

WWII SPOMENIKS IN CROATIA  
(1945 - 1990.)

# WWII SPOMENIKS IN CROATIA (1945.-1990.)

ARCHITECTURAL THOUGHT BEHIND THEM AND THE IMPACT OF THE  
ARCHITECTS AND AUTORS WHO DESIGNED THEM



Doria **GOBIĆ**  
5861187

Architectural History Thesis  
TU Delft

April 2023

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the creation of anti-fascist postwar memorials in Croatia, as a former part of Yugoslavia, between 1945 and 1990, with a focus on three independent memorials in Croatia commissioned by the same government - Petrova Gora, Kamenska and Jasenovac. The research aims to understand the historical and political context in which these memorials were constructed, as well as their relationship to one another. By using image analysis of the visual and verbal narratives of the monuments, there is a correlation to be grasped, which leads to a better understanding of the topic's multi-layers. The paper addresses questions regarding the architects' roles in creating monuments to tragic events, their ideas, who they were designed for, and who or what they honor. To discover answers to these issues, secondary and primary bibliographies are going to be analyzed, including original images, architectural sketches, written thoughts, and interviews. The study offers insight into the architectural and symbolic values of the memorials and their significance in Yugoslavian history.

### Keywords:

Yugoslavian architecture  
WWII Memorial  
spomenik  
Petrova Gora  
Kamenska  
Jasenovac

## CONTENT

PROLOGUE	4
INTRODUCTION	7
SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT	8
SPOMENIKS	13
PETROVA GORA	20
KAMENSKA	28
JASENOVAC	36
CONCLUSION	44
DISCUSSION	45
FOOTNOTES	48
REFERENCE LIST	50

## PROLOGUE

I come from a country that had one of the earliest Anti-fascist Resistance Movements in the occupied region of Europe. My great-grandfathers were partisans from the very beginning of the Resistance's existence, in Croatia, back then Yugoslavia. Tales about Yugoslavia and anti-fascism are deeply woven into the history of my family, the history of my nation, but also its present. For the last twenty years since Yugoslavia's dissolution, the subject of it and its traces of existence are increasingly gaining more attention. But for generations that weren't a part of it (including myself), the story of it is still shrouded in mystery and people who experienced it are reluctant or unwilling to speak into detail. This makes it both more mysterious and fascinating for me, as well as for many of my peers who were not witnesses to those times. Growing up, we were frequently told that life was better in Yugoslavia, but all that now remains from it are the stories of family members, disagreements between former compatriots, and architecture. Architecture that we mostly perceive as common, usual, such as dwellings, office and public buildings, factories. But apart from it, there is also a whole network of mystical buildings, abandoned and condemned by the grace or disfavor of time and nature, unknown to us new generations - World War II monuments, regionally called spomenik(s). A narrative not being told, but still present and part of the heritage and representation of a nation that has been dissolved. Given how little information I knew and was able to gather before conducting research for this paper about these megalithic structures, I was even more curious to learn their history. Why do they look the way they do? Why don't they have clear representations of the combat and the battle amongst the soldiers, but rather such peculiar abstract forms? Who exactly designed them, and for whom? And first, what part did architects play in all of this? What was their assignment, and how did they go about doing it? Even so, there is a sense that it belongs in that region of the world. Is this due to the way the material is used? Forms? A shared idea among the architects who were designing them?



Figure 1  
Valentin Jeck  
Monument to the Battle of the Sutjeska,  
Tjentište, Bosnia and Herzegovina ( Miodrag Živković)  
View of the monument, 2016,  
MoMA, 2017

# INTRODUCTION

This thesis will be focused on a specific part of history - post World War II years, between 1945.-1990, that is, until Yugoslavia fell apart. During those years a number of different anti-fascist, post-war memorials emerged all around Yugoslavia. Croatia, as its former part, witnesses the rise of them on its own territory as well.

The study is divided into two parts: understanding the historical and political context in which they were built, and understanding their correlation with spomeniks - through the analysis of three separate memorials created by different authors, but commissioned by the same government. Through image analysis, I will compare the visual and the verbal narrative of the monuments, to find correlation, and to understand the multi-layeredness of the topic. This subject is largely unexplored, yet it has a lot of potential in terms of both its architectural and symbolic values.

The primary goal of the paper's body will be to address some of the following questions: What part did architects play in creating monuments to such tragic events? How did they convey their ideas? Who were they designed for? What or who are they honoring?

I will try to find answers to these questions by comparing and analyzing primary and secondary bibliography - original photography, architects' sketches, written thoughts, interviews, as well as literature regarding the topic.

The most significant current contributions to the topic, used as a basis for theoretical and critical background, were the works of academics and professor Maroje Mrduljaš and Vladimir Kulić - *Unfinished Modernisations - Between Utopia and Pragmatism* (2012) and a scientific paper by Sanja Horvatinčić - *Monument, Territory, and the Mediation of War Memory in Socialist Yugoslavia* (2015). In addition, there are also publications written by academics such as Nevenka Stanković, Ante Kadić, Maja Babić, and as such they were a beginning point for this research paper. These are works created from a post-Yugoslavian viewpoint and by post-Yugoslavians, therefore lacking the direct impact of the communist state and, most significantly, they give crucial critical analysis and information, that would be otherwise dismissed or censored, during the Socialist regime. Yet, they are more based on factually describing the monuments and their historical context, rather than delving into the architects' roles in their design and construction. The main primary bibliography are archived original photos and sketches, as well as a book *Spomenici revoluciji - Jugoslavija* (1968) by a group of authors, published by SUBNOR - the socio-political organization of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

There is a distinguished architectural language to be discovered through the analysis of the case studies - a language that is recognizable to all ex-Yugoslavia nations, yet it's not taught why. Even through my architecture education, we were taught about residential, public and cultural ex-Yugoslavian buildings, but never about spomeniks. Even so, there is a sense that they belong in that region of the world. Is this due to the way the material is used? Forms? A shared idea among the architects who were designing them?



Figure 2: Jasenovac Memorials detail  
Vladimir Kulić and Wolfgang Thaler, 2018 / MoMA

# SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

"The Balkans produces more history than it can consume."  
Winston Churchill, 1945.

Following the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, The Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenians was born on the ruins of said vast empire, in pursuit of its national identity, just as many others had done in the late nineteenth century, such as Italy and Germany. It was organized as a multinational monarchy made out of the "three tribes" - Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Hence in the early years of the Kingdom, research was launched to uncover the region's cultural legacy, in order to build the shared cultural phenomena of unification, and these activities have been encouraged by King Aleksandar I. Karađorđević. (Roksandić, 2017)

The name of Yugoslavia appeared for the first time in 1929., when King Aleksandar suspended parliament and established a royal dictatorship, renaming The Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenians into Yugoslavia. It was also the year when two extreme parties emerged in Croatia, the Communists, and the Fascist Ustaše. However, things took a turn for the worse when the Second World War broke out in 1939. At first, Yugoslavia remained neutral, but in March 1941, pro-British officers staged a coup, leading to a shift in Yugoslavia's stance towards the war. Consequently, the Germans launched an invasion of Yugoslavia on April 6th, 1941, and rapidly conquered the territory. As a result, the Germans established a puppet state in Croatia, ruled by the fascist Ustaše, called the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). Consequently, the communist party organized the anti-fascist resistance, that is, the partisans, who in 1945, led by Marshal Josip Broz Tito, liberated Croatia and the rest of the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. A new country was formed on the basis of the ex-Kingdom, renamed into Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), with Tito as its president. (Schmidt, 1999) The specificity of anti-fascism in Yugoslavia was that it was organized by Tito's communist party, even though a vast number of Partisans weren't identifying themselves as communists, only anti-fascist. Still the two became synonymous over time in the Yugoslavia region.

Establishing a new country, with a new leading ideology, the leaders of the new Yugoslavia faced several challenges, including how to develop the country, determine its position between East and West, and define its new shared identity. Throughout history, Yugoslavia's six republics were never under one rule together, under one ideology, or religion.<sup>1</sup> Historically always divided between the east-west influences, that was recognized as a potential reason for division from its formation. (Mrduljaš & Kulić, 2012)

With the history of each founding nation already being distinct, how can a new nation be formed?

August 11th, 1804.	<b>Austrian Empire</b> established on the territories of Habsburg monarchy
April 19th, 1848.	The union of the Croatian provinces proclaimed by Sabor, independence from Hungary but still within Austrian Empire, influence of ban Josip Jelačić
March 30th, 1867.	Austro-Hungarian Compromise, dual monarchy established by the name <b>Austria-Hungary</b>
November 8th, 1868.	The Croatian-Hungarian Settlement, Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia established within Hungary
October 8th, 1871.	Eugen Kvaternik declares the establishment of independent Croatian government, shortly after was executed
June 28th, 1914.	Gavrilo Princip assassinates Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife
July 28th, 1914.	Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, <b>World War I</b> begins
December 1st, 1918.	The State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs form <b>Kingdom of Yugoslavia</b>
November 12th, 1920.	Treaty of Rapallo, Italia claims some of Yugoslavian territory
December 29th, 1920.	Following major success during elections, communist propaganda and organizations are to be dissolved, goverment orders
January 6th, 1929.	6th January <b>dictatorship</b> , King Alexander I. aims to create one Yugoslav nation
September 3rd, 1931.	1931.Yugoslav Constitution ending dictatorship
August 23rd, 1939.	Banovina of Croatia, established by Cvetković-Maček Agreement
April 6th, 1941.	<b>World War II</b> begins in Yugoslavia, Germany attacks Belgrade
April 10th, 1941.	<b>Independent State of Croatia</b> declared by Ustaše lead by Ante Pavelić, establishment of borders towards neighbouring states
July 4th, 1941.	birth of the Yugoslav Partisan, <b>Communist Party of Yugoslavia</b> call of duty to resist Ustaše
November 26th, 1942.	Yugoslav Partisans establish the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia ( <b>AVNOJ</b> )
June 14th, 1943.	National Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Croatia established
November 21st, 1943.	<b>Josip Broz Tito</b> becomes <b>Prime Minister</b> of federal, democratic Yugoslavia
May 9th, 1944.	The Federal State of Croatia
May 8th, 1945.	Formal end of war in Yugoslavia
November 29th, 1945.	Declaration of the <b>Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia</b>
May 19th, 1948.	<b>Tito-Stalin split</b> , Tito refuses to send delegates to Cominform meetings
March 13th, 1967.	<b>Croatian spring</b> , demands for equal status of the Croatian language
November 23rd, 1971.	Croatian spring, student protests in Zagreb
May 4th, 1980.	President <b>Tito dies</b>
January 23rd, 1990.	Communist party ends monopoly in Croatia
December 22nd, 1990.	Franjo Tuđman made president of Croatia, <b>Constitution of Croatia</b>
June 25th, 1991.	Croatia becomes independent of Yugoslavia, declared by Croatian Parliament, <b>war begins</b>
November 12th, 1995.	<b>Erdut Agreement</b> , war ends for Croatia
December 10th, 1999.	President Tuđman dies
April 1st, 2009.	Croatia joins <b>NATO</b>
July 1st, 2013.	Croatia joins <b>European Union</b>

To combine six separate republics in Yugoslavia under one federation, they used an anti-historian approach to modernism and tried to create a Yugoslav style, identity, free of Byzantine, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian influence. This concept, which was created under Tito's leadership, was carried on in the guise of 'Titoism', a version of Marxism, against capitalism and Stalinism. This regime is present not just in politics, but also in architecture and art. (Kerkezi, 2018) The modernism that was passed down from the pre-WWII era acted as a strong foundation, but in order to execute mass urbanization on a bigger scale, new knowledge had to be developed and put into practice. By the middle of the 1950s, strong international ties had been created, boosting the discourse of architecture. The continued education of architects abroad was linked to the internal development of architecture and the creation of distinct Yugoslav schools. The country's cultural plurality was a result of the information interchange that occurred there while also preserving the conceptual independence of various milieus. (Mrduljaš & Kulić, 2012)

With its undoubted significance in constructing the public life of the new nation, architecture played a vital background role in that establishment. It had a tremendous impact on how residents lived their daily lives, helped to create a public sphere, and significantly influenced how Socialist Yugoslavia was perceived by both allies and foes abroad. Since everything was state-funded at the time, it was in everyone's best interest for the construction to be completed quickly and affordably while still being functional and serving its intended purpose. A great number of buildings needed to be constructed throughout the 1960s, and they needed to be done quickly and affordably. Concrete was the material that could best meet these requirements while also serving as the facade's and everything else's main load-bearing component. Thermal energy was not given much consideration at that time because it was easy to get and inexpensive. Concrete was used for very practical reasons rather than for any philosophical purpose. Reinforced concrete was used in 95% of instances. For the reasons mentioned above, brutalism and concrete construction persisted for a very long period in Yugoslavia and are still widely used today. (Alfirević, 2015) (Figure 4-6)

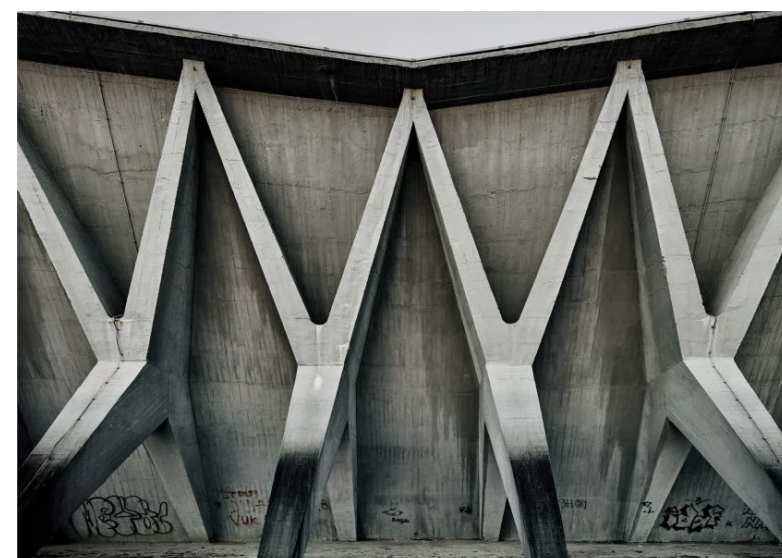
Such relationships served as a significant foundation for this research because of their evident propagandistic function and link to the politics of the moment. The leading modernist architects were frequently hired for significant construction projects that served to legitimize the social order. Modernism therefore came to represent the progressivism of Yugoslav Socialism, even though this was not an official cultural strategy but rather an affiliation that made sense.<sup>2</sup> Each architectural achievement was touted as another triumph of communist modernization. Building monuments and memorials honoring the anti-fascist battle and the revolution was a significant part of the system's symbolic legitimization. They were numerous, of varying quality, and in terms of artistic expression. Their creative accomplishments went beyond the confines of the area as they created intricate non-figural surroundings that challenged the traditional distinctions between sculpture, landscape architecture, and architecture. (Mrduljaš & Kulić, 2012)



**Figure 4**  
Valentin Jeck  
Building block on Braće Borozan Street,  
Split 3, Split, Croatia (Dinko Kovačić,  
Mihajlo Zorić), 1970–1973  
Exterior view, 2016  
MoMA, 2016



**Figure 5**  
Valentin Jeck  
Hotel Adriatic II, Opatija, Croatia (Branko  
Žnidarec), 2016  
MoMA, 2016



**Figure 6**  
Valentin Jeck  
Pavilion of West Germany, Zagreb Fair, Zagreb,  
Croatia (Ivan Vitić, Krunoslav Tonković)  
View of the northeastern facade, 2016  
MoMA, 2016

# SPOMENIKS

/spômenik/  
a Croatian word meaning monument

The first thing to realize about the "Spomeniks" is that they stand for many different things to many different people. They are the relics of a bygone age, a symbolic testimony to suffering and misery, the embodied mythology of a generation, targets of rage, evidence of victory, emblems of wrath, and so on. In a literal sense, what are known as spomeniks, are a number of monuments built in Tito's Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from the 1950s to the 1990, with the main goal of honoring its people's resistance struggle against Axis occupation and oppression during the People's Liberation War (1941-1945) (also known as WWII). They memorialize not just the atrocities committed to its people during the region's occupation, but also the 'Revolution' that destroyed the (Fascist) occupation, all led by Tito's army of guerrilla fighters - the Partisans. Nonetheless, these monuments were and continue to be greater than the sum of their individual components.

Establishing a new country of Yugoslavia, Tito envisioned a heterogeneous utopian society organized around its own internal sense of progressive optimism, which would be held together by a solid grasp of its own common future and collective righteousness in their victory over fascist aggression. A classless country governed by socialist principles, a population free of ethnic conflict, and all of them bound together by emotions of "brotherhood and unity",<sup>3</sup> and Yugoslavia's "spomeniks" was a part of that big vision. In a 2017 publication, Nina Stevanović quotes a source stating that by 1961, Yugoslavia had already built over 14,000 monuments commemorating World War II and the communist revolution. It is uncertain exactly how many memorial artifacts were produced overall by the time Yugoslavia was dismantled in 1991, but assuming they were produced at the same rate as those that were constructed between 1945 and 1961, the total would be considerably over 40,000. As a part of that concept, these monuments serve not only as peculiar and abstract buildings commemorating a tragic past and victory over fascism, but also as political instruments aimed to convey the country's vision of a better tomorrow. But how?

Sculptors and architects in the nation were given a rare chance to foster and build a culture of memory, since that goal closely fit with their postwar nation's emerging wsociopolitical goals. The Yugoslav war experience and a desire that came, in large part, directly from the people, may both be used to explain the enormous quantity of memorials being built after its end. A democratic system of anonymous public competitions supported the progress of the memorials' artistic qualities. From the mid-1950s through the early 1990s, national contests were a powerhouse of artistic networking and innovation. (Horvatinčić, 2015)



Figure 7  
Some of the bigger and well known spomeniks mapped throughout ex-Yugoslavia region  
Exhibition Arhitektura. Skulptura. Sjećanje. Umjetnost spomenika Jugoslavije 1945.–1991., 2021.  
vizkultura.hr



Ilirska Bistrica, Slovenia



Jasenovac, Croatia



Knin, Croatia



Kolenica, Croatia



Petrova Gora, Croatia



Podgoric, Croatia



Grmeč, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Kozara, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Sinj, Croatia



Sisak, Croatia



Sanski most, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Tjentište, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Kosmaj, Serbia



Nis, Serbia



Ostra, Serbia



Sar planina, Kosovo

Figure 8 Some of the bigger and well known spomeniks throughout ex-Yugoslavia region by Jan Kempnaers



Kolašin, Montenegro



Nikšić, Montenegro



Krusevo, Republic of North Macedonia





Figure 9  
An archive photo of school children's trip to Spomenik Ilinden,  
Kruševo, Macedonia // spomenikdatabase.org



Figure 10  
An archive photo of Tito's Young Pioneers in a Pioneer rally at the Vraca Memorial  
Complex in Sarajevo, BiH // spomenikdatabase.org

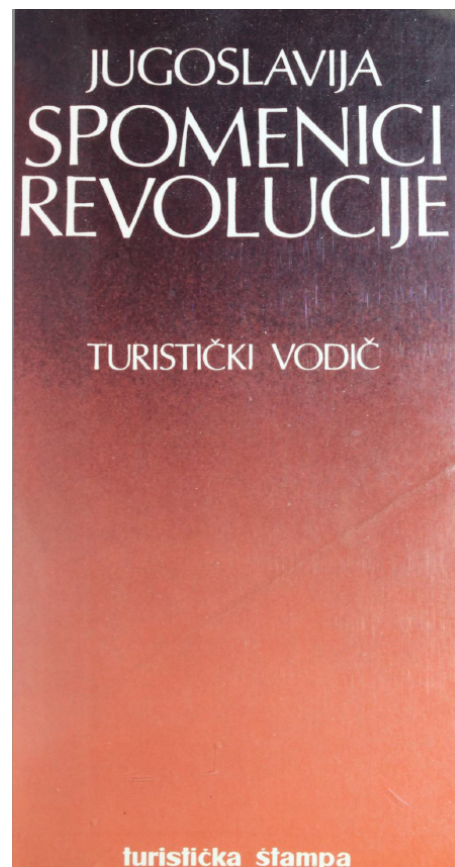


Figure 11  
Publicized Touristic Guide to the spomeniks



Figure 12  
Cover of the Sticker Album - a collection of  
collectable stickers of different spomenik's  
photography, names and locations

Prior to 1960, the great majority of memorial sites were built in an unplanned and spontaneous manner. The government planning initiative oversaw a few significant projects in the immediate post-war years, but apart from that, they were mostly modest plaques, stone markers, and simple memorial graves created by local villagers or small veterans groups. After 1960, the State-run veterans organisation SUBNOR (Federation of the Association of Veterans of the National Liberation War of Yugoslavia) had sole responsibility for overseeing and supervising Yugoslavia's monumental construction. The goal was to create a less chaotic approach to creating monumental projects.

When SUBNOR announced a memorial project, a monument planning panel assumed charge of the spomenik development. Firstly, the commission would hold a design competition, in the form of open or closed calls, where numerous applicants would submit their own thoughts and design suggestions. When all design concepts were received, the memorial planning commission formed a jury (composed of artists, architects, art critics, politicians, party officials, veterans, and military commanders) to pick a winner collectively and anonymously.

Because the majority of the jurors were members of State institutions, the chosen concepts closely represented the required political aesthetics. In any case, the anonymous design competition and diverse judges ensured the selection of aesthetically daring designs that would not have been chosen for monumental applications otherwise. As a result, modern architectural and sculptural thought found its way into the realm of monumental sculpture, resulting in creative, multidisciplinary fusions of ideas. (Filipović, 2021)

Once Yugoslavia left the Soviet sphere of control in 1948, this huge and mainly independent anti-fascist struggle of all Yugoslav peoples became even more important for everyone to be aware of. With one of Europe's greatest death tolls during World War II, Yugoslavia's tens of thousands of monuments were as much a response to a widespread need for places of communal commemoration as they were the product of a planned politics of memory. (Figure 8)

Several of these memorial complexes are large amphitheatres in diverse architectural styles that serve as outdoor classrooms. Tens of thousands of schoolchildren from all over the country were brought (during said period) to these memorial complexes every year by Tito's political youth initiative, "Young Pioneers," to learn about the history, mythology, and ideology of "Socialist Yugoslavia." (Figure 9) Even those that weren't shaped that way were still used as gathering places for mass federal ceremonies, as well as "(locals) tourist attractions". (Figure 10) There were whole guidebooks being printed out by the government, to be used as tourism flyers for the Yugoslavians, (Figure 11) as well as a Collectible sticker album. (Figure 12)

Monument to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija on **Petrova Gora**

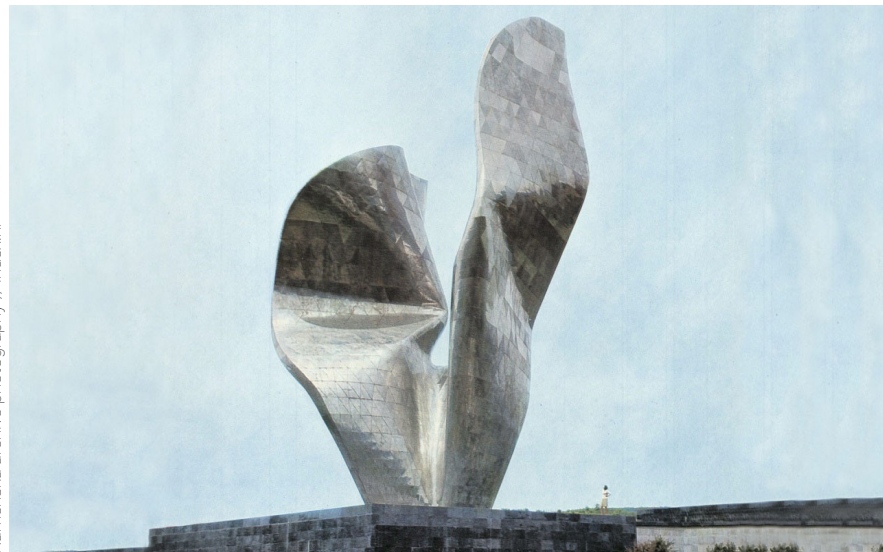
Vojin Bakić and Berislav Šerbetić  
1979–1981

Monument Revolutionary Victory of the People of Slavonija in **Kamenska**

Vojin Bakić, Josip Seissel, Silvana Seissel,  
Anđela Rotkvić  
1958-1968

Memorial Site **Jasenovac**

Bogdan Bogdanović  
1959-1966



In spite of the fact that new commissions to commemorate locations of mass murder or guerilla conflict typically concentrated on a single sculptural piece, architects frequently had a significant influence on the monuments' ultimate design. This interdisciplinary blending of architecture and sculpture resulted in the creation of new typologies, which were most visibly demonstrated in hybrid designs that gave functional architectural objects a strong sculptural quality - like the project for the Monument to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija on Petrova Gora, a mountain in Croatia (Vojin Bakić and Berislav Šerbetić, 1979–1981), which is going to be one of the three case studies. (Figure 13)

The 1960s and 1970s saw the culmination of memorial building. Ambitious projects were accomplished with funding not just from the government, but additionally from system-self-managed firms and citizens who routinely contributed individually and through donations. The multiyear fundraising campaign for Vojin Bakić and Josip Seissel's Monument to the Revolutionary Victory of the People of Slavonija in Kamenska, Croatia (1958-1968), the largest abstract sculpture in Europe at the time, was characterized by such hybrid patronage, and as such is going to be the second case study. (Figure 14)

Most of these remote-site monuments responded to the grandness of the surrounding environment through monumental proportions, innovative typologies, or expressive use of material and form. The third case study is Bogdan Bogdanović's Jasenovac Memorial Site (1959-1966), created on the remains of a Nazi concentration camp in Croatia, rising from the swampland's natural environment. The architect's intervention in the geography of the location of the Yugoslav territory's worst mass tragedy is based on natural element symbolism (water and earth). The locations of the demolished camp barracks are marked by earth mounds, while a symbolic concrete flower serves as the focal point of remembering, reflection, and redemption. (Figure 15)

Thousands of these spomenik sites were constructed across the SFR Yugoslavia between 1960 and 1990, ranging in size from large ones the size of a 15-story skyscraper to smaller ones no larger than a wardrobe. It was a huge monument-building undertaking that was unmatched in Europe at the time and still is today. The structures stood like forces that controlled the landscape wherever they stood, spanning from seashores to desolate mountaintops. As the war and ethnic unrest that engulfed the Yugoslav area through the 1990s ended, the remains of an invisible network of lost cultural markers remained as heritage and a reminder of a hidden history, a representation of a lost nation. But where many hundreds had existed, several have since been demolished and left abandoned, with only a handful remaining intact.



Figure 16  
Valentin Jekc  
Petrova Gora, Croatia, 2016.  
MoMA, 2017

## PETROVA GORA

/PEH-troh-vah GOR-ah/

Spomenik ustanku naroda Banije i Korduna  
(Monument to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija)

Year completed: 1981 (10 years to plan & build)  
Designer: Vojin Bakić & Berislav Šerbetić  
Dimensions: 37m tall and 40m wide  
Coordinates: N45°18'58.6", E15°48'17.6"

Materials used: Poured concrete, rebar, steel frame and stainless steel plates

In 1941, ethnic-Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia were forcibly taken from their homes and deported to Serbia by Ustaše militiamen, causing unrest in the Kordun and Banija regions. The Kordun Partisan Detachment entered the region and persuaded ethnic-Serbs to rise up and oppose Ustaše's deportation efforts. They established a Partisan stronghold on Mali Petrovac hill in the Petrova Gora mountain range to safeguard the 15,000 people who sought sanctuary there. The Ustaše attempted an attack in 1942 to clear the territory of ethnic-Serb resistance and Partisan soldiers, but it instead fueled the uprising. Over the course of the conflict, 27,000 people died in the Kordun region as a result of the Ustaše taking control of the Petrova Gora range (approximately 30% of the pre-war population) and sending many ethnic-Serbs who had been seized to concentration camps, most notably Jasenovac. (SUBNOR, 1968)



Figure 17 Archive photograph of the Ceremony "Narodni zbor bratstva i jedinstva", 1990.

## FIRST COMPETITION 1971.

Directly following the war, the idea to build a large memorial atop Mali Petrovac first emerged. But due to a lack of funding, it wasn't until 1970 that a design competition was held, and the very top of Mali Petrovac, the second-highest peak in the Petrova Gora range, was chosen as the location for the memorial building.

The guidelines for this design competition particularly directed entrants to produce a design that rises over the surrounding forest and serves as an observatory for the surrounding landscape. By the time the competition's deadline in 1971, the selection committee had received 17 submissions. These works were evaluated by a jury of historians, artists, and architects, including Neven Šegvić<sup>4</sup> and Josip Seissel<sup>5</sup>. Igor Toš won first place for his design proposal. (Figure 18) Vojin Bakić, however, came in second. (Figure 19) A former Bakić's student Stevan Luketić and architect Ivan Vitić, (Figure 20) placed third. (Dragičević, 2015)

Toš's winning design was formed as a spiral shape, symbolizing a long struggle and a heroic victory at the ultimate top (the observatory). The shattered exterior spoke of continuity, but also of perpetual stopping and moving forward again. Symbolically, Bakić referred to the Yugoslav unity of the six republics (six pillars) and the ancient symbolism of the sphere as the universe (sphere in the middle of the pillars). But as work on the project got under way, it became clear that the complexity of Toš's (and Bakić's) designs would make them too expensive to construct, especially because the project was mostly supported by contributions from the Karlovac community. The monument project was thus momentarily put on hold. Then, in 1974, a second design competition was held to choose a more feasible design solution for the monument. Only the top three competitors from the original competition (Toš, Bakić, and Luketić) were invited to submit new concepts. Toš declined to participate, understandably dissatisfied at this unexpected move. (Dragičević, 2015)

A new design proposal offered by Bakić was picked as the winner of this second competition. (Figure 21) Construction work on the monument started right away because of the short deadline that needed to be met for it to be ready for the July 4th (Fighter's Day) 1981 celebration of the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the National Liberation struggle. In terms of bringing Bakić's<sup>6</sup> sculptural concept to life, architect Berislav Šrbetić<sup>7</sup> played a crucial role in transforming the scale-model sculpture of the structure into an architectural designs that could subsequently be built. The project was funded via both public and private donations, as well as a loan that Yugoslavia took out from the International Monetary Fund. (IMF) The framework of the building was made of a 37 m tall concrete frame that was covered in five layers of rectangular, undulating stainless steel panels that were imported from Sweden.

From a sizable tourist center and parking area, a steep staircase ascends to the base of the building. A 250-person congress hall, a library, reading room, a cafe, and a museum housing hundreds of records and artifacts related to the conflict, and the background of ethnic-Serbian struggles in the area, were originally planned for the building's thousands of square meters of floor space. In the years after its completion, the great majority of these facilities, however, were never completely realized.



Figure 18 Igor Toš's design

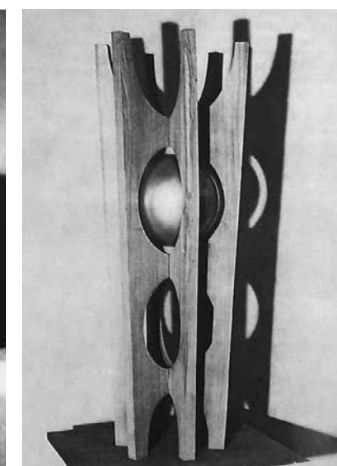


Figure 19 Vojin Bakić's design

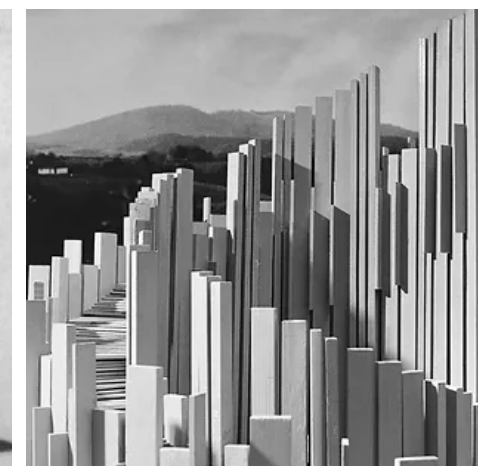


Figure 20 Stevan Luketić & Ivan Vitić's design

## SECOND COMPETITION 1974.



Figure 21 The chosen design's scale model



Figure 22  
Vojin Bakić's "Sliced Segments" models  
from Avantgarde Museum  
avantgarde-museum.com

WINNING DESIGN PROPOSAL

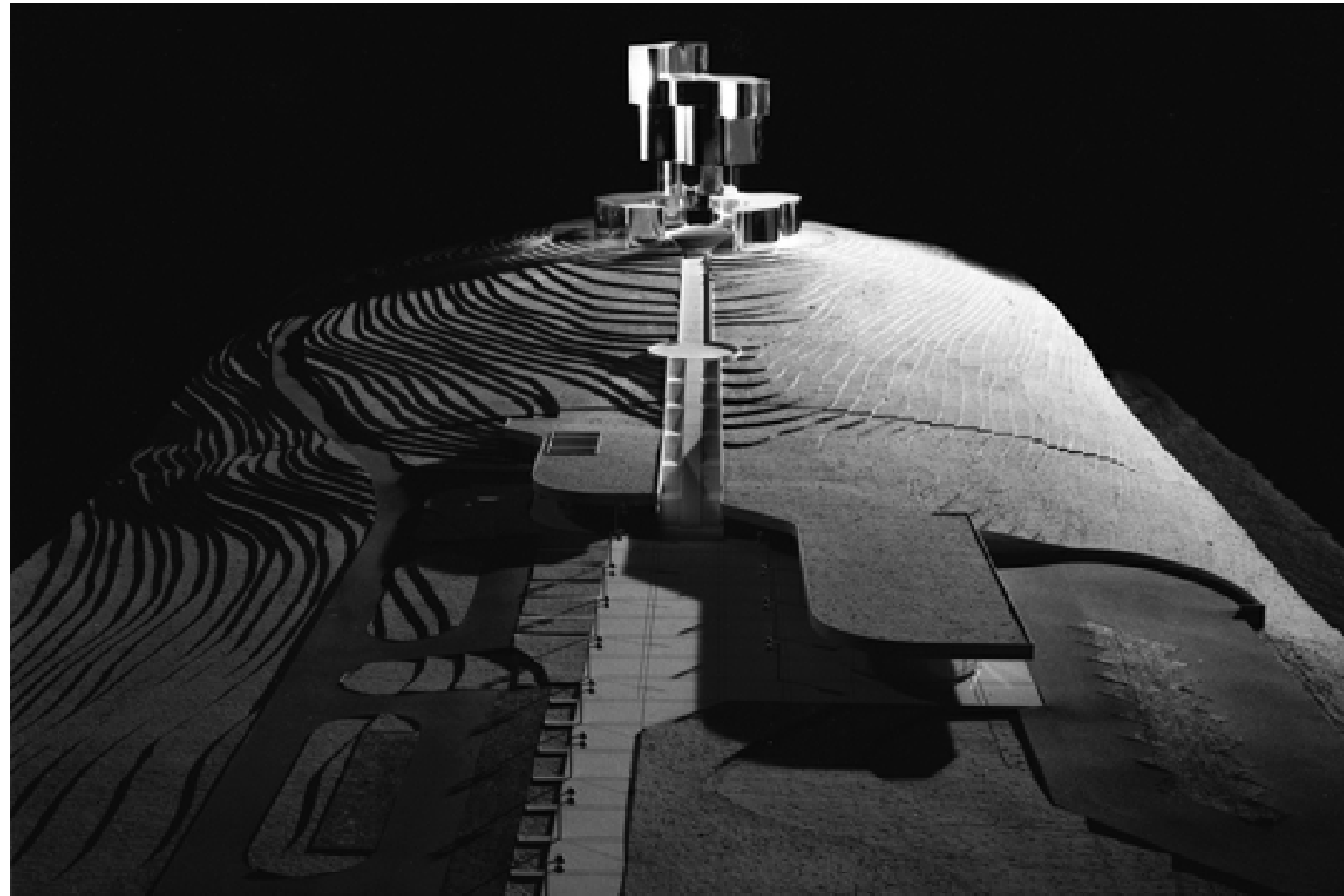


Figure 23 Archive photography of the scale model of the winning design. It is depicting the positioning of the monument on top of the hill, reached by a monumental long staircase, therefore allowing the visitor to appreciate for the whole time that he is ascending the stairs towards it.



Figure 24 Archive photography of the construction of the monument

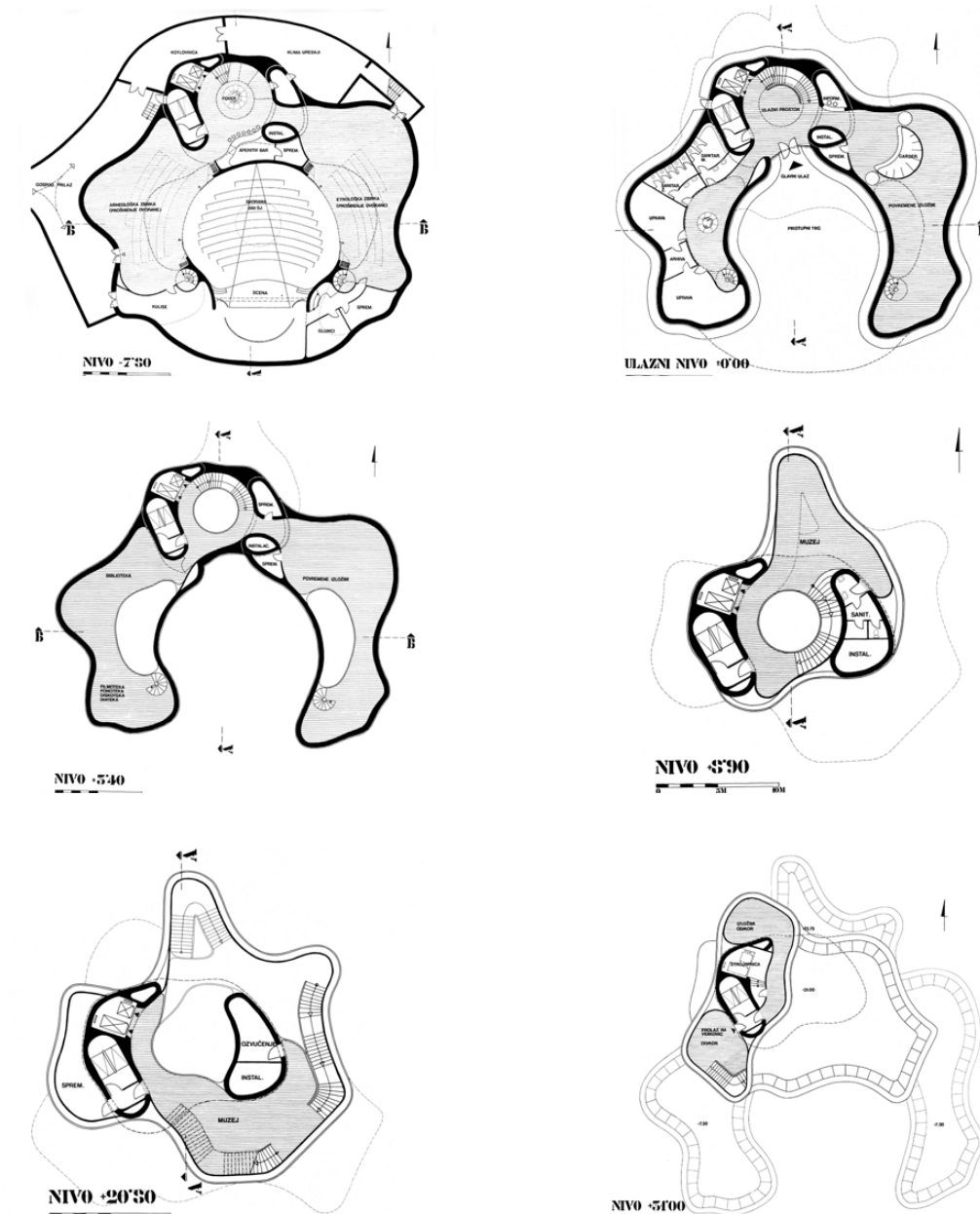


Figure 25 Archived floor plans of the six levels, from the entering ground floor, to the final roof-floor, the observatory

Petrova Gora spomenik is not explicitly or blatantly evocative of any particular element of the fight or tragedy that took place at this location. It is a pure abstract sculpture instead. Despite allegations that Bakić had used parts of Toš's winning design from the first competition in his second proposal, Bakić insisted he got inspiration from a series of sculptures he made in the 1970s called "Sliced Segments." (Figure 22)

Although the structure's shape may not be conveying any clear symbolic meaning,<sup>8</sup> its reflecting surface and organic form do appear to promote calm through the energy it emits, almost as if the structure's silver curves were pulsing with light. Perhaps Bakić sought to metaphorically shed new light on a place that had suffered from such darkness for such a long time by using reflecting stainless steel on his memorial that remembers a great tragedy. In reference to his method of creating monuments, Bakić is cited as stating the following:

“...sculpture, especially monuments, ought to be architecture which is deprived of its utilitarian function, something as a pure poetic conquest of a space and establishes a new human relationship with it.”

Furthermore, in terms of the symbolic connotations of the Petrova Gora monument's reflecting abilities, when the sun is at just the correct angle on the horizon, the polished metal panels of the building are lighted in a spectacular red show of hues. This effect is particularly noticeable while viewing the monument from a distance in the lower valleys towards Vojnić.<sup>9</sup> This amplification of the monument's reflected impact not only supports the above-mentioned metaphorical attributes of "light conquering darkness", but also gives the monument the appearance of a beacon or lighthouse. As so, the symbolic 'lighthouse' dimension implies that the Petrova Gora complex is a force that, in addition to providing light, is also intended to serve as a guide or compass for the region. (Figure 26)

Meanwhile, it becomes clear that the Petrova Gora monument's site, at the highest point of the surrounding terrain, was most likely intended to be symbolic, since the building's highly reflecting shape dominates the countryside for kilometers around. Its domination has the unmistakable impact of confirming the space as a place of recollection and contemplation.

Figure 26 Current state of the monument - aerial view of the sunsets' reflection - "lighthouse effect"

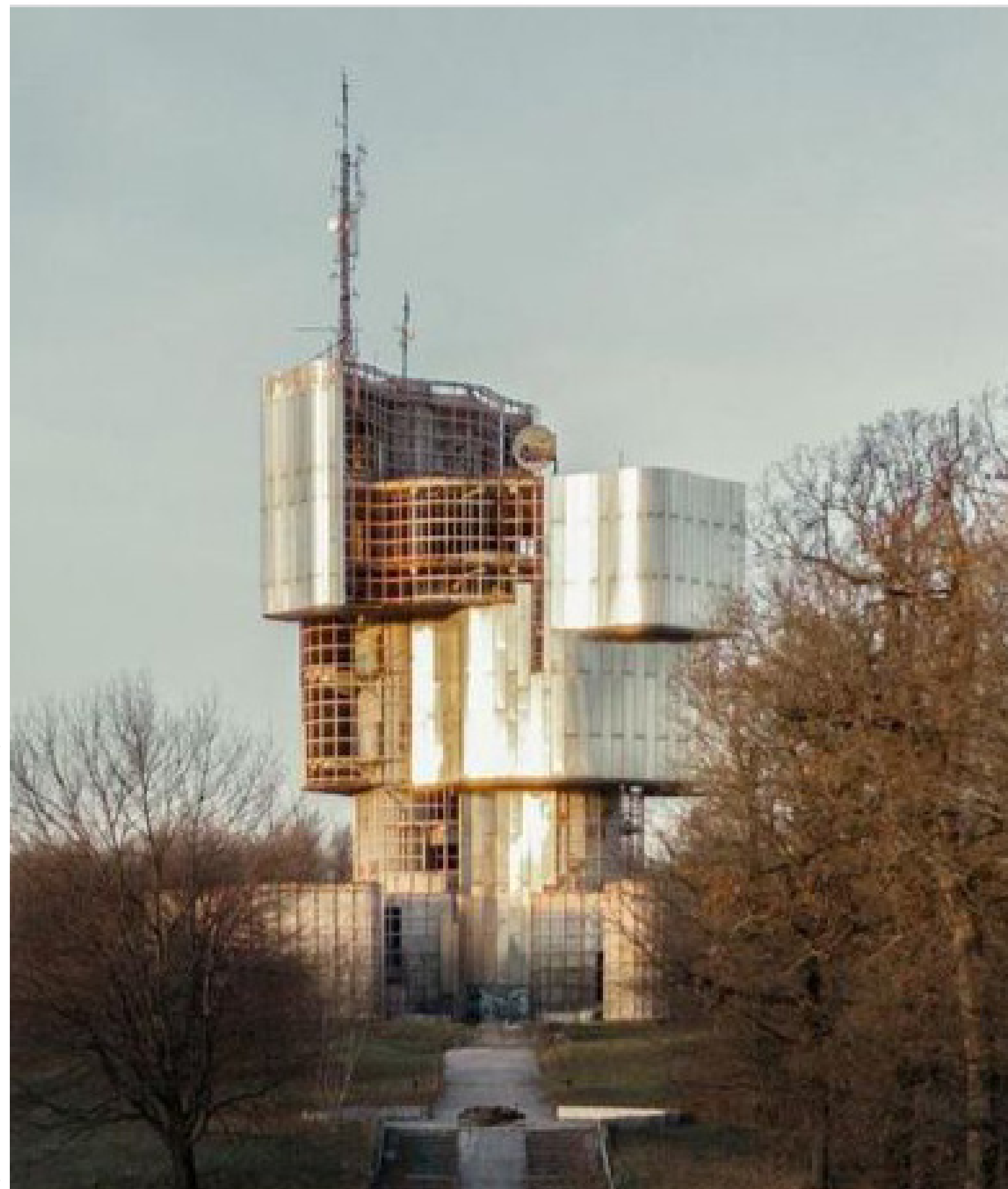




Figure 27  
index:hr  
archived photo of Kamenska

# KAMENSKA

/kah-MEN-skah/

Spomenik pobjedi revolucije naroda Slavonije  
(Monument to the Revolutionary Victory of the People of Slavonija)

Year completed: 1968 (8 years to plan & build)  
Designer: Vojin Bakić & Josip Seissel  
Dimensions: ~30m tall  
Coordinates: N45°26'46.4" E17°28'36.4"

Materials used: Poured concrete, rebar and stainless steel

Throughout Slavonia, various Partisan formations were founded, such as the 6th Slavonian Corps, which was made up of the 40th and 12th Slavonian Divisions - largely composed of young men aged 18-20. By the summer of 1943, these Partisan groups had liberated much of the Požega Valley region, and they were working on sabotaging and dismantling the German and Ustaše occupiers' communication and transportation networks, as well as liberating additional Slavonian regions. In April 1945, the 6th Slavonian Corps and the 3rd Yugoslav Army seized the territory of Slavonia. Over 2,000 Slavonian Partisan soldiers were killed during occupation and liberation fights during the conflict. (SUBNOR, 1968)



Figure 28 Archive photography of the memorial after the opening ceremony, 1968. // by Zvonko Maković, 1968.

The plan for building the monument arose in the 1950s, when the Union of National Liberation warriors of Slavonia and Baranja (SUBNOR) wished to commemorate the victims and fallen warriors of the Slavonian area. The location of Papuk, or rather the hill Blažuj, near Kamenska, was chosen as the site for its erection. On multiple levels, the location choice was symbolic. Firstly, it was the place where the 12th Slavonian Brigade, the oldest Slavonian military force, was organized in the 1940s. (Kokot, 1986) Furthermore, it is the location of Nikola Džemonja's burial, a member of the aforementioned unit and a national hero whose request was to be buried precisely where his combat adventure began. His grave was one of the necessary components of the future project, and by SUBNOR's command, and it could not have been displaced or not included. (Kolacio, 1961) In 1960, the Union of NOR Fighters of Slavonia and Baranja published a public open and anonymous competition for the design of the Victory Memorial of the Revolution of the people of Slavonia. The following instructions were given as the most important determinants of the monument's design solution: "with its conceptual conception clearly reflect all the greatness and specificity of the struggle of the people of Slavonia, to be representative and to preserve with its idea a lasting memory of the struggle, heroism, sacrifices, and ultimate victory of the people of this region of our homeland." (from the proposal) (Ljubljanović, 1961)

There were 25 works submitted, judged by a respected panel of designers and politicians, with the top prize going to Miodrag Živković's design, the second prize split by Bakić and Stevan Luketić, and the third place going to Dušan Džamonja. However, at the committee meeting held the day after the competition results were announced, it was decided to grant two second-place prizes instead, while leaving out the first prize. Instead of the competition's original results, second-place prizes were granted to projects with the codes "Papuk" (Vojin Bakić and Josip Seissel) and "550506" (Miodrag Živković and Vasilije Janković). The third reward went to Luketić and Mutnjaković, while the fourth went to Dušan Džamonja's design. (Ivančević, 2015)

The design proposed by Bakić and Seissel<sup>10</sup> was chosen for the realization project. The site itself, the terrain on which the monument was to be placed, controlled its form, that is, its development and increase in height; hence, the majority of the accepted designs were conceptually similar. (Figure 29-32) Due to the difficulty of the execution as well as budgetary constraints, the Kamenska monument's construction did not begin until 1966. In addition to Seissel and Bakić, architects Berislav Radimir, Aleksandar Dragomanović, and Tea Ložnik worked on the monument's realization and planning, with Silvana Seissel in charge of landscape architecture. (Ivančević, 2015) The monument was completed in 1968, and it was dedicated on November 9, that same year. The monument's opening was attended by Josip Broz Tito himself, who ceremonially unveiled it. (Bekić, 2006) (Figure 36)

This free play of volumes resulted in the formation of a complicated composition whose form altered with the change of point of view, transforming the entire structure into a sculpture with numerous faces. Its smooth surface reflected the sunlight, as well as the surrounding scenery, a heroic scenery.

## COMPETITION 1960.



Figure 29 Miodrag Živković's design



Figure 30 Vojin Bakić and Josip Seissel's

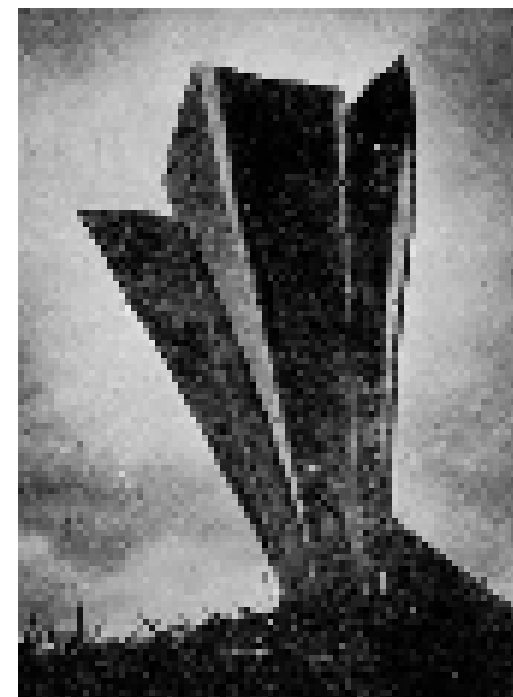


Figure 31 Stevan Luketić's design

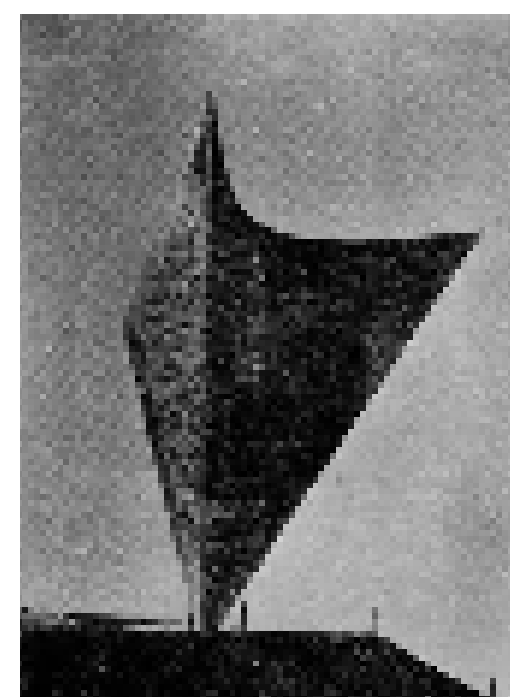


Figure 32 Dušan Džamonja's design

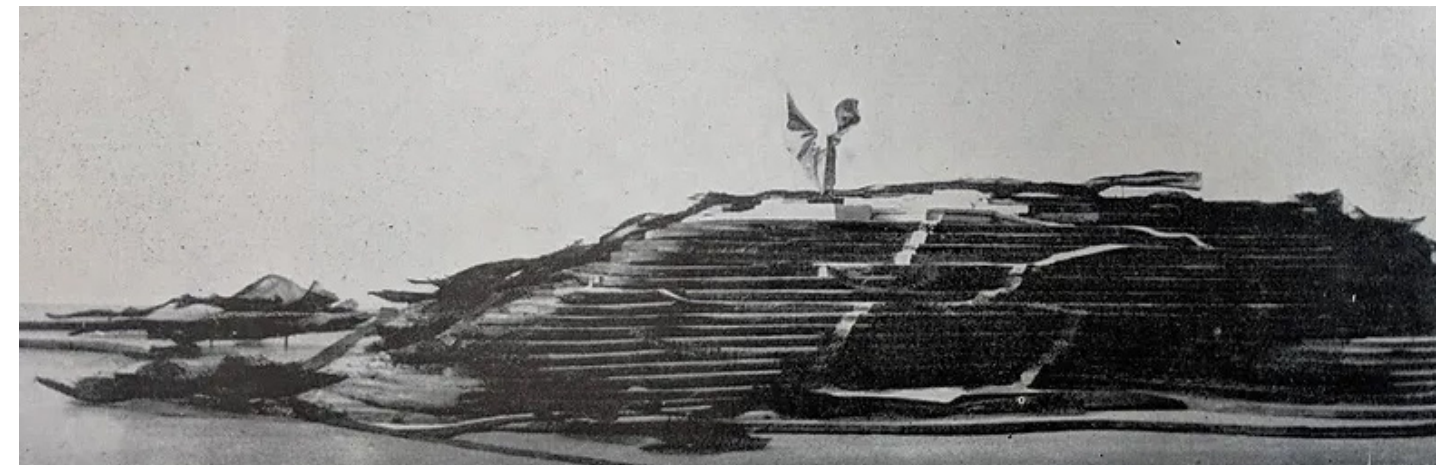


Figure 33 Archive photograph of the chosen design's scale model. Depicting the predominance of the monument over the landscape and elevated terrain.





Figure 34 Access road on the eve of the Memorial inauguration ceremony, 9th November 1968



Figure 36 Archive photos of Tito and Jovanka Broz at the Memorial inauguration ceremony, 9 November 1968, property of the History Museum of Yugoslavia



Figure 37  
Archive photography from private archive of the project's collaborator



Figure 35 Archive photo of the construction of the Memorial and its finished state



The concept was created by the elaboration of formal elements that he explored in 1958 with the cycle of sculptures "Leaved Forms". Bakić went to say: "The free-flowing vertical form that develops from a compact base and branches into a winged form was suitable for expressing the symbolic values that the monument was supposed to represent." (Bakić, 1970)

With exaggerated winged verticals, the monument ascends into the sky, and the light-reflecting surface appears as a flash and a source of light that entirely dominates the lonely hilltop terrain. Bakić sought the metaphysical and archetypal symbolism of light as a principle opposed to darkness, as a sign of fresh life, renewal, a righteous victory against fascism, and, ultimately, humanism and positive ideals. The pursuit for light, betterment, and development is part of the modernist vision that he shared with his colleagues who sought to make post-war Yugoslavia a better and more humane place.

Next to the monument, it was planned to build a house in which the original documentation about the undertaking and other information should be kept, but this was never carried out. All the original records and project documentation were destroyed due to inadequate storage, and due to the destruction of the project itself, (Figure 38) only photographs and memories of it remain.

*It is actually a form emerging from the ground, practically from a single spot, it rises and branches off into two wings, as I was calling them in the working process, each of them having with its own dynamics, of course. In the broader one on the left, you can see some fractures if you look at it from the front, and they might signify some sort of slow motion, rising, or breaking, while the other one contains some sort of thrust forward, pride, conviction, and power, and when it reaches the top – there is victory and liberation... 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.*

Vojin Bakić



Figure 38 Archive photo of the destruction of the Kamenska monument - last picture of the monument, 1992.



Figure 39  
Valentin Jekc  
Jasenovac, 2016,  
MoMA, 2017

# JASENOVAC

/YAH-sen-oh-vats/

Cvjetni spomenik  
(Flower Monument)

Year completed: 1966 (6 years to plan & build)  
Designer: Bogdan Bogdanović  
Dimensions: 24m high and 35m wide  
Coordinates: N45°16'49.4", E16°55'42.2"

Materials used: Poured concrete, rebar and wood

This memorial honors the people ruthlessly killed by the Ustaše dictatorship in Jasenovac, one of the most notorious concentration camps during WWII. The Ustaše dictatorship, Croatia's puppet government under Nazi occupation, founded the Jasenovac camp in 1941. Originally established as a forced labor camp for the manufacturing of bricks, leather, and forest goods, Jasenovac discontinued forced labor operations in November 1941, and began operating solely as a death camp. Tens of thousands of individuals were killed by the Ustaše government, including partisans, communists, anti-fascists, prisoners of war, and members of particular ethnic groups (Serbs, Jews, Roma). (SUBNOR, 1968) The Jasenovac camp was infamous for its cruelty, and it is thought that between 80,000 and 100,000 individuals died there, however the true figure is unclear and is not regarded as definitive by historians.



Figure 40 Ceremony of remembrance held in the early 2000. //spomenikdatabase.org

Following the end of WWII, the Jasenovac concentration camp infrastructure was mostly removed and/or destroyed immediately after, with its material remnants generally utilized to rebuild devastated buildings in adjacent communities. Then, for the next 20 years, there was no official or ceremonial memorial to commemorate those events. Instead, locals and survivors constructed a number of improvised wooden-plank monuments and stone mounds. (Figure 41) One reason given for the long delay in any sort of official commemorative construction at Jasenovac is that the political elite in Belgrade was paralyzed for so long by the uncertainty over the exact number of victims at the camp during the war - not knowing how the space should be remembered. (Karge, 2015)

Following demand from relatives and victims, the Yugoslav government began to set plans in action to build an official modern monument in the late 1950s. As a result, throughout the 1950s, numerous artists proposed designs for how they envisioned such a monument should look like. Vanja Radauš, a Croatian sculptor, proposed a gigantic tomb covered with skulls and encircled by grieving people. (Figure 42) This, as well as other comparable offerings, were deemed unsuitable. In 1960, the Yugoslav government commissioned designers Bogdan Bogdanović and Zdenko Kolacio to submit their concepts for the monument complex. (Vuković, 2012) Bogdanović<sup>11</sup> was given the opportunity to propose his idea directly to President Josip Broz Tito during their one and only meeting. The commission was eventually handed to Bogdanović, a choice made by Tito himself, according to some accounts contrary to the wishes of other KPJ (the ruling party) officials. (Bogdanović, 2001)

Bogdanović noted that while designing the spomenik, he believed that creating a monument that clearly and explicitly conjured ideas of death and misery would be absurd and revolting. When designing the complex, he was encouraged to look through photographs, eyewitness testimony, and documentation about the events that occurred at the camp; however, Bogdanović pushed that material away, saying, "I knew... that I would neither look for nor find inspiration by bringing the evil back to life." Instead, he envisioned a poetic monument that served as a metaphysical declaration on meditation, sentiments of reconciliation, and the "termination of the inheritance of hatred that passes from generation to generation." Before Bogdanović began his project, all of the camp's ruins had been removed, leaving him with a sort of "tabula rasa" for his undertaking. Interestingly, Jasenovac is the only large concentration camp site in Europe where no physical trace of the original camp facilities survived.

Much of the initial proposal was considerably reduced once it was presented and analyzed by budget analysts and monitoring organizations in 1963. Smaller floral sculptures were proposed for different areas surrounding the memorial to mark old buildings and burial sites in the first conceptual layout, but they were never constructed owing to funding restrictions. Bogdanović also proposed a vast subterranean museum complex underneath the floral sculpture as one of his most ambitious designs for the monument. (Figure 43) Such proposals, however, would have been not only prohibitively expensive, but also problematic on a floodplain so near to the Sava and Una Rivers. In terms of funding, the project was supported by both federal funds, as well as public and private donations.



Figure 41 Archive photo of makeshift memorials before 1960



Figure 42 Vanja Radauš's design proposal

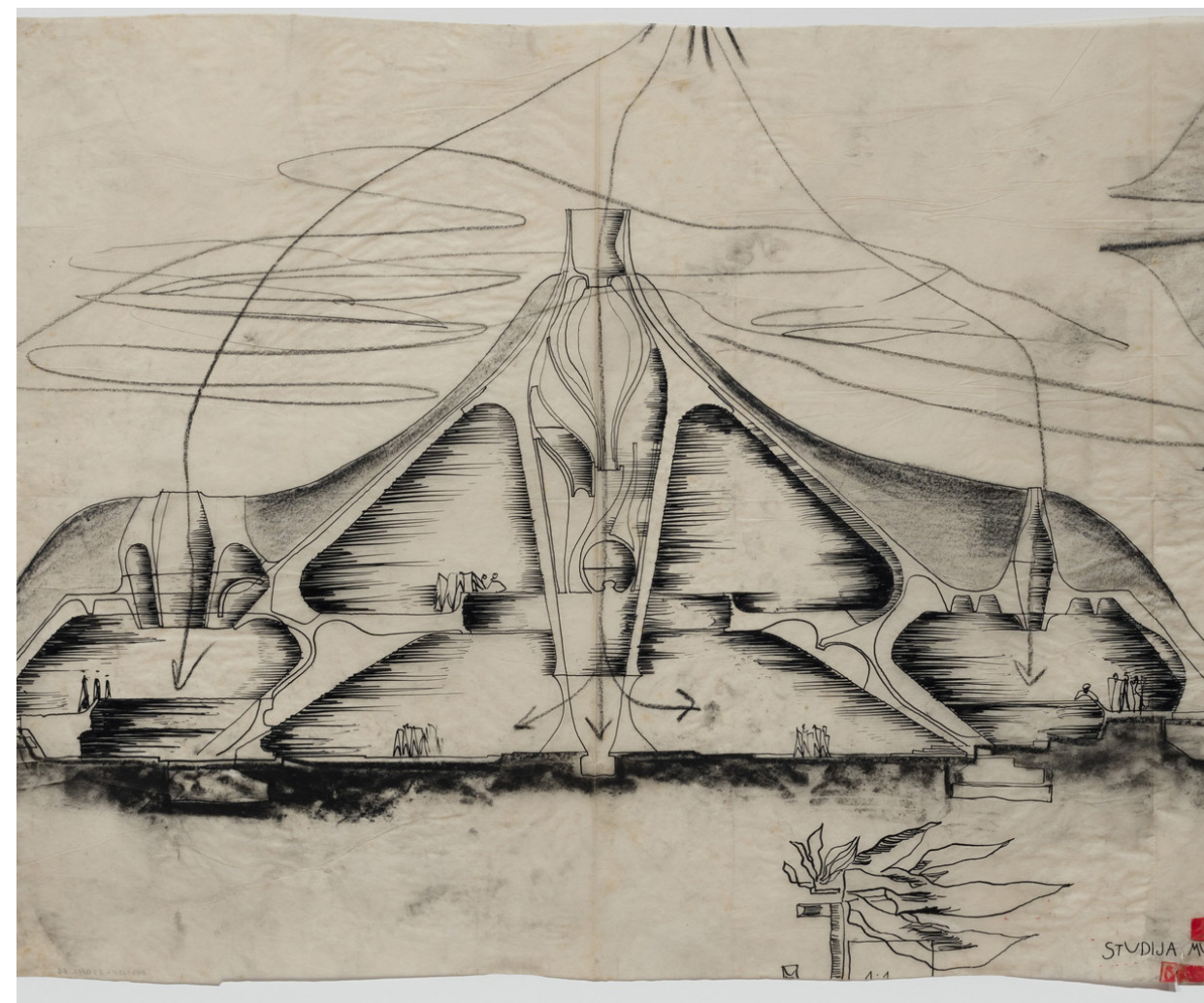


Figure 43 Bogdan Bogdanović's first conception of the complex with an underground museum, photographed by John Wronn, MoMA archive



Figure 44 Jasenovac lotus flower, with its reflection in the lake, covered by water lillies // Luka Esenko

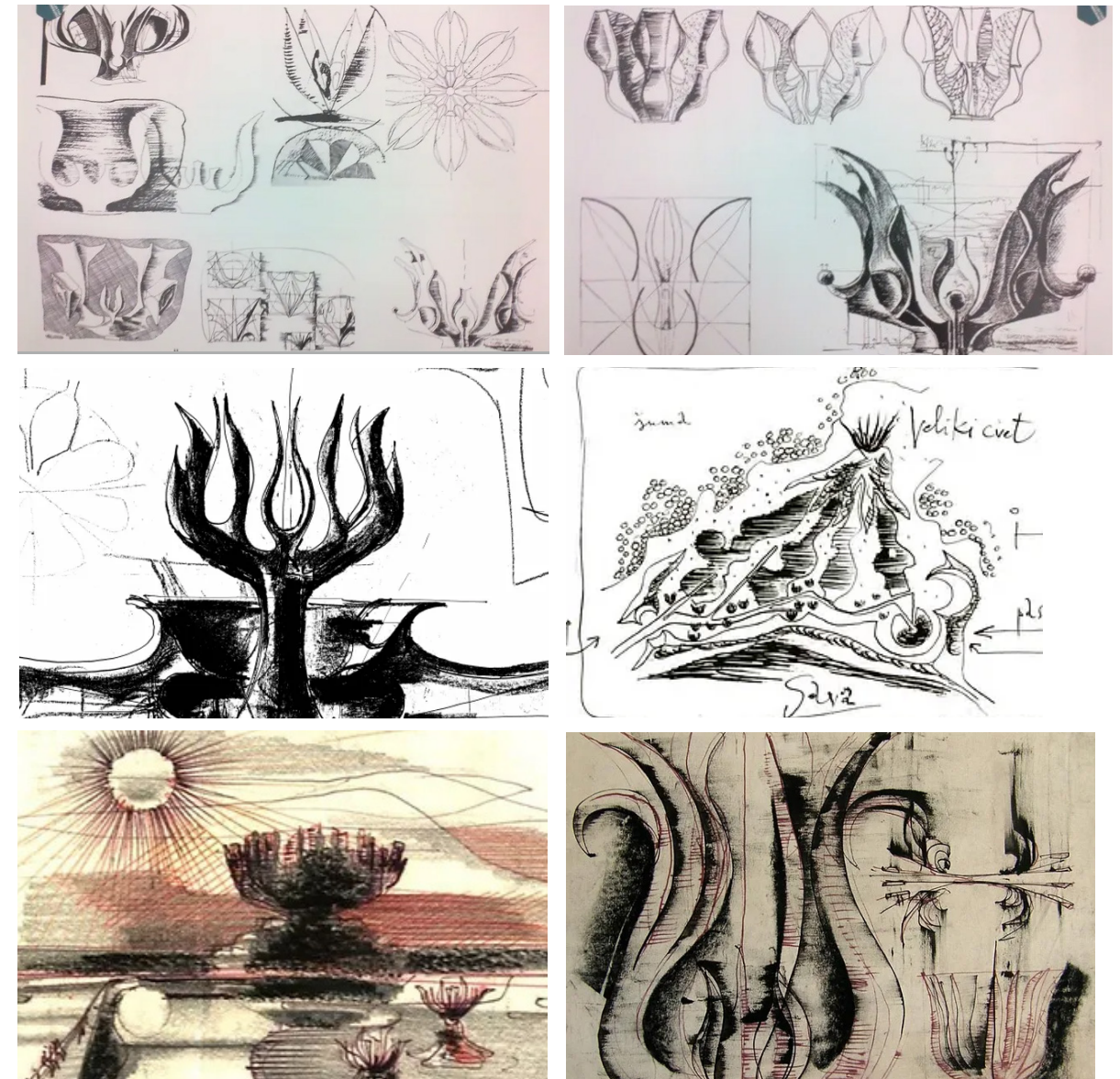


Figure 46 Bogdan Bogdanović's original preliminary sketches of the complex, and flower's shape // JUSP Jasenovac

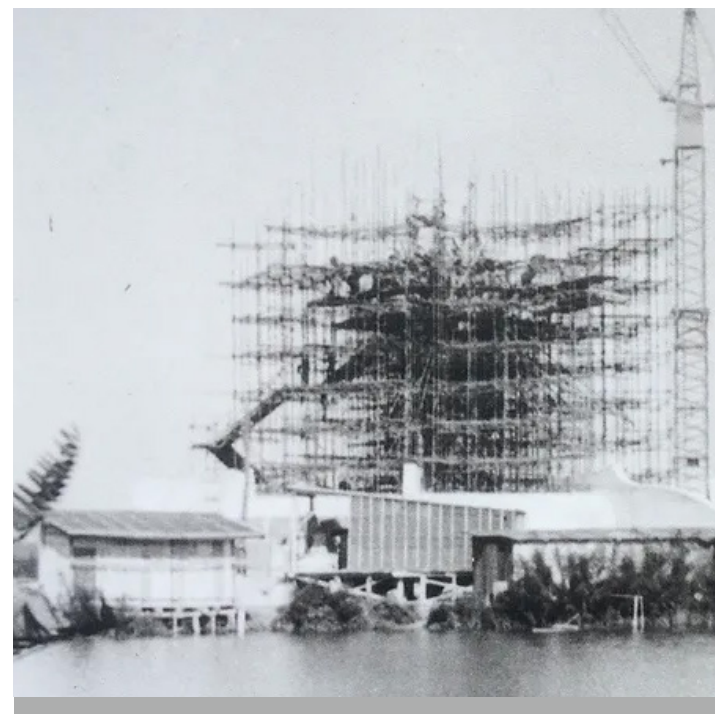


Figure 45 Archive photo of the monument's construction //JUSP Jasenovac

On July 4th, 1966, the monument was formally revealed to the public, following several years of redesign, negotiations, planning, and building. Tito was not present at this ceremony (nor is he ever known to have visited the monument during his life). The memorial complex's centerpiece is a 24m tall six-petal flower-blossom shaped concrete sculpture. Within the monument's interior is a crypt lined at its base with railroad links from the train that formerly delivered captives to the execution camp. Bogdanović decided not to reconstruct the demolished buildings of the camp. Instead, he marked their places with hills (tumults), and the place of torture and cemeteries by hollows in the ground (craters).<sup>12</sup> To create a reflected scene, man-made lakes were placed around the camp area. Finally, the major access trail is a long footpath made of railroad ties that extends from the road to the memorial. A bronze plaque with a brief passage from the well-known Croatian anti-war poem "The Pit" by Ivan Goran Kovačić can be found connected to those old railroad ties on the rear wall of the sanctum. The extract is translated by Alex Brown from Croatian to English as follows:

|| That simple happiness, the window's glint, swallow and young, or windborne garden sweet- Where? The unhurried cradle's drowsy tilt? Or by the threshold, sunshine at my feet."

The poem "Jama" describes Kovačić's firsthand observations of pre-war rural life, which became a living nightmare in 1941. Such memories range from visions of his nostalgic boyhood to scenes of seeing the killing of his fellow citizens, waiting for his turn to be slain, and finally being tossed and left for dead in a deep hole filled with corpses (jama). He fights his way out of the hole after smelling his town burning and manages to survive despite all obstacles. He is found by the Partisans, and joins the Resistance. The poem investigates and lauds the themes of regeneration, recollection, and rebirth. The poem's cited passage, describes memories of his calm home during pre-war years, when he had a simple but contented young life. As he approaches his town after emerging from the hole, he sees it engulfed in flames and is experiencing these memories of it. The inclusion of this inscribed verse, which describes the tranquil memory of Kovačić's pre-war village life, is intended to serve as a meditation for the viewer on peace and happiness itself, showing that moments of serenity can still be attained even in the face of the most tragic and horrifying memories and scenes.

Bogdanović did not intend for this memorial to explicitly represent the horrible events that took place at this location because he felt that doing so would be too gruesome and repulsive for the visitor to see firsthand. Additionally, he thought that bringing up too detailed images of the camp's atrocities within the monument may fuel ethnic animosity and division. Instead, Bogdanović opted for the figurative shape of flower petals opening out to the sky. In his talks of the symbolism of the monument, Bogdanović claims that he intended the structure's emphasis to be dualistic in nature, with the flower sculpture opening up to the sky and blooming toward the "light of life" and the crypt and roots gazing down toward the burial victims.<sup>13</sup> It should also be noticed that Bogdanović included the notion of reflection into the monument area design as well. (Figure 47) As you travel down the promenade, you can see the artwork mirrored in the man-made lakes. This tranquil reflected effect causes the spectator to become ponderous and introspective.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 47 Current state of the monument - reflection of the flower in the man-made lake, 2020s.



# CONCLUSION

What all three case studies have in common is an organic design that is distinct from the rest of the period's socialist architecture in an effort to set them apart from them, namely the Russian one under Stalin. By breaking free from that literal, direct architectural language, a new, unique Yugoslav one was created. This was done by developing poetic forms that communicated abstract values and aspirations rather than directly tragedy and war - like the freedom of the Kamenska wing, the spiral ascending to the goal of Petrova Gora, and the flowering of new life in Jasenovac.

All three have the mutual concept of light triumphing over darkness; in Jasenovac, it's the inner, dark part of the project vs the outer one that blossoms towards the light. In Petrova Gora and Kamenska, the material choice itself reflects the light that emanates from it into the surrounding darkness of the site, the scene of those conflicts, and the area where the same individuals who are commemorated by the monument died. In addition, there is also a motif of reflection, both physical and psychological. In the material (Kamenska, Petrova Gora) and the water (Jasenovac), the observer sees the monument itself, the surroundings, but also himself. Being put and seeing yourself in the context that is being commemorated. Locations that are of historical importance but also isolated in the landscape were deliberately chosen. This alone makes the monuments look even more monumental, dominating the nature in which they are located, additionally leaving an even greater impression on the visitor.

Given that firms organized free visits and tours to monuments during Yugoslavia, the projects themselves demonstrate that they were constructed with this in mind from the start (large gatherings and visits). From the planned parking spaces within the complex to the broad walkways that lead to them, the museum within the complex, hotels in vicinity, and the amphitheatres for ceremonies. When compared to other European countries at the time, the exceptional wellspring of memorial construction in Yugoslavia demonstrates how much importance the Yugoslav government placed on the creation of a massive, landscape-wide commemoration of the events of the People's Liberation Struggle, WWII, and the socialist uprising that launched the revolution.

What Italy was achieving by spreading the ideology of fascism with its Casas del Fascio, which sprung all over Italy - as public places of gathering and connecting into a nation with the same ideology; Yugoslavia did with anti-fascist WWII monuments. In addition to commemorating the lives given in the fight for the nation's independence, they were also places of ideological gathering and connection, as well as monuments to the greatness of the newly formed nation - a reminder of the connection of six nations, that fought together for the same goal, succeeded in doing so, and were bound in building a better tomorrow under the slogan "brotherhood and unity".

# DISCUSSION

By moving away from the previous (socialist Russian) literal depiction of the war with/on monuments, and developing its own style - abstract conveying of feelings, instead of directly conveying the act itself, Yugoslavia created a distinctive component of its own architecture, completely different from others of the era. Succeeding in doing so by using material that is generally known and understood - concrete, but in a way that is specifically understandable to that region. From the places chosen as building sites, where all of the terrors memorialized by these monuments occurred, to reflecting aspects that encourage self-reflection, to the weaving of symbolism into the very creation of their architecture. In my opinion, spomeniks continue to be the purest form of representation of the previous state, just as churches and cathedrals are the most common forms of representation of religion, palaces of kings, and council houses of the republic.

But with the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, a massive and systematic destruction of socialist and anti-fascist monuments started. The practice of destroying artwork that was incompatible with the new political and social order began to emerge with the shift in the political regime and ideas. One of the most notable and tragic examples of such destruction is the Monument to the Victory of the Revolution of the People of Slavonia. The largest Croatian abstract artwork, Kamenska, was demolished on the Blažuj hill over the course of the night of February 21-22, 1992 using a significant amount of explosives. After nine attempts, the sculpture was brought down. The devastation was attributed to members of the 123rd Brigade of the Croatian Army. The culprits were never held accountable or sanctioned. The blame was attributed to the wind and poor performance, and the monument went into oblivion. The Petrova Gora monument was not completely destroyed in the war, unlike Kamenska, but it is one of the direct examples of later and systematic neglect, destruction and robbery. It ceased operations in 1991, and its significance shifted with the establishment of a new state. It is no longer a work of art or a memorial complex, but rather an abandoned relic of an unacknowledged past. Almost everything, from archive records to exhibitions, was destroyed.

Serbs presented their offensive actions in Croatia (that started Croatia's Homeland War in 1991.) as self-defense, avoiding a "repeated genocide" of Serbs by demonstrating their own victimization at the hands of Croatian enemies from WWII (like Jasenovac concentration camp). Similarly, the Bleiburg massacre from WWII to Croats served as proof of a pattern of Serbian murderous action, followed by planning, cover-ups, and political dominance. Each side was able to persuade its own people that they needed to defend themselves from the repeated horrors of genocide by proving its own "holocaust." In other words, the history of WWII became the present of fresh conflicts in the 1990s, and it remained a continual symbolic burden, ever since.

From the statements and viewpoints of the designers of the three case studies, they made it clear that they personally did not have a political agenda in mind when creating them. What they wanted to achieve was to communicate feelings through the abstract form of the monument. However, considering that the commissioner was Socialist

Yugoslavia, by their display and association with them, they acquired the connotation of political monuments, propaganda. With that link in mind, during Yugoslavia's disintegration, it makes sense why people had the need to destroy them, viewing them as propaganda symbols of the previous system, exactly the one which they were fighting against in the Homeland War. The very fact that even after the Homeland War they do not remain protected as heritage, but are allowed to continue to deteriorate, further confirms it.

**T**hrough the still ongoing and continuous mentioning of the same problems about the Uprising and Partisanship in the Croatian nation, it is clear that this topic has not been overcome. Following the defeat of one ideology, another formed, from which Croatia emerged 32 years ago, but the memories of the previous and intolerance remain. I believe it is both sad and unfortunate that a nation fails to prevent the disintegration of a large portion of a valuable heritage because of its inability to connect with it in the present. Instead, spomeniks are abandoned and left to be forgotten.

**I**n order for a nation to be whole, it must become aware of, accept and live its affirmative, but also negative, past. Both are teachers through whom the future is shaped and on whose foundations a healthy and functional society is created. It is necessary to accept both the good and the bad in order to be whole. And until then, the monuments continue to deteriorate, being an unsightly reminder of bygone eras and the trauma of wars of previous generations.

Thank you.



# FOOTNOTES

1 THE FIRST DIVISION OF EUROPE IN THE EAST AND WEST IS BASED ON THE DIVISION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE INTO TWO IN THE EARLY 4TH CENTURY. THE TERRITORY OF THE TWO EMPERORS (DIOCLETIAN AND CONSTANTINE THE GREAT) WHO CREATED THIS DIVISION WAS LATER CALLED YUGOSLAVIA. AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE - IN THE 7TH CENTURY THE SLAVIC TRIBES SETTLED IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO AS THE EASTERN ORTHODOX AND WESTERN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN 1054. NORTHWEST OF YUGOSLAVIA, WESTERN CATHOLIC CHURCH (ROMANESQUE-GOTHIC-RENAISSANCE-BAROQUE); AND THE SOUTHEAST OF IT WAS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH. SLOVENIA AND CROATIA ARE WESTERN CATHOLIC, WHEREAS SERBIA, MONTENEGRO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, AND MACEDONIA ARE EASTERN ORTHODOX.  
MRDULJAŠ, M., KULIĆ, V. (2012.): UNFINISHED MODERNISATIONS - BETWEEN UTOPIA AND PRAGMATISM

2 "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." VOJIN BAKIĆ, FROM THE INTERVIEW "GLASAM ZA NAROD, GLASAM ZA ŠKOLE" [I VOTE FOR THE PEOPLE, I VOTE FOR SCHOOLS], 1950

3 "THE GREAT DAY OF PEACE AND FREEDOM DAWNED. NEW DAYS OF PEACEFUL CONSTRUCTION OF OUR DEVASTATED COUNTRY ARE COMING. NOW WE NEED TO WIN A NEW GREAT VICTORY, TO REBUILD OUR BROKEN COUNTRY AND STRENGTHEN OUR TRULY PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT. TO STRENGTHEN OUR BROTHERHOOD AND UNITY EVEN MORE, SO THAT NO FORCE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO DESTROY IT AGAIN."  
TITO'S SPEECH 9.5.1945.

4 WILL BE THE ARCHITECT WORKING ON THE FINALIZED DESIGN FOR THIS MEMORIAL

5 ONE OF THE DESIGNERS OF THE JASENOVAC MEMORIAL

6 BORN IN 1935 IN BUSOVAČA, BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA. GRADUATED FROM THE ARCHITECTURE FACULTY OF ZAGREB IN 1959. WORKED FOR KAZIMIR OSTROGOVIĆ, AND LATER EDWARDA DURELL STONE (NY). BECAME A PROFESSOR AT THE SAME FACULTY HE GRADUATED FROM IN 1996. HAD A VAST OPUS OF DIFFERENT TYPOLOGIES, WHERE SOME OF THE MORE NOTABLE WORKS WERE RAKETE - DWELLING SOLITAIRES, CIBONA TOWER - OFFICE TOWER IN ZAGREB.

7 BORN IN 1915 IN BJELOVAR, CROATIA. GRADUATED FROM THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN ZAGREB IN 1938. EXHIBITED IN 1956 AT THE VENICE BIENNALE, WHERE HE PARTICIPATED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1950. EXHIBITED IN GALLERY DRIAN IN LONDON AND DENISE RENÉ GALLERY IN PARIS, AS WELL AS AT THE GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN ZAGREB. THERE IS NO CLEAR INFORMATION ABOUT WHO WAS HE (IF HE WAS) INFLUENCED BY - OTHER ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS OF THAT TIME.

8 LIKE WINGS IN KAMENSKA, OR A FLOWER IN JASENOVAC

9 THE VILLAGE IN THE VALLEY ABOVE WHICH PETROVA GORA RISES

10 BORN IN 1904 IN KRAPINA, CROATIA. GRADUATED FROM THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN ZAGREB IN 1929 (BEFORE BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT FACULTY, FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE WAS A PART OF THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY). BECAME A PROFESSOR AT THE ARCHITECTURE FACULTY OF ZAGREB IN 1965. SINCE 1921, HE HAS BEEN PAINTING UNDER THE PSEUDONYM JO KLEK, BELONGING TO THE AVANT-GARDE GROUP GATHERED AROUND THE MAGAZINE ZENIT, WITH WHICH HE EXHIBITED IN BELGRADE, BUCHAREST AND MOSCOW IN 1924.

11 BORN IN 1922 IN BELGRADE, SERBIA. GRADUATED FROM THE ARCHITECTURE FACULTY OF BELGRADE IN 1950., WHERE HE BECAME PROFESSOR IN 1973. FROM 1982 TO 1986, HE WAS THE MAYOR OF BELGRADE. HE LEFT POLITICS BECAUSE OF THE CONFLICT WITH SLOBODAN MILOŠEVIĆ (FIRST SERBIAN PRESIDENT AFTER THE YUGOSLAVIA'S DISSOLUTION), WHICH HE DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK "THE GREEN BOX". BECAUSE OF THE SAME CONFLICT, HE WENT INTO EXILE IN VIENNA, WHERE HE LIVED WITH HIS WIFE UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 2010.

12 SOME ARGUE THAT HE WAS INSPIRED BY THE AMERICAN ARTIST HERBERT BAYER, WHO CREATED AN ALMOST IDENTICAL WORK IN ASPEN, COLORADO, IN 1954, WHICH IS WIDELY REGARDED AS THE FIRST EXAMPLE OF THE CONTEMPORARY LAND ART MOVEMENT.

13 NONETHELESS, BOGDANOVIĆ DID NOT CREATE ANY FLOWER. DESPITE THE DUALISTIC CHARACTER OF THE FLORAL EMBLEM, HE WOULD ADDRESS IT AS THE "MELANCHOLY LOTUS" TO REAFFIRM DIVINITY, REBIRTH, AND RECOLLECTION INTO THE JASENOVAC MEMORIAL. IN ANCIENT CULTURES LOTUS REPRESENTS FOUNDATIONS OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND WISDOM, SUCH AS HORUS IN EGYPT, BRAHMA IN HINDUISM, AND BUDDHA. HOWEVER, LOTUS IS ALSO CONNECTED WITH FORGETFULNESS IN HELLENISTIC MYTHOLOGY, AS REPRESENTED IN HOMER'S "ODYSSEY." GIVEN THE SITE'S ETHNIC TENSIONS BETWEEN SERBS AND CROATS, BOGDANOVIĆ MAY HAVE CHOSEN THE LOTUS TO REPRESENT BOTH RECOLLECTION AND RECONCILIATION, LEAVING THE PAST IN THE PAST.

14 FROM THE BUKA MAGAZINE'S INTERVIEW WITH BOGDAN BOGDANOVIĆ, 20.01.2014.

# REFERENCE LIST

## PRIMARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bakić, V. (1970). *Exhibition "Apstrakcija i simboli"* [Abstraction and symbols]

Bogdanović, B. (2001). *Ukleti Neimar*

Kokot, J. (1986). Iz borbenog puta 12. slavonske proleterske udarne brigade. *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 18 (3), 57-80. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/215984>

Kolacio, Z. (1961). Spomenik pobjede narodne revolucije u Slavoniji (Kamenska). *Arhi-tektura: časopis za arhitekturu, urbanizam i primijenjenu umjetnost*, 15 (1961), 12, 20-27.

Ljubljanović, S. (1961). *Izložba idejnih projekata za Spomenik pobjede revolucije u Slavoniji, Muzej revolucije naroda Hrvatske*

## SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bekić, D. (2007). *Vojin Bakić ili kratka povijest kiposlavije* (2nd ed.).

Alfirević, Đ. (2015). *Conversation on Brutalism: Interview with architect Ljupko Čurčić.*, <https://scindeks-clanci.ceon.rs/data/pdf/0354-6055/2015/0354-60551541069A.pdf>

Čižić, K. (2022). *Konzervatorska i muzeološka analiza spomenika revolucije u opusu Vojina Bakića* (Master's thesis). <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:306321>

Dragičević, Z. (2015). Spomenik na Petrovoj gori - prilog istraživanju i revalorizaciji. *Anali 32 – 33 / 34 – 35 - Galerija Antuna Augustičića*, 385–404. <https://gaa.mhz.hr/anali-32-33--34-35-a114>

Horvatinčić, S. (2015). *Spomenik, teritorij i medijacija ratnog sjećanja u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji*.

Igor Zabel Association. (2023, March 29). *Haike Karge: Monuments' Biographies – The Case of Jasenovac* [Video]. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/151627151>

Ivančević, N. (2015): Promjena tipologije spomeničkog rješenja Vojina Bakića - Spomenik pobjedi revolucije naroda Slavonije, Kamenska. *Anali 32 – 33 / 34 – 35 - Galerija Antuna Augustičića*, 405–426. <https://gaa.mhz.hr/anali-32-33--34-35-a114>

Kerkezi, R. (2018). Transformation of Modernism in Socialist Yugoslavia Architecture. *Prizren Social Science Journal*. 2. 18. 10.32936/pssj.v2i3.61.

Mrduljaš, M., & Kulić, V. (2012). *Unfinished Modernisations - Between Utopia and Pragmatism*

Roksandić, D. (2017). Yugoslavism before the creation of Yugoslavia. Beograd: *Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji*.

Vuković, V. (2012): *Arhitektura sećanja - Memorijali Bogdana Bogdanovića*

## GRAPHICS

Figure 1: Jeck, V. (2016). Monument to the Battle of the Sutjeska, Tjentište, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Miodrag Živković) View of the monument, MoMA

Figure 2: Kulić, V. & Thaler, W. (2018). Jasenovac Memorial's detail, MoMA

Figure 3: own work

Figure 4: Jeck, V. (2016). Building block on Braće Borozan Street, Split 3, Split, Croatia (Dinko Kovačić, Mihajlo Zorić), 1970–1973, Exterior view, MoMA

Figure 5: Jeck, V. (2016). Hotel Adriatic II, Opatija, Croatia (Branko Žnidarec), MoMA

Figure 6: Jeck, V. (2016). Pavilion of West Germany, Zagreb Fair, Zagreb, Croatia (Ivan Vitić, Krunoslav Tonković) View of the northeastern facade, MoMA

Figure 7: Exhibition Arhitektura. Skulptura. Sjećanje. Umjetnost spomenika Jugoslavije 1945.–199., (2021) <https://vizkultura.hr>

Figure 8: Kempenaers, J. (n.d.) Spomenici

Figure 9: A historical photo of the amphitheatre complex and Makedonium monument in Kruševo, Macedonia, <https://spomenikdatabase.org>

Figure 10: A historical photo of children gathered at a Young Pioneer rally at the Vraca Memorial Complex in Sarajevo, BiH, <https://spomenikdatabase.org>

Figure 11: kupindo.com (n.d.) [https://www.kupindo.com/Brosure/60260493\\_Spomen-Podrucje-Jasenovac-Turisticki-Vodic-1983-](https://www.kupindo.com/Brosure/60260493_Spomen-Podrucje-Jasenovac-Turisticki-Vodic-1983-)

Figure 12: mentioned above

Figure 13: Kempenaers, J. (n.d.)

Figure 14: index.hr (n.d.) [https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/prije-27-godina-hrvati-su-srusili-partizanski-spomenik-bio-je-najveci-u-svijetu/2065903.aspx?index\\_ref=read\\_more\\_d](https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/prije-27-godina-hrvati-su-srusili-partizanski-spomenik-bio-je-najveci-u-svijetu/2065903.aspx?index_ref=read_more_d)

Figure 15: Kempenaers, J. (n.d.)

Figure 16: Jeck, V. (2016). Monument to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija, Petrova Gora, Croatia, MoMA

Figure 17: domovinskirat.hr (n.d.) (1990). Mass meeting "Brotherhood and Unity".

Figure 18: Dragičević, Z. (2015). Spomenik na Petrovoj gori - prilog istraživanju i revalorizaciji. *Anali 32 – 33 / 34 – 35 - Galerija Antuna Augustičića*, 385–404. <https://gaa.mhz.hr/anali-32-33-34-35-a114>

Figure 19: Dragičević, Z. (2015)

Figure 20: Dragičević, Z. (2015)

Figure 21: Dragičević, Z. (2015)

Figure 22: (n.d.) Avantgarde Museum, <https://www.avantgarde-museum.com/hr/museum/kolekcija/vojin-bakic>

Figure 23: Oris. (2017). The Petrova Gora Memorial model. In publication of the Oris magazine, (nr. 77, year 2012, p. 129)

Figure 24: Maković, Z. (2003). Spomenička plastika Vojina Bakića: jučer, danas, sutra

Figure 25: Oris. (2017). The Petrova Gora Memorial model. In publication of the Oris magazine, (nr. 77, year 2012, p. 130-131)

Figure 26: Petrović, M. (2023).

Figure 27: index.hr (n.d.) [https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/prije-27-godina-hrvati-su-srusili-partizanski-spomenik-bio-je-najveci-u-svijetu/2065903.aspx?index\\_ref=read\\_more\\_d](https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/prije-27-godina-hrvati-su-srusili-partizanski-spomenik-bio-je-najveci-u-svijetu/2065903.aspx?index_ref=read_more_d)

Figure 28: Maković, Z. (2003)

Figure 29: Ivančević, N. (2015): Promjena tipologije spomeničkog rješenja Vojina Bakića - Spomenik pobjedi revolucije naroda Slavonije, Kamenska. *Anali 32 – 33 / 34 – 35 - Galerija Antuna Augustičića*, 405–426. <https://gaa.mhz.hr/anali-32-33-34-35-a114>

Figure 30: Ivančević, N. (2015)

Figure 31: Ivančević, N. (2015)

Figure 32: Ivančević, N. (2015)

Figure 33: Ivančević, N. (2015)

Figure 34: Ivančević, N. (2015)

Figure 35: Ivančević, N. (2015)

Figure 36: History Museum of Yugoslavia, (n.d.) Archive photography

Figure 37: Private project's collaborator (n.d.) Archive photograph from private archive

Figure 38: Antifašistički vjesnik, Jak vjetar ili četnici?!, [https://www.antifasistickivjesnik.org/hr/prenosimo/6/Jak\\_vjetar\\_ili\\_cetnici\\_/350/](https://www.antifasistickivjesnik.org/hr/prenosimo/6/Jak_vjetar_ili_cetnici_/350/)

Figure 39: Jeck, V. (2016). Jasenovac Memorial Site, Croatia, MoMA

Figure 40: [spomenikdatabase.org](https://spomenikdatabase.org) (n.d.) Ceremony of remembrance held in the early 2000.

Figure 41: [spomenikdatabase.org](https://spomenikdatabase.org) (n.d.) (1960). Makeshift memorial at Jasenovac

Figure 42: [spomenikdatabase.org](https://spomenikdatabase.org) (1952). Jasenovac concept by Vanja Radauš

Figure 43: Wronn, J. (n.d.) Bogdan Bogdanović's first conception of the complex with an underground museum, MoMA archive

Figure 44: Esenko, L. (n.d.) Jasenovac lotus flower, with its reflection in the lake, covered by water lillies

Figure 45: JUSP Jasenovac (n.d.) Archive photo of the monument's construction

Figure 46: JUSP Jasenovac (n.d.) Bogdan Bogdanović's original preliminary sketches of the complex, and flower's shape