.

The second goal of the symposium is to consider how these monuments are inscribed with desires to strengthen a common Yugoslav identity, establish a collective imaginary, and develop a distinctive visual image of the young state. Yugoslavia faced considerable difficulties in this area, which were fostered not only by internal inter-ethnic and political tensions and a poorly thought-out state cultural policy, but also by the lack of unifying shared stories and memories. Because, before unification, the different peoples of Yugoslavia had often found themselves in opposing political camps, stories from the past could even be extremely divisive for the young state.

The creation of monuments dedicated to the achievements and to the fallen soldiers of the First World War was itself a problematic task: both victors and vanquished found themselves living in the same country, and the burial and commemoration of soldiers from both sides were happening simultaneously. Monuments normally tell us, directly and overtly, that the dead did not die in vain and the living embody the values for which they fought, but in Yugoslavia after the First World War such monuments were impossible. A sense of solidarity, whether sincere or pragmatic, constrained the victors, at least initially, from freely exulting in euphoric triumphalist narratives. And the vanquished were even more constrained, for what had happened was the very reverse of what they had been fighting for, and there was no possible way to rationalize the deaths of the many who had fallen in battle.

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 18 October 2018: The Production of Monuments Associated with the First World War in Different Parts of Yugoslavia

10:30 Introductions

11:00 Beti Žerovc: The Development of Public Monuments on the Territory of Future Yugoslavia

11:30 Petra Svoljšak: Stones of Memory: How and Why were the Memorials Built during the First World War – The Case of the Slovenian Territory and the Isonzo Front

12:30 Marko Štepec: The Monuments to the First World War in Slovenia

13:00 Ljiljana Dobrovšak: The Places of Memory of the First World War in Croatia

13:30 Andrea Baotić-Rustanbegović: The Monuments to the Victims of the First World War: Commemorative Practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina

15:00 Nenad Lajbenšperger: The Monuments Dedicated to the First World War on the Territory of Serbia without Provinces, in Vojvodina and Abroad

15:30 Danilo Šarenac: The Monuments Dedicated to the First World War on the Territory of Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro, and the Monuments to Foreign Soldiers in Serbia and Macedonia

16:00 Panel discussion with lecturers

Friday, 19 October 2018: The Monuments in Service of the State

10:30 Olga Manojlović Pintar: The Monuments to the Heroes and Victims of the First World War and the Remembrance Policy in Yugoslavia

11:00 Borut Klabjan: Violence in Space: Marking the Border Space in the Northern Adriatic in the First Half of the 20th Century

11:30 Dalibor Prančević: Ivan Meštrović and the First World War: An Artistic Path from Emigrant Activism to the State Commissions

12:30 Barbara Vujanović: Shaping the Nation: Interwar Monuments in the Context of the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb

13:00 Aleksandar Ignjatović: Yugoslavism through the Syntax of Classicism: The Memorials to the First World War in Belgrade and Ljubljana, 1931–1939

13:30 Panel discussion with the lecturers

The symposium is dedicated to Špelca Čopič (1922–2014), an expert and interpreter of Slovenian and Yugoslav sculpture and public monuments in the 20th century. On this occasion, we will also remember her with a commemorative display.

Organizer: Department of Art History, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

The symposium is part of the seminar *Art for Collective Use*.

Partners: Igor Zabel Association for Culture and Theory and Moderna galerija

The symposium is affiliated with the international research project and exhibition *Visual Arts in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–41)* due to open in spring 2019 at the Moderna galerija (Museum of Modern Art).

Venue: Moderna galerija, Cankarjeva 15, Ljubljana

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