



2024
Special Issue

Architecture, Landscape
and Territory
in Yugoslav Modernism

AGG+ Journal for Architecture, Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Related Scientific Fields
АГГ+ часопис за архитектуру, грађевинарство, геодезију и сродне научне области

154-161 Visual essay

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THE LANDSCAPE OF THE KRAJINA MONUMENTS

The essay is based on the Architecture exhibition titled "Architecture. Sculpture. Remembrance. The Art of Monuments of Yugoslavia 1945–1991" and its installations, which was held from 29th November to 7th December 2023 in the new building of the Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Geodesy at the University of Banja Luka. This exhibition was organized as a part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the school of architecture in the Republic of Srpska.

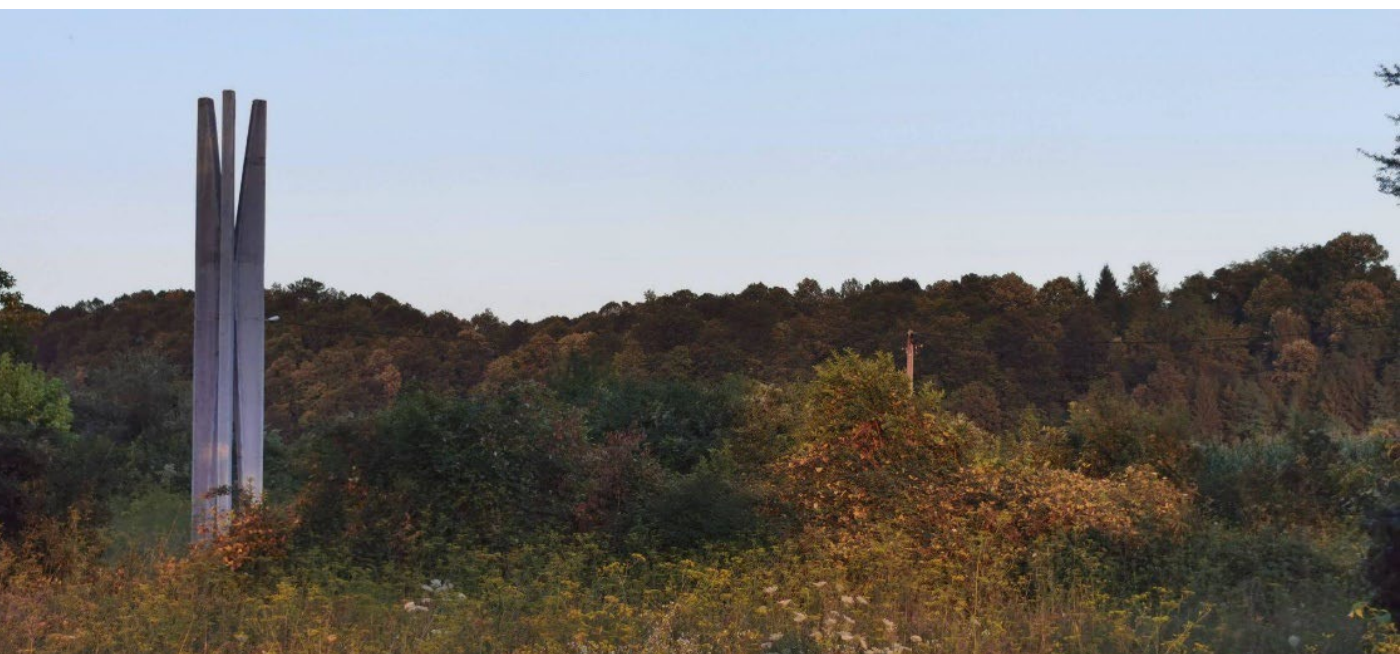
The exhibition is dedicated to showcasing the architecture and sculpture of the monument built in Yugoslavia to commemorate the national liberation struggle. It aims to highlight the significance of architectural and cultural heritage, with particular emphasis on Yugoslavia's modernist architecture and its influence on contemporary thought about space. The exhibition showcases around 60 mapped monuments that commemorate the national liberation struggle of the people of Yugoslavia, emphasizing their cultural and timeless importance and trying to raise awareness of their value. The goal is to encourage better maintenance and preservation of these monuments. The exhibition has already visited 11 cities across all the former Yugoslav republics, defining the landscape of memories from the entire Yugoslav area and beyond. This exhibition presents the qualities of the unique architecture of Yugoslav monuments, emphasizing their importance and influence on the education of fundamental values and principles of contemporary thought about space.





The way we remember historical events is not just about the facts but also about how they are perceived. Our understanding of the past is constantly changing and influenced by different individuals, groups, and even nations. As cultural memory adapts and expands, memories are transformed across generations, and we choose to remember certain aspects of the past. Personal connections to these memories weaken over time, and identities shift from being based on shared experiences of the past to a common heritage rooted in history.

The act of remembering is significant because it gives meaning to places that are important in history. Without memory, these places would lose a significant portion of their significance. In the past, the significance of the marked heritage and the mark itself as a heritage can be equally understood. By interpreting the timeless message sent to us, we become aware of such heritage and its importance in understanding the history and development of a territory. By shaping the message through universal symbols of life and death, love and fear, mourning and acceptance, we can read it today in every memorial as a response to the culture of memory. Memorial projects of the past served as places of collective mourning and remembrance. They also served as a place of acceptance and faith in the future, and now that future is our present day. Cultural memory helps us better understand the past, as our (mis)understanding of the past shapes our future.





The former Bosnian Krajina area holds significant historical and geographic value due to the events that happened here in the past, particularly during World War II. Throughout its history, the Kozara and Grmeč mountains have been a sanctuary for fighters and refugees from the surrounding regions and now serve as the most prominent memorials of the NOB in Bosnian Krajina. The exhibition has 56 monuments, including the two most massive memorial features in the mountain landscape - the memorial complex on Mount Kozara, created by the sculptor Dušan Džamonja in 1972, and the memorial zone Korčanica on Mount Grmeč, designed by the sculptor Ljubomir Denković in 1979. Besides their historical and artistic significance, these monuments also have social and cultural values for the region. They toned the wild nature of the mountain through the cultivation of the territory, making them significant for the participants and the community at a certain period. Many other places in the area were also marked, such as places of torture and cemeteries, including the memorial area of Garavica, created in 1981 by the architect Bogdan Bogdanović, as well as places of significant events, such as the Monument to Fallen Fighters in Drvar, constructed in 1967 by Marijan Kocković, the beginning of the rebellion and making historical decisions or birthplaces of prominent personalities. Some of the monuments are related to the wider area and the creation of a new identity, such as another monument of Marijan Kocković, Mother Partisan in Novi Grad, built in 1964.





Photos: Igor Kuvač, Sonja Rapajić, Igor Vujić, Una Okilj



The curators of the original exhibition are Boštjan Bugarić, Kristina Dešman, Maja Ivanić, Špela Kuhar, Eva Mavsar, Špela Nardoni Kovač and Damjana Zaviršek Hudnik. The local curators of the exhibition in Banja Luka are Igor Kuvač, Sonja Rapajić and Una Okilj. The organizers are DESSA Gallery, ab - architect's newsletter, DAL, Architectuul, Space Research Center and Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, University of Banja Luka.

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Una Okilj was born in Zagreb (1985) and finished high school in Novi Grad (2004). She finished her bachelor's studies at the Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy at the University of Banja Luka (2009), where she has worked as a teaching assistant since 2015. She graduated with a master's degree from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade (2011), where she enrolled in PhD studies.

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