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TWO NOTABLE SCULPTURAL-SPATIAL MEMORIALS IN THE TOPOGRAPHY OF PRIŠTINA COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF WORLD WAR II

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Keywords:
Miodrag Živković; Svetislav Ličina; memorial architecture; public sculpture; preservation of architectural heritage; Priština, Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia.

Abstract. This paper deals with Yugoslavia in the aftermath of World War II, a time when the preservation of revolutionary tradition and the legacy of the People's Liberation Struggle were elevated to the status of a paramount social imperative. Cultural policy during this era functioned as a heterogeneous and far-reaching system of systematically coordinated actions, extending across both the spiritual and material domains of cultural life—entirely subordinated to the directives of political leadership. Within this framework, state authorities promptly embraced public sculpture as a vital medium for the effective transmission of ideological values and for advancing a broader ideological project: the symbolic reconfiguration of the cultural and political landscape of the New Yugoslavia.

This study centers on two sculptural-spatial WWII memorials in Priština, the capital of the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, in order to illuminate their significance within both artistic and commemorative contexts. The first is the Monument to the People's Liberation Struggle of the People of Kosovo and Metohija (1959–1961) by sculptor Miodrag Živković, located in the central square of the "new city center" constructed after the war. The second is the Memorial Cemetery for Fallen Fighters (1960–1961), situated on Matičane Hill in the Velania neighborhood overlooking the city, designed by architect Svetislav Ličina in collaboration with architect Prvoslav Janković.
Through the lens of sculptural architectonics and urban memory, the study seeks to underscore the cultural, symbolic, and spatial import of these two significant achievements—situating them not only within the individual artistic trajectories of their respective creators, but also within the broader evolution of post-WWII monumental art in Serbia. These works, produced by artists whose distinctive creative vocabularies transcended the strictures of ideological orthodoxy, are examined as both critical contributions to their respective oeuvres and as emblematic "sites of memory" embedded in the urban fabric of Priština. In this dual capacity, they are essential to understanding the complex commemorative cartography of the former Yugoslavia as it took shape in the ideological and spatial aftermath of the liberation at the end of WWII.

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Introduction

In the aftermath of World War II, the newly established Yugoslav state entered a complex and dynamic period, demarcated by the adoption of the first and second constitutions of communist Yugoslavia, spanning from January 1946 to April 1963. During this era, the country was officially designated, in its constitutional and political history, as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, and, from 1963 onward, as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The emerging political order, spearheaded by the ascendant Communist Party of Yugoslavia, unequivocally rejected any continuity with the former Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—subsequently the Kingdom of Yugoslavia—which had existed from December 1, 1918, until its dissolution on November 29, 1945. Within this newly constituted ideological framework, art was placed under direct political supervision and bound by official mandates. These directives prescribed a focus on socially engaged themes and aesthetics rooted in leftist theoretical paradigms. As a result, Yugoslav art theory was formally conscripted into the broader project of envisioning and articulating the new socialist society, while artistic production itself was subordinated to the Party and its ideological imperatives. Artists were thus expected to contribute to the construction of socialism and to advance the doctrine of "brotherhood and unity"—a foundational slogan of the People's Liberation Movement and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, particularly within the context of the People's Liberation Struggle.

By the late 1940s, following the official political rupture with the Cominform, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Bloc, Yugoslavia initiated a significant foreign policy realignment. This strategic realignment—consolidated in the early 1950s—entailed a pivot toward Western Europe and the United States, thereby laying the groundwork for a decisive departure from the doctrine of socialist realism, which was defined by its explicitly anti-Western character. This reorientation enabled Yugoslav art to re-engage with broader European cultural and intellectual movements. This transitional era was further defined by the development of two innovative ideological and political paradigms that would come to shape Yugoslav socialism in distinctive ways: the concept of socialist self-management and the

foreign policy doctrine of non-alignment (Marković Savić & Vukotić Lazar, 2021, pp. 332–336; Vukotić Lazar & Marković Savić, 2020, pp. 27–32; Вукотић Лазар & Даниловић Христић, 2012, pp. 119–129; Докнић, 2013, pp. 316–318).

The transitional period marked by the shift toward so-called civilian authority was notably characterized by the establishment of the Association of Veterans of the People's Liberation War of Yugoslavia, formally founded during the First Congress of the Veterans of the People's Liberation War, held in Belgrade from September 28 to 30, 1947. At its Fourth Congress, convened from June 29 to July 1, 1961, the Association underwent institutional consolidation through its merger with the Union of Yugoslav War Invalids and the Association of Reserve and Non-Commissioned Officers. This unification resulted in the adoption of the name the Association of Veterans' Organizations of the People's Liberation War. This structural convergence gave rise to a unified socio-political organization whose central mission was the preservation, promotion, and perpetuation of the legacy of the People's Liberation War and the socialist revolution. All forms of organizational activity and institutional engagement undertaken by the Association were closely aligned with the programmatic directives of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the ideological tenets of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia (Аноним, 1961, July 2, pp. 1–2; Ристановић, 2009, pp. 17–69).

In the immediate aftermath of the liberation, the new authorities identified sculpture as the most communicatively potent medium for articulating and transmitting political messages. Whether realized in the form of memorials, portraits, didactic representations, or agitprop works, sculpture was invariably conceived as an instrument in the service of the nascent political order. Within this ideological framework, public monuments rapidly assumed a central role as the most effective vehicle for expressing and disseminating themes aligned with collective social, political, and emotional imaginaries. In the context of the newly constituted state, sculpture was granted both a broad operational field and a far-reaching socio-political mandate, leading to an unprecedented and unstoppable proliferation in the production of public monuments. Although stylistically diverse, these works were marked by clear ideological coherence and a consistent alignment with the prevailing political discourse (Baldani, 1977, pp. 9–17; Стојановић, 1955, pp. 461–475).

As a political symbol rooted in both spatial and temporal dimensions, public sculpture was entrusted with the dual task of memorializing and representing collective memory. This role underpinned the widespread production of monuments and ossuaries dedicated to fallen partisans, civilian victims, and national heroes throughout Yugoslavia—structures whose primary function was to glorify the People's Liberation Revolution and the broader revolutionary struggle. Monumental, figurative compositions, narrative in character—whether portraying mass scenes or individualized, heroized figures—consistently evoked pivotal and emblematic episodes from the People's Liberation War or the People's

Liberation Struggle. Although subordinated to ideological imperatives and didactic functions, the sculpture produced during the socialist realist period nevertheless succeeded in preserving a measure of authentic artistic value, thereby testifying to the creative resilience of its authors despite the constraints of a prescriptive aesthetic doctrine (Protić, 1982, p. 78).

On a symbolic level, sculpture functioned as a mechanism for institutionalizing the official version of the past and for constructing a new—ideologically sanctioned—collective identity. Its thematic repertoire invariably centered on remembrance of wartime atrocities, the suffering endured by partisans and the Yugoslav peoples, and the glorification of the People's Liberation Struggle, the People's Liberation War, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and related historical and political narratives. Within this context, sculpture was charged with the responsibility of communicating visual messages to the broader public—clearly, compellingly, and with the persuasive force of artistic veracity. This was the era of socialist, or engaged, realism, during which the socially committed artistic impulses of the interwar period were redirected and amplified to serve what became the principal aesthetic and political imperative of the time: visually articulating scenes from the People's Liberation Struggle through the medium of art. These representations spanned a wide expressive range—from lyrical and sentimental, through symbolic, to realist and even naturalist modes of depiction.

Although this period is commonly associated with socially driven tendencies and revolutionary subject matter, its chronology can only conditionally be confined to the years between 1945 and 1950. In fact, the reach of this movement within Yugoslav art extended well beyond these formal temporal limits—not only in terms of its ideological and stylistic foundations but also owing to the enduring ambiguity surrounding its ultimate cessation. This is further evidenced by the continued recurrence and resonance of its aesthetic and conceptual paradigms, which have persisted within the contemporary Serbian visual arts scene to this day.

Cultural policy, as a newly constituted domain of reciprocal influence between culture and politics in the emerging Yugoslav state, was established as a heterogeneous and multifaceted system of strategically coordinated initiatives within both the spiritual and material dimensions of cultural life. Although largely subordinated to the imperatives of political leadership, the cultural sphere continuously resisted its instrumentalization, striving to affirm its autonomy and intrinsic value. In pursuit of mutual advancement, channels were opened for the synchronized interaction between the cultural and political domains, with the aim not only of fostering their respective development but also of contributing to the broader progress of society as a whole (Marković Savić & Vukotić Lazar, 2021, pp. 332–336; Vukotić Lazar & Marković Savić, 2020, pp. 27–32; Докнић, 2013, pp. 316–318, Марковић Савић, 2018).

A New Perspective on Art in Yugoslavia: Collective Liberation from Figuration

A pivotal moment in the transition from socialist realism to socialist modernism in the cultural landscape of the New Yugoslavia was signaled by Edvard Kardelj's address at the ceremonial session of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana in 1950, followed by Miroslav Krleža's influential lecture *On the Freedom of Culture*, delivered at the Third Congress of Yugoslav Writers in Ljubljana in 1952. Krleža's address fundamentally underscored the imperative of creative freedom and advocated a synthesis of artistic autonomy and revolutionary ideals (Krleža, 1952, pp. 205–244; Krleža, 1967, pp. 11–57; Kruljac, 2021, pp. 19–26). Despite such progressive pronouncements, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia retained an unchallenged monopoly over ideological arbitration—asserting control through both vigilance against the infiltration of Western cultural influence and repression of any resurgence of Soviet-style socialist orthodoxy. The process of liberalization within Yugoslav society was therefore not only tightly regulated but also actively obstructed through the systematic repression of political dissent, culminating in a series of so-called political purges. The most notorious manifestation of these repressive measures was the establishment in 1949 of prison camps on the remote and uninhabited Adriatic islands of Goli Otok (for men) and Sveti Grgur (for women), where political prisoners were interned—some until their final release in 1956 (Jambrešić Kirin, 2021, pp. 10–22; Kulunčić, 2019–2021; Winter, 2013).

Notwithstanding the numerous criticisms voiced during this period regarding the encroachment of Western influences upon all domains of Yugoslav artistic production—including those articulated by Miroslav Krleža himself, who, at an extraordinary plenary session of the Writers' Union of Yugoslavia held in Belgrade, delivered a sharply critical assessment of abstract art and thus aligned himself with those who condemned the 1958 Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia as "revisionist"—Western European modernist tendencies gradually and consistently gained ascendancy over the proponents of realism. Within this context, a tempered abstract visual language, rooted in the harmonious orchestration of formal elements, increasingly established itself as the *modus operandi* in the sphere of visual culture (Krleža, 1967, pp. 61–127; Kruljac, 2021, pp. 23–25). The process of opening up to the wider world profoundly unsettled the Yugoslav artistic scene, giving rise to numerous questions, dilemmas, and polemics. One particularly significant phenomenon that emerged as a modernist artistic response to socialist realism—understood as a programmatic and dogmatic model of representation and expression within Yugoslav art—was most evident in the field of literature after 1950. The literary critic and theorist Sveta Lukić (1931–1997) characterized this phenomenon as "socialist aestheticism," a syntagma that continues to be employed in the vocabulary of literary criticism and history to this day (Denegri, 2012b, pp. 395–400; Popović, 2015; Šuvaković, 2012a, pp. 353–394;

Лукић, 1963). It pertains to post-WWII Yugoslav modernism, which, while distancing itself from the prevailing dogma, nevertheless continued to operate within the framework of social engagement, thereby giving rise to a new form of ideology. As such, as Lidija Merenik observes, it may be examined in terms of both its aesthetic significance and ideological function (Merenik, 2001, p. 70).

Socialist modernism was institutionalized through a series of national, Yugoslav, and international exhibitions, as well as through the founding of key institutions devoted to modern and contemporary art. Among the most prominent were the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana (1948), the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Zagreb (1954), and the Museum of Modern Art in Belgrade, which was transformed into the Museum of Contemporary Art with the construction of its new building at Ušće in 1965 (Merenik, 2001, p. 58).

The struggle for dominance of the modernist visual paradigm found a decisive stronghold in Mića Popović's first solo exhibition, held at the Art Pavilion on Kalemegdan. At its opening on 24 September 1950, Popović presented a programmatic text that articulated a clear commitment to an artistic approach distinct from socialist realist doctrine, a stance further substantiated by his *Preface* in the exhibition catalogue (Поповић, 1950, pp. 37–47; Трифуновић, 1967, pp. 479–487). Nevertheless, it was with the exhibition of Petar Lubarda, which opened on May 1 and ran until June 1, 1951, at the ULUS Gallery (Association of Fine Artists of Serbia) on Terazije (Šuvaković, 2012a, p. 367), that the foundations of the early phase of liberalization in Serbian art after 1945 were firmly established. This event also marked the revival of Serbian art criticism as a vital and indispensable companion to the artistic movements and developments of the period (Трифуновић, 1967, p. 33; Трифуновић, 1982, pp. 55–73). Through this exhibition, Petar Lubarda proposed a novel worldview, a new aesthetic sensibility, and a redefined conception of painting: "I am who I am, and I paint the world according to my own volition. I agitate the sea until it foams like champagne. I deconstruct the hills. The red shadows of rugged terrains, the blue shadows at midday, the yellow dread of death, the white cry of seagulls—these constitute the full spectrum of my palette", Lubarda once proclaimed (Трифуновић, 1982, p. 64).

As compelling testimonies to the dynamic transformations occurring within the trajectories of Yugoslav foreign policy, as well as within the domain of cultural policy at the highest institutional levels, the 1950s saw a remarkable succession of major international exhibitions in Belgrade. These events showcased a wide range of seminal artistic movements and figures, including *Contemporary French Art* (1952); *Le Corbusier* and *A Selection of Dutch Painting from 1850 to 1950* (1953); a solo exhibition of Henry Moore's sculptures (1955); *Contemporary Art of the United States* from the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1956); *Contemporary Italian Art* (1957); the influential photographic exhibition *The Family of Man* (possibly shown in 1957); *Contemporary French Art* (1958); a Belgian painting exhibition known as *The Urvater Collection* (1959); an exhibition of contemporary American

art (1960–1961); and a second installment of *Contemporary French Art* (1963), among others. These exhibitions not only exemplified Yugoslavia's increasing openness to global artistic currents but also played a critical role in shaping the evolving cultural landscape of the period (Denegri, 2012a, pp. 375–378; Лазић, 2014, pp. 9–69; Марковић, 1996, p. 425).

During the period dominated by the modernist paradigm, the emergence of neo-avant-garde movements in socialist Yugoslavia became increasingly pronounced, with their temporal framework conventionally bounded between 1951 and 1973. In Serbia, these boundaries remained equally fluid, beginning with the early experimental and multimedia works of Vladan Radovanović produced after 1955, and extending to a provisional denouement marked by the *Drangularium* exhibition held in 1971 at the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade (Šuvaković, 2012b, p. 284). The development of the "neo-avant-garde under socialist conditions"—comprising a spectrum of heterogeneous phenomena, tendencies, and distinct artistic practices—served as a reaction and alternative to "socialist modernist" art, characterized by state-supported and tightly controlled autonomy coupled with official institutional endorsement. This complex interplay closely aligns with the observations and conclusions articulated by Gérard Genette in his seminal work *Figures V*:

> "But indeed: abstraction is not, in the strict sense of the term, a new genre, nor a novel technique […] nor—still less—a new style. […] Rather, abstraction constitutes not a unified or collective style, but an open gateway to a remarkable diversity of individual styles—radically more personal and varied than the previously imposed collective constraint of figurativeness allowed. This profusion of pluralism, which Danto identifies as emblematic of postmodern, or post-historical art […], signals a fundamental shift in artistic expression." (Ženet, 2002, p. 249)

All these developments exerted a significant and enduring impact on the education of emerging artists, the evolution and refinement of art criticism, as well as on the formation and cultivation of a wide-ranging cultural public sphere.

Architect Bogdan Bogdanović was profoundly inspired by the lectures, oeuvre, and writings of his professor, architect Aleksandar Deroko, who publicly advocated ornamentation and stood against the "machine for living" ethos. Deroko manifested his distinctive creative vision during a period marked by rigid priorities centered on monument construction within the framework of political and social organization in the new socialist Yugoslavia, when he successfully executed one of his most acclaimed works of memorial architecture: the project for the Monument to the Kosovo Heroes at Gazimestan, located in the vicinity of Priština (1953). Dedicated to the Battle of Kosovo of 1389, the monument is located several kilometers southeast of the historic battlefield known as Kosovo Polje. At the site of the historic battlefield, a 25-meter-tall tower was erected, constructed in a monumental

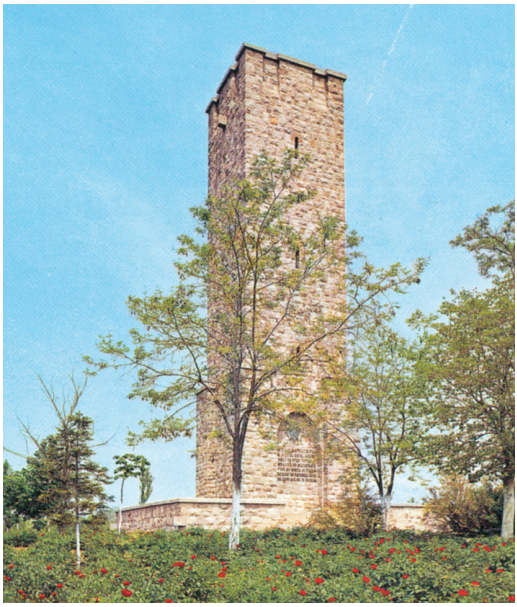

Figure 1. A. Deroko, Monument to the Kosovo Heroes at Gazimestan in the vicinity of Priština (1953). Source: Anonim, 1981, p. 2

style using roughly hewn stone, evoking the donjon towers of medieval Serbia, traditionally built as part of its defensive architecture (Anonim, 1981, p. 2; Kadriju, 1983, figure 26, n.p.; Павловић, 1989, p. 423). In our view, this achievement by Deroko, among other factors, played a pivotal role in catalyzing the emergence of Bogdanović's "new formula of the memorial," dedicated to the victims of fascism and the combatants of the liberation wars fought across Yugoslavia during World War II. This paradigm went on to leave an indelible imprint not only on a generation of students at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade but also on the broader artistic landscape of both Belgrade and Yugoslavia.[4]

The "dramatic monumentality" of Bogdanović's compositions is precisely as described by the distinguished connoisseur of his work, Zoran Manević:

> "They bear no relation whatsoever to the long-standing tradition of figurative monuments, nor to the myriad of abstract, geometricized forms—such as bidents and tridents—that during the 1950s served as symbols of the brotherhood and unity among the Yugoslav peoples." (Маневић, 2008a, p. 32)

[4] In the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA), within Historical Collection No. 14678, the legacy of Aleksandar Deroko is preserved. Among the documents in folder No. 1, item No. 13 is a letter of congratulations written by Bogdan Bogdanović to his professor on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. In this letter, Bogdanović reflects: "[…] I believe that I owe to you the impetus behind the deepest essence of this commitment. Your resolute stance (in not loving contemporary art) quite clearly provoked a decisive shift within me […]." The letter, dated Belgrade, September 24, 1974, is personally signed by Bogdanović.

Among Bogdanović's executed works, his inaugural design—the Monument to the Jewish Victims of Fascism at the Sephardic Cemetery in Belgrade (1951–1952), famously dubbed by his student, colleague, and longtime conversational partner Alexander Trumić as the "Master Builder's Gate at the End of the Road"—assertively posed the profound and enduring question if this creation should be classified primarily as sculpture or architecture (Trumić, 2020, pp. 24–27; Јанакова Грујић, 2022, n.p.; Маневић, 1967, pp. 32–33; Маневић, 1984, n.p.; Маневић, 1985; Маневић, 2008a, pp. 36–37; Милашиновић Марић, 2017, pp. 225–227). Teaching as an assistant at the Department of Urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, Bogdanović offered, with his Monument to the Jewish Victims, a foundational key to interpreting the so-called new formula. However, the full articulation of this formula remained an ongoing enigma, gradually resolved through a prolonged sequence of architectural interventions embodied in twenty memorials built throughout the former Yugoslavia. These memorials explore the profound themes of life and death, fire and water, and narratives steeped in antiquity, wisdom, and spirituality.

Under the mentorship of Bogdan Bogdanović as their teaching assistant, the next generation of students at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade experienced a profound and lasting influence of his artistic and conceptual vision—an influence that played a crucial role in shaping their professional development and careers. Among these emerging architects, Svetislav Ličina (born in Zagreb in 1931; graduated in 1956) stands out as a prominent figure. Shortly after completing his studies, Ličina joined forces with Bogdanović at the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade as a member of the "Group for Small Urbanism," an initiative founded and led by Bogdanović between 1958 and 1960. During this formative period, Bogdanović was commissioned to design the Memorial Cemetery for Fighters Executed in Occupied Belgrade (1959) at the New Cemetery in Belgrade. Recognizing Ličina's talent and alignment with his own vision, Bogdanović proposed that they collaborate on this landmark project, consolidating their professional partnership and contributing significantly to the development of memorial architecture in post-WWII Yugoslavia.

Bogdanović and Ličina opted for a concept that brought to life an imaginary city of the dead, structured as a stylized relief map of Belgrade, featuring a raised mound evocative of Avala Hill. This elevated site houses the remains of fighters who perished in Belgrade under German occupation during WWII, along with victims of the city's concentration camps. Bogdanović articulated his poetic vision through a series of symbolic motifs: a fractured gate, a perforated concrete wall functioning as a horizon punctuated by firing slits and stylized portals, a paved plaza, and a principal avenue facilitating the cascading descent of terraces, culminating in a sanctuary. These formal elements appear in this project and persist throughout his subsequent work. Svetislav Ličina is credited with the overall urban design of the complex and the creation of a scale model of Terazije with

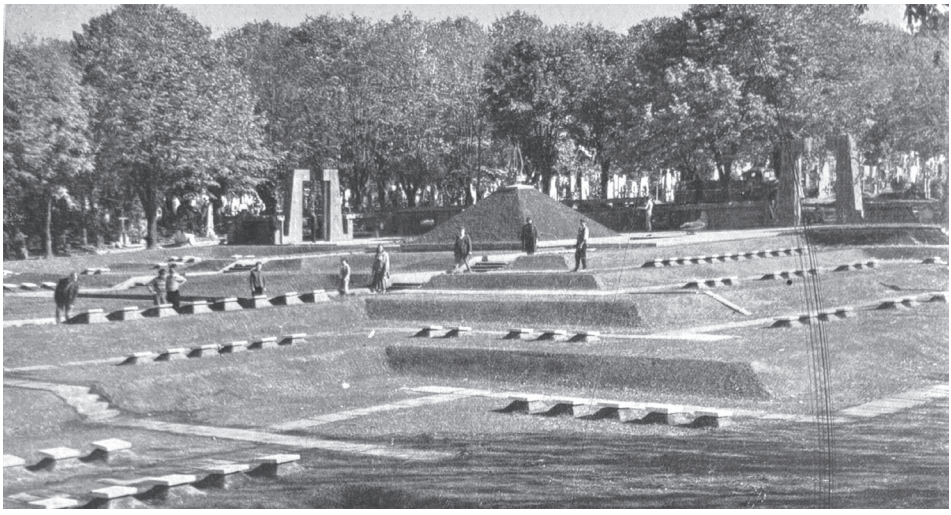

Figure 2. B. Bogdanović & S. Ličina, Alley of the Executed Patriots, 1941–1944 (Former name: Memorial Cemetery for the Fighters (Patriots) Executed in Occupied Belgrade, 1941–1944), Belgrade New Cemetery (1959). Source: Аноним, 1960, pp. 26–27

its columns, marking the site where Belgrade's patriots were martyred (Аноним, 1960, pp. 26–27).

Following this project, Ličina continued to collaborate closely with Bogdanović, providing crucial support in the design and implementation of the Memorial Cemetery to the Victims of Fascism in Sremska Mitrovica (1959–1960). During this time, Bogdanović entrusted Ličina with an existing commission to build a similar memorial complex in Priština, further solidifying their professional partnership and Ličina's growing role in monumental architecture (Milašinović Marić, 2004, pp. 86–93; Маневић, 2008b, pp. 227–230; Милашиновић Марић, 2013, pp. 448–451).

Two Landmark Examples of Memorial Sculpture Within the Urban Landscape of Priština Commemorating the Victims of World War II

Priština, the largest city in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, is strategically positioned in the central and broadest expanse of the Kosovo Basin. The city lies along the valley of the Prištevka River, which flows from the north through the urban core toward the southwest, where it converges—at the very heart of the city—with the Veluša River. Priština's topography is defined by a series of surrounding hills: Dragodan to the northwest; Matičane Hill to the east and southeast; and the slopes of Mount Grmija to the east and northeast.

Approximately two kilometers south of the city rises the hill of Veternik. Due to this natural configuration, Priština emerges into view from the Kosovo plain only when approached from the southwest (Група аутора, 1973, pp. 853–857; Урошевић, 2009, p. 219).

In 1946, Priština was established as the administrative center of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, which formed part of the People's Republic of Serbia within the broader framework of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. With the constitutional revisions of 1963, the city was officially designated the capital of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, thereby further consolidating its political and institutional significance within the Yugoslav federation.[5]

Following the end of World War II, between 1947 and 1951, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia launched a comprehensive Five-Year Development Plan aimed at the country's reconstruction. Within this framework, the Republic of Serbia undertook the development of regulatory plans for its cities and settlements—comprising 22 urban plans and 25 settlement plans—published collectively in the volume *Cities and Settlements of Serbia*. This important work synthesized the results of extensive projects, studies, and analyses conducted by experts at the Urban Planning Institute of the People's Republic of Serbia between 1946 and 1952 (Момчиловић & Кортус, 1953, pp. 11–26). During this early postwar period, the prevailing planning model was one of centralized state control, structured along a hierarchical system modeled after the Soviet paradigm. This etatist approach to urban and economic development prioritized top–down directives and centralized authority.

However, by 1951, the limitations of this model prompted a gradual shift toward a more socially oriented planning system. The process of decentralization and the transition to social planning were protracted, requiring cautious, staged implementation. This transitional phase was characterized by the coexistence of two types of plans: social plans, which reflected macroeconomic objectives, and enterprise plans, which addressed microeconomic concerns. Professional planning efforts focused primarily on formulating medium-term economic development plans, exploring long-term development potentials, and elaborating strategic measures for achieving defined goals and priorities. The 1963 Amendments to the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the 1965 economic reform were critical milestones in the evolution of planning practices. These reforms institutionalized decentralization principles and officially inaugurated the system of social planning (Вукотић Лазар, 2023, p. 217; Милашиновић Марић, 2017, pp. 51–61; Момчиловић & Кортус, 1953, pp. 11–27; Фолић, 2017, pp. 147–162).

[5] See the Constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Article 2, adopted in Belgrade on January 31, 1946, and the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Article 111, adopted by the Federal People's Assembly in Belgrade on April 7, 1963.

In this context, one of the earliest urban development efforts was the formulation of the General Urban Plan of Priština, headed by architect Dragutin Partonjić, a permanent associate of the Urban Planning Institute of the People's Republic of Serbia. Work on the plan began in 1947, and the document was formally adopted in 1953. The plan defined the main functional zones of the city, including the opening of a new road with an adjacent pedestrian promenade running along the south–north axis, flanked on both sides by major public and social buildings, as well as the first multi-unit residential housing blocks. To enhance institutional and professional capacities, the Municipal Technical Service of the Priština Municipality was established in 1957, followed by the foundation of the Urban Planning Institute of Priština in 1961, led by architect Bashkim Fehmiu (1930–2008)[6] (Beganović, 1998, pp. 87–93; Beganović, 2014, pp. 39-46; Sadiki, 2019, pp. 21–33; Маневић, 1996, pp. 129–143; Стојков, 1996, p. 49). Architect Bashkim Fehmiu graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade in 1958, where he studied under the mentorship of the esteemed Professor Branko Maksimović. His considerable expertise earned him the respect of colleagues across the former Yugoslavia. Within this professional milieu, numerous prominent architects collaborated closely with the Urban Planning Institute of Priština. Among the earliest planning documents produced by the Institute following its establishment were the *Program for the Urban Design of Three Residential Communities and the District Center of the New Part of the City* (1962), headed by Bashkim Fehmiu, and the *Conceptual Urban Design of the New Center of Priština* (1962), led by architect Ljiljana Babić, an associate of Nikola Dobrović. The latter project was commissioned by the Municipal Assembly of Priština and officially approved in 1967 (Babić, 1967, pp. 22–31; Babić, 1979, pp. 26–27; Mitrović, 1967, pp. 34–35; Sadiki, 2019, pp. 30–36).

Svetislav Ličina was one of the most prominent figures among the next generation of graduates from the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, having completed his studies in 1956. This cohort also included notable architects such

[6] On July 12, 1999, I conducted an in-depth interview with architect Bashkim Fehmiu, former director of the Urban Planning Institute in Priština, held in the library of the Urban Planning Institute in Belgrade. Our discussion focused on the professional activities of the Institute in Priština and its collaboration on projects with other urban planning institutes across the former Yugoslavia. In the course of the conversation, architect Fehmiu shared a notable recollection: his former professor, the renowned architect Nikola Dobrović, had visited Priština and was profoundly impressed by the work carried out by the Institute. Dobrović, he noted, immediately expressed a keen willingness to undertake all necessary measures toward the development of the General Urban Plan of Priština, as well as to contribute to the architectural project for the Railway Station building in Kosovo Polje. This conversation was of particular significance, as architect Fehmiu provided the precise date of Nikola Dobrović's visit to Priština—July 9, 1964—which occurred just two days prior to the formal presentation of the *Seventh of July Award* to Dobrović. This event had been widely discussed at the time, especially in Priština. For further reference, see: Vukotić Lazar, 2002, pp. 121–122, footnote 425).

Figure 3. M. Živković, Monument to Brotherhood and Unity in Priština, located at the square of the same name (Former names: Monument to the Revolution and Monument to the People's Liberation Struggle of the People of Kosovo and Metohija) (1959–1961). Source: Kadriju, 1983, front cover

as Bashkim Fehmiu, Mihajlo Čanak, Branislav Vulović, Milorad and Vukota Vukotić, among many others, who, after graduating in Belgrade, went on to have influential careers across the former Yugoslavia (Бјелоусов, 2009, pp. 94–101; Маневић, 2008b, p. 225; Маркуш, 2008, pp. 43–53).

Upon the recommendation of architect Bogdan Bogdanović, Svetislav Ličina arrived in Priština to build a memorial complex on Matičane Hill near the city. There, he was greeted by the presence of the "Donjon Tower" erected by his professor, Aleksandar Deroko, at Gazimestan in 1953. At the very center of Priština, in the then-called Brotherhood and Unity Square, a study for the memorial was first undertaken in 1959. This led to the construction of the Monument to Brotherhood and Unity (its original name; later referred to as the Monument to the Revolution or the Monument to the People's Liberation Struggle of the People of Kosovo and Metohija)—the first in a series of memorial sculptural compositions by the exceptionally prolific sculptor Miodrag Živković, built between 1959 and 1961.

The composition consists of eight bronze sculptures whose stylized, cubist forms subtly suggest human figures—more precisely, eight partisans—and a tripartite concrete obelisk measuring 22 meters in height, embodying an effort to reconcile two distinct sculptural idioms. Positioned on the opposite side of the obelisk, within a paved plaza and oriented away from the figures, was a fountain that, in conjunction with the sculptures, formed an integral artistic ensemble. The fountain was later replaced with a grassy area (Baldani, 1977, p. 15; Grupa autora, 1967, p. 188; Милашиновић Марић, 2013, p. 449; Путник, 2014, p. 117; Станковић Симић, 2023, pp. 96–97).

Miodrag Živković's sculpture imbues the entire square in Priština with a clear sense of purpose and spatial organization, while simultaneously asserting its dominance over the surrounding area. The verticality of the obelisk is both

Figure 4. M. Živković, Monument to Brotherhood and Unity in Priština (1959–1961) (detail). Source: Baldani, 1977, p. 160

deliberate and symbolic; without this element, the spatial composition of the square would appear indifferent and lack cohesion. Positioned at the focal point of the visual field, the monument exerts a direct and commanding presence that reinforces its monumental character. Živković's work straddles the boundary between figurative representation and abstraction. It navigates this threshold through a formal language that, via experimental exploration, moves toward the geometric simplification of symbolic motifs—yet it does not abandon the ability to communicate its core message through a recognizable and evocative visual lexicon.

The year 1960 marks a decisive turning point in the introduction of abstraction into the sphere of public monumental sculpture. From this period onward, sculptural works progressively detached from figurative representation, evolving into symbols that, almost overnight, severed their ties to immediately recognizable imagery and instead emanated complexity through their compositional sophistication. Within this framework, geometric forms were increasingly employed to address themes of collective memory—particularly the commemoration of victims of the National Liberation War, the National Liberation Movement, fascism, and

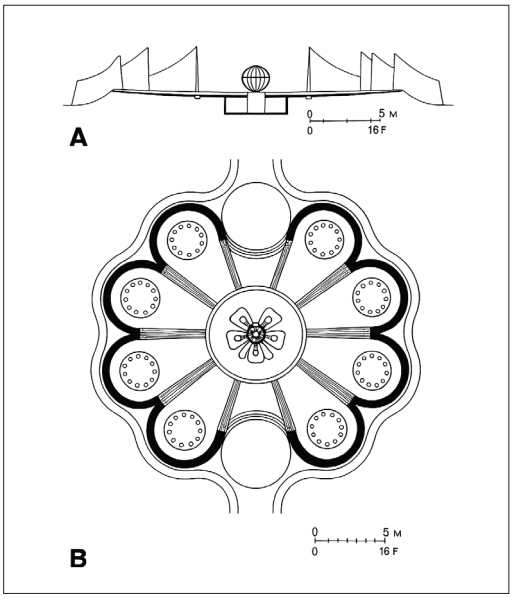

Figure 5. S. Ličina & P. Janković, Fallen Fighters' Memorial Cemetery in Priština. Cross section and plan of the central area (1960–1961). Source: Valeix, 1963, p. 72

related historical experiences. Through free and inventive reinterpretations of artistic objectives, these monuments acquired the character of abstract signs, which quickly proliferated and came to dominate the spatial and visual landscape of socialist Yugoslavia.

A distinct thematic focus in the creative practice of sculptors and architects was the imperative to harmoniously integrate monumental structures within the landscape, wherein the monument served as a tangible embodiment of an abstract concept, historical event, or symbolic narrative.

The memorial complex on Matičane Hill, located in the Velania neighborhood overlooking Priština, was designed by architect Svetislav Ličina in collaboration with Prvoslav Janković. It was erected in memory of the Kosovo–Metohija partisans

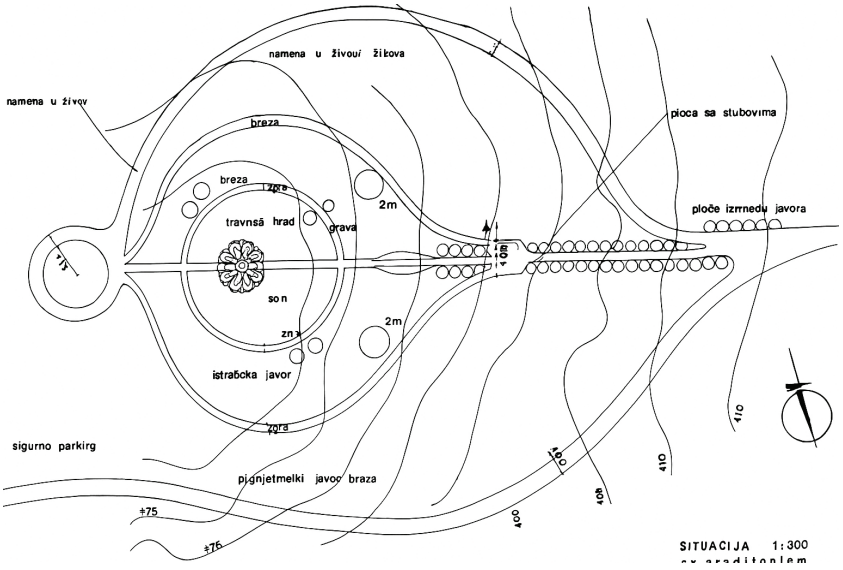

Figure 6. S. Ličina & P. Janković, Fallen Fighters' Memorial Cemetery in Priština. Site plan (General Development Plan) (1960–1961). Source: Valeix, 1963, p. 72

Figure 7. S. Ličina & P. Janković, Fallen Fighters' Memorial Cemetery in Priština (1960–1961). Source: From the private photographic collection of Prof. Dr. Zoran Nedeljković

who perished during World War II. Functioning both as a monument and a memorial ossuary, it serves as the collective burial site for 220 fallen fighters and victims of fascist terror from the Priština municipality. Completed in 1961, the monument is strategically positioned to the east of the city center and once offered a commanding panoramic view of Priština.

Svetislav Ličina affirms the commemorative value of the monument exclusively through its structure and symbolism. It was conceived as the embodiment of a purely abstract idea—materialized in forms that function simultaneously as carriers of meaning, symbolic resonance, and scenographic expression. Like an indigenous sculptural organism, it appears to emerge organically from the terrain, becoming deeply rooted in the landscape through its dialogue with changing weather conditions and the interplay of light and shadow. What stands out most is the author's pronounced sensitivity to—and respect for—the urban context, the surrounding environment, and the ambient landscape. Positioned in front of the memorial ossuary is a public park, which originally extended across three hectares and served as a well-frequented recreational area for the citizens of Priština, offering a striking panoramic view of the city (Пејовић, 1996, p. 180).

The memorial complex in Priština comprises an access road, a perimeter wall, and a sanctuary at its center. While these architectural elements reflect Bogdanović's conceptual vocabulary, they are distinguished by a markedly different design

Figure 8. S. Ličina & P. Janković, Fallen Fighters' Memorial Cemetery in Priština (1960–1961). Source: Postcard, Tourist Press Belgrade, private ownership

sensibility—one that is deeply integrated with the topography of Matičane Hill through a bold embrace of geometric expression. The sanctuary's spherical form, symbolizing eternity and communal unity—qualities inherently associated with the circle—is realized with compositional restraint and strong visual confidence. The perimeter wall consists of several symmetrical, subtly Baroque-inspired conchae, while the central element takes the form of a stylized "Kosovo peony," crafted from concrete and bronze (Станковић Симић, 2023, p. 96).

The conchae are vertically fluted, featuring a dynamic rhythm of white marble plaques engraved with the names of fallen partisans from various nationalities. The tomb surfaces alternate between coarse and polished finishes, creating a deliberate textural contrast that evokes a tactile narrative of sacrifice and memory. In a conversation with his colleague Zoran Manević, architect Svetislav Ličina reflected on his childhood in Sarajevo and fondly recalled a book from which, as a young boy, he meticulously traced the pearl-embellished robes of medieval Serbian rulers—an early gesture of reverence for ornamentation, symbolism, and historical continuity: "That book on Serbian rulers has haunted me throughout my life—it has persistently echoed in my consciousness. In one way or another, it has always found expression in my architectural creations" (Маневић, 2008b, p. 227).

The visual language of Svetislav Ličina reflects his conceptual and ideological stance. The structural integrity and clear spatial articulation of this prominent landmark are rigorously aligned with the established principles of architectural

Figure 9. S. Ličina & P. Janković, Fallen Fighters' Memorial Cemetery in Priština (1960–1961) (detail). Source: Kadriju, 1983, p. 18

and urban design. Formally, it exemplifies a refined sensibility that employs a precise, lucid, and almost laconic visual vocabulary—characterized by functionality, logical coherence, directness, and understated subtlety. As a commemorative site dedicated to significant historical events and a space for reflection, the memorial complex received immediate and sustained critical acclaim, resonating deeply within both domestic and international academic and professional circles. The prestigious French journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, in its 1963 issue No. 108, recognized the Memorial Cemetery in Priština—designed by Svetislav Ličina and his associate Prvoslav Janković—as one of six exemplary works of memorial sculpture. This distinguished selection also included seminal works by Dušan Džamonja, Bogdan Bogdanović, and Ed Ravnikar, alongside a notable competition design by Miodrag Živković and Vasilije Janković, highlighting the significance of the memorial within the broader context of contemporary commemorative art (Bogdanović, 1961, pp. 26–31; Valeix, 1963, pp. 72–73). Given the anticipated and necessarily limited scope of this paper, the broader comparative discussion is condensed to the present analysis of these two outstanding works, as published in the authoritative catalogue of the exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, edited by Martino Stierli and Vladimir

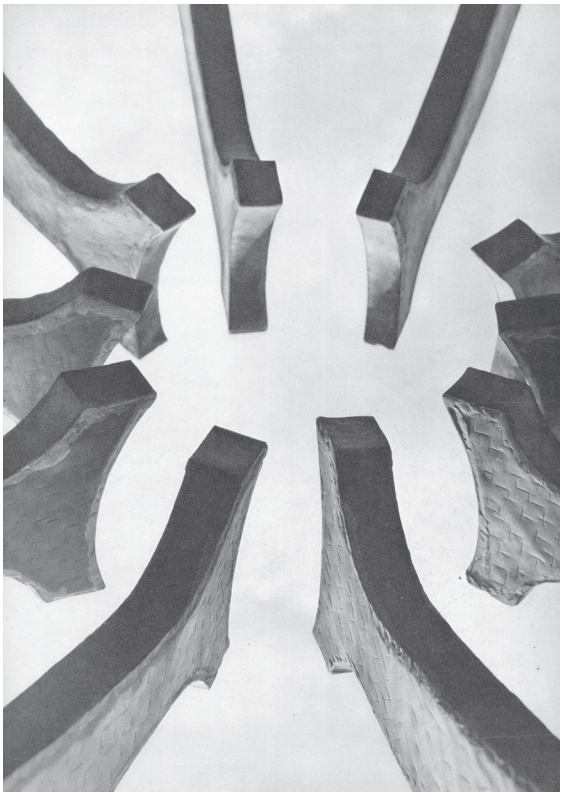

Figure 10. S. Ličina & P. Janković, Fallen Fighters' Memorial Cemetery in Priština (1960–1961) (detail). Source: Baldani, 1977, p. 13

Kulić. The exhibition, held at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York between July 15, 2018, and June 13, 2019, garnered widespread critical acclaim (Horvatinčić, 2018; Worsnick, 2018).

In Lieu of a Conclusion

Svetislav Ličina's subsequent project, the design for the Cemetery of Distinguished Citizens of Belgrade (1963–1965), features elements reminiscent of those developed a few years earlier in Priština—specifically, concrete conchae integrated into park-like cemetery grounds alongside traditional burial plots. The uneven, cascading terrain is articulated through a purposefully conceived wall composed of semicircular segments, which frame circular forms bearing commemorative plaques. The memorial alley is situated in the central section of the New Cemetery in Belgrade, to the right of the main pathway and in close proximity to the Cemetery of Executed Patriots 1941–1944 in Belgrade (1959)—the only collaborative project between Bogdan Bogdanović and Svetislav Ličina, and the point of departure for this very study.

Figure 11. S. Ličina, Alley of Distinguished Citizens, Belgrade New Cemetery (1963–1965). Source: Костић, 1999

In a comprehensive appraisal of the architectural oeuvre of Svetislav Ličina (Zagreb, October 15, 1931)—former full professor at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, and head of the Department of Architectural Spatial Organization—the Memorial Cemetery in Priština (1960–1961) stands out as a work that is indispensable to any discussion of memorial architecture and sculpture, marking a pivotal contribution to the development of Yugoslav modernist commemorative design.

Similarly, within the extensive oeuvre of Miodrag Živković (Leskovac near Lazarevac, 1928—Belgrade, 2020), who also served as a full professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, where he taught the course Applied Sculpture, the Monument to Brotherhood and Unity in Priština (1959–1961) stands as his inaugural work and a precursor to an exemplary series of monumental sculptural compositions that remain cornerstones of his memorial-themed oeuvre. Živković's major subsequent works include the Monument to the Executed Students and Professors "V/3" in Kragujevac (1963); the Valley of Heroes in Tjentište (competition held in 1964, completed in 1971); and the Kadinjača Memorial Complex (1979), among others (Лајбеншпергер, 2013, pp. 290–297; Путник, 2013, pp. 298–309; Путник, 2014, pp. 117–122).

The artists in question possess distinctive authorial signatures that unequivocally transcend the confines of ideological narratives and constraints. Within this framework, their works in Priština are viewed from two complementary perspectives: on one hand, as indispensable components within the overall oeuvre of these artists; on the other hand, as prominent landmarks within the city's topography, serving as pivotal "sites of memory" commemorating World War II. These memorials are also crucial for understanding the broader spectrum of analogous monuments that collectively mapped the post-liberation landscape across the former Yugoslavia. Material creations and unique examples of authorial creativity—the Memorial Cemetery in Priština (1960–1961) and the Monument to Brotherhood and Unity in Priština (1959–1961)—possess, on the one hand, great significance for the history of the city of Priština, serving as testimonies to the time of their inception, design, and endurance, while also embodying historical, artistic, environmental, sociological, and broader cultural value. On the other hand, through a comparative consideration of analogous memorials erected in the region during the same period, it becomes evident that, immediately upon their realization, these monuments attracted attention by virtue of their radical modernist style and their deliberate departure from ornamentalism. Equally significant is the fact that they continue to command attention with undiminished intensity even today, a representative illustration of which is their inclusion in the internationally renowned exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, held at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York.

In this context, a particularly instructive case—and one serving as a constructive reference point for the protection and restoration of the two monuments discussed, the Memorial Cemetery in Priština (1960–1961) and the Monument to Brotherhood and Unity in Priština (1959–1961), which indisputably occupy a pivotal place among comparable solutions in the region and have effectively secured official recognition as exemplars of abstraction within public monumental sculpture—is the Report on the Valorization of the Immovable Cultural Property of the Jasikovac Memorial Complex, adopted in 2022 by the Administration for the Protection of Cultural Property of Montenegro. The Jasikovac Memorial Complex, located above Berane, Montenegro, was designed by architect Bogdan Bogdanović (1972–1977).[7]

Amidst profound socio-political and cultural transformations—and the attendant shifts in the frameworks that confer meaning upon these "sites of memory"—the original impetus behind the creation of these specific and comparable artistic monuments, namely the "dynamics of memory," has undergone a profound

[7] The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Mrs. Violeta Folić, Director of the Polimski Museum in Berane, for her collegial and generous assistance in granting them access to the complete set of relevant documentation, including: Stručni tim. (2022). *Elaborat o valorizaciji nepokretnog kulturnog dobra Spomen kompleks Jasikovac*. Cetinje: Crna Gora, Uprava za zaštitu kulturnih dobara.

inversion, manifesting as a "dynamics of oblivion." These once sacred places have increasingly devolved into arenas of neglect, repudiation, historical revisionism, victim renaming, and, in some instances, outright destruction (Asman, A., 2011, pp. 58–68; Asman, J., 2011, pp. 27–33; Smit, 2010, pp. 226–233).

The "sites of memory" highlighted in this study, along with their creators, have largely become mere material and symbolic vestiges, stripped of their original meanings and messages. Increasingly, they are lost to the passage of time and spatial transformations, fading from the collective memory of the city's inhabitants, who now encounter them only passively. Unfortunately, due to a confluence of circumstances, these memorials have become detached from their historical and cultural contexts. Their preservation and meaningful continuity can only be ensured through rigorous, ongoing reinterpretation and scholarly engagement by dedicated professionals. As Jan Assmann insightfully noted: "Memory reconstructs the past. In this regard, the thesis is posited that the past comes into being through our relationship to it" (Asman, J., 2011, pp. 29–30).

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Два репрезентативна ликовно-просторна остварења комеморације жртава Другог светског рата у топографији Приштине

Резиме

Рад се бави периодом у Југославији након Другог светског рата у коме су неговање револуционарне традиције и тековина Народноослободилачког рата били приоритетни друштвени задаци. Културна политика је у том правцу представљала разнородни и разгранати систем плански координираних акција духовног и материјалног културног простора, потпуно подређеног фактору политичког руковођења. У том контексту се власт одмах определила за скулптуру у јавном простору као значајном медију за ефикасно преношење вредносних идеала, али и спровођења важног задатка – преобликовања идеолошке мапе Нове Југославије.

Кроз призму два ликовно-просторна остварења у Приштини, граду на простору Косова и Метохије – Споменика Народноослободилачкој борби народа Косова и Метохије (1959–1961) скулптора Миодрага Живковића, који се налази у јавном простору на тргу у „новом центру града" који се развијао након Другог светског рата

и Спомен костурнице палих у Народноослободилачкој борби (1960–1961), која се налази на Матичанском брду у насељу Веланија, изнад града Приштине, архитекте Светислава Личине у сарадњи са архитектом Првославом Јанковићем – рад има за циљ да укаже на ова два значајна остварења из угла поимања скулпторске архитектонике и урбане меморије, а у том контексту да нагласи и њихов значај у опусу ова два стваралаца у сфери савремене споменичке изградње у Србији након Другог светског рата. Овде је реч о уметницима чији ауторски рукопис по свему превазилази оквире идеолошких написа и ограничавања. У том контексту су и сагледана њихова дела у Приштини: са једне стране као незаобилазна у опусу уметника, а са друге стране су издвојена из топографије Приштине као кључна „места сећања" на Други светски рат и важна у сагледавању целог спектра сличних меморијала, којима је у периоду након ослобођења мапиран простор бивше Југославије.

Кључне речи: Миодраг Живковић; Светислав Личина; меморијална архитектура; скулптура у јавном простору; заштита градитељског наслеђа; Приштина, Косово и Метохија, Србија.