Heritage on the Margins? Central and Eastern European Perspectives

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

THE 1ST CONFERENCE

of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS)
Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) Chapter

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Heritage on the Margins? Central and Eastern European Perspectives

The 1st conference of Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS) Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) Chapter

@ ZRC SAZU

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about the conference

The history of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) has been characterized by the violent changing of borders and routes ever since World War I and World War II. Post-war events continue to shape everyday local realities, state formations, and displacement of communities. (Self) imposed views on the region's centrality and/or marginality come strongly to the fore when considering these developments, producing inherent diversity.

Socialism and post-socialism can be understood as a unifying experience in the region, but it is also very distinctive when considered alongside historical events and local political developments. How are these diverse historical developments affecting the region's heritage-related processes? What kind of perspectives can be gained from CEE heritage-making processes?

The conference aims to further discuss identified common themes of the Central and East European heritage studies; marginality vs. centrality, the impact of World War I and World War II, the interplay of borders and routes, displacement of people, distinctive legacies of (post)socialism and future CEE heritage prospects. Its intention is to stimulate discussion about how various case studies of heritagization in CEE can contribute to the wider critical heritage studies.

The conference is hosted by the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and co-organized by the ZRC SAZU research program Heritage on the Margins (financed by Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, P5-0408), the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences research program Strategy AV21 - Anatomy of European Society, History, Tradition, Culture, Identity. The conference is held under the auspices of the CEE Chapter of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE

Martina Bofulin, Tjaša Jakop, Špela Ledinek Lozej, Primož Pipan, Marjeta Pisk, Ana Reberc, Nataša Rogelja Caf, Maja Topole, Jiří Woitsch

keynotelectures

Borderstraddling heritage: Defining an agenda

David C. Harvey | Aarhus University, Denmark, and Ali Mozaffari, Deakin University, Australia

Heritage, broadly understood, is fundamental to group identity and the drawing of borders and boundaries. As global connectivities have arisen in recent decades, so too have the consciousness of differences and supposedly essential identities, which are at the heart of understanding borders and boundary-making processes. In this paper, we explore some of the overlaps and conceptual intersections that are at the root of the complex and dynamic relationship between borders and heritage as relational processes. Thus, rather than separating work on borders and heritage, we argue that heritage and borders must be approached as mutually constitutive as heritage-border complexes. Working with, and trying to move beyond 'critical heritage studies', the paper attempts to sidestep the limitations of subscribing to a preconceived framework while opening out what may be called a more-than-critical space, which avoids the outright rejection of efforts by organizations such as UNESCO or the EU, while acknowledging their possible shortcomings. This is a necessarily open-ended effort, which seeks to ask better questions rather than necessarily providing simple answers.

Cultural heritage in once-socialist countries: Heterogeneous ideas on serendipitous ethnography, imagined marginality, and even stranger things on this side of Europe

Alessandro Testa | Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

In this talk, Alessandro Testa relates his personal experience of doing historical and ethnographic research about cultural heritage in one once-socialist country, Czechia (Czechoslovakia), and of doing comparative desk research on several other associate countries with similar contemporary history. These considerations will be aligned with more theoretical insights on how to conceive and analyse marginality anthropologically, as well as, how to think outside the box about it. The talk will also explore the history of the emergence of ideas and practices of heritage in once-socialist countries and the oblique and sometimes complicated relationships between the various players in the game: academics, bureaucrats, amateur ethnologists, cultural experts, communities, tradition-holders, but also transnational institutions fostering heritage policies like the EU and UNESCO. It will also consider national and sometimes even nationalistic agencies such as local cultural associations and organizations. It will pose the question, is there anything specifically "post-socialist" or "Eastern European" about said relationships?

round table
with film screening

Pain, but shame no more: Heritagization of the former psychiatric institutions and institutions for people with disabilities

The Museum of Madness | director Amir Muratović | Round table and film screening

Participants | Sonja Bezjak, Amir Muratović, Rajko Muršič, and Florian Schwanninger
Moderator | Ana Reberc, ZRC SAZU, Slovenia
Convenor | Martina Bofulin, ZRC SAZU, Slovenia

The round table will address the heritagization of former institutions for people with mental and other disabilities. These places have often been characterized by marginality and stigma and housed in infrastructures already burdened with specific or troublesome legacies. The round table will mention two such cases; Castle Cmurek in eastern Slovenia and Hertheim Castle in Upper Austria which have both been recently transformed into heritage institutions; first into the Museum of Madness and the other into the Place of learning and remembrance. The speakers will describe the evolution of such institutions and comment on the processes of the heritagization of this particular form of difficult heritage.

conference **programme**

WEDNESDAY, November 29

Conference day 1 | venue ZRC Atrium, Novi trg 2

08.00 Registration

09.00 **Conference opening**

Welcome address by **Oto Luthar,** ZRC SAZU director, **Špela Ledinek Lozej,** leader of the research programme *Heritage on the Margins,* and **Jiří Woitsch,** coordinator of the ACHS CEE chapter

09.15 **Keynote lecture 1**

David Charles Harvey, Aarhus University, Denmark, and Ali Mozaffari, Deakin University, Australia (presenting D. C. Harvey)

Borderstraddling heritage: Defining an agenda

10.00 Coffee break

10.30 **PANEL 1** | **Re-imagining material heritage part I**

Chair | Monika Stobiecka

Oláh Gábor | City in the landscape, landscape in the city: The Hungarian concept of 'landscape' in the formation of urban heritage (1930-1960)

Miha Kozorog | Animated materiality of the Slovenian-Hungarian border

László Mód | Mobile heritage? Memorial trees of the Doberdo frontline

Olga Nešporová | The forest cemetery in Northern Bohemia – a place of memory, history, and reconciliation

Jernej Gregorač | Marching on memory: Preservation of memory and heritage on the Trail of remembrance and comradeship in Ljubljana

12.30 Lunch (with book presentation corner by Tjaša Jakop: 14.00-14.30 in Prešeren Hall)

14.30 **PANEL 2** | **Re-imagining material heritage part II**

Chair | Monika Stobiecka

Jasna Popović | Brutal destiny of Yugoslav brutalist buildings – case of Belgrade: What are the social and what are the legal reality and future of the best-known examples of Yugoslav brutalist heritage in Belgrade

Monika Stobiecka | Closure or erasure? The reconstruction of the Saxon palace in Warsaw

Frank Rochow | The wider context: Habsburg fortifications beyond their local heritage value

Hanna Mezei | Synagogues as heritage in the post-socialist Hungary

Emina Hodžić | Searching for the Suleiman bridge: Constructing Ottoman heritage in Darda village in Croatia

16.30 Coffee break

17.00 **PANEL 3** | **Pain, but shame no more: Heritagization of the former psychiatric institutions and institutions for people with disabilities**

Chair | Ana Reberc

Round table and film screening *The Museum of Madness* (director Amir Muratović)

Participants | **Sonja Bezjak, Amir Muratović, Rajko Muršič, and Florian Schwanninger**

19.00 **End of day 1**

19.15 Walk to the dinner venue with a short guided tour by Primož Pipan (start at Novi trg 2)

20.00 Dinner

THURSDAY, November 30

Conference day 2 | venue Prešeren Hall, Novi trg 4

09.00 Keynote lecture 2:

Alessandro Testa | Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republik

Cultural heritage in once-socialist countries: Heterogeneous ideas on serendipitous ethnography, imagined marginality, and even stranger things on this side of Europe

09.45 Coffee break

10.00 PANEL 4 | **(Trans)national heritage**

Chair | Daša Ličen

Martina Bofulin | Chinese restaurants: Locating migration heritage beyond the immigration/emigration lens

Anja Moric | Difficulties with heritage in the Kočevska region (Gottschee): Shared heritage, heritage of a (hidden) minority or migration heritage?

Neža Čebron Lipovec | Unveiling place-attachments and heritage dissonances in contested territories of post-socialist northern Istrian built heritage: »Group memory talk«

Katja Hrobat Virloget | Heritage, lieux de oubli and massive migrations: The case of Istria

11.30 Break

11.40 PANEL 5 | **Art, tourism and heritage**

Chair | Pavel Horák

Ivo Strahilov | From the margins to the mainstream? Queering heritage through art and activism in Eastern Europe

Magdalena Marija Meašić | Prokofiev's Soviet operas in the 21st century: To perform, or not to perform, that is the question

Renata Komić Marn | Musealisation of art heritage objects in Slovenia 1945–1965: Contexts, identities, reception

Mateja Habinc | Appropriations of a socialist past in contemporary event tourism

Marjeta Pisk | Intangible cultural heritage in Slovenia: Between the state and heritage communities

13.40 Lunch break

15.00 PANEL 6 | **Post-socialist legacies beyond obvious**

Chair | Martina Bofulin

Jasna Galjer and **Sanja Lončar** | Architecture and its Social Role: From Generator of Local and National Development to Marginalized and Dissonant Heritage

Nina Vodopivec | Industrial herigitization in Slovenia: Industrial workers and their experiences

Patrik Mravik | Crossroad – a participative approach to deal with postsocialist heritage after COVID-19

Ioana Baskerville | The show of the self and the other

16.30 Coffee break

17.00 PANEL 7 | **Politics of heritage**

Chair | Jiří Woitsch

Elena-Maria Cautiș | Whose heritage? The making of the Transylvanian landscape

Hanna Schreiber and Julia Krzesicka | Rethinking "politicization" in UNESCO heritage regimes or: Why bending the rules helps to protect "the spirit of the Convention"

Jasna Fakin Bajec | The intangible cultural heritage of Nova Gorica as seen by local people and professionals

Janine Schemmer | Experiencing dynamic margins – the regional museum SMO

18.45 Closing remarks (all chairs)

Moderator | Nataša Rogelja Caf

19.30 End of the conference (walk to the dinner venue)

20.00 Dinner

FRIDAY, December 1

10.00-12.00 Meeting of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS) Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) Chapter members (venue Prešeren Hall, Novi trg 4)

Chair | Jiří Woitsch

abstracts

PANEL 1 | Re-imagining material heritage part I

Chair | Monika Stobiecka, University of Warsaw, Poland
Venue | Atrium ZRC SAZU, Novi trg 2

Oláh Gábor | Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary

City in the landscape, landscape in the city: The Hungarian concept of "landscape" in the formation of urban heritage (1930-1960)

Nowadays, landscape is one of the most frequently used terms in research on territorial identity and urban heritage. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that after World War I, especially after the Treaty of Trianon (1920), landscape has gradually become an omnipresent, referential concept in Hungarian academic and public discourse. We can observe a proliferation of academic and public reflections around landscape, and the emergence of research programmes where several disciplines and professions came together. During the interwar period, as in other European countries, the landscape as a scientific category was essentially linked to geography. From the 1930s onwards, initiatives to develop the methodology of urban studies also emerged within geography. Simultaneously, the institutionalisation and the scientific-conceptual development of urbanism were taking place. In this context, initiatives to conceptualise landscape also appeared in the discourse on urbanism. After World War II, the landscape emerged during the Stalinist dictatorship of the 1950s, at the time of the "quest" for a socialist realist style. Since the 1960s, the landscape has increasingly been shaped in the context of paradigm shifts in urban heritage, as a "transcendental transmitter"of the almost invisible Hungarian architectural heritage. Thanks to its ambiguity and flexibility, the Hungarian word/concept of landscape, *táj*, has emerged in contexts of conflicting ideological objectives, both as a repository of the modern movement's vision of the past and as a resource for rejecting modernism, or as a research object for universal and interdisciplinary modern science and as a source of tradition. This paper aims to identify the ideological and scientific objectives of the concept of landscape in architectural journals in different socio-political contexts.

Miha Kozorog | ZRC SAZU, Slovenia

Animated materiality of the Slovenian-Hungarian border

Goričko (Slovenia) and Rábavidék (Hungary) are neighbouring regions where the national border has been intensively heritagized after its softening in the 1990s. During the Cold War, this was a heavily guarded border, which later fostered memories of harder – but especially different – times. In Rábavidék, thus, a military post was turned into the Border Guards museum collection, dedicated to the Hungarian piece of the so-called Iron Curtain. Across the border, in Goričko, a Yugoslav military post was renovated into the Border Guardians museum collection, thematising the Yugoslav soldiers' life there and the Slovenian independence war as a prelude to the softening of the border. Besides, several in situ objects have been renovated to represent the border as local heritage, such as two watchtowers in Goričko and a border stone in Rábavidék. An open-air museum, demonstrating the material composition of the Cold War border, was erected as a result of an Interreg cross-border cooperation.

This heritage-making is very much a local project. Indeed, during my ethnographic research along the border, I kept meeting people who were enthusiastically sharing memories of the border. However, something that stands out in these memories is the very materiality of the border, i.e. material and ecological components. Although this is to some degree represented in selected cases of the above-mentioned heritage sites, peculiar materiality is much more vividly preserved in people's memories. Moreover, although one might expect this materiality to be associated with undesirable control, people (especially in Goričko) have fond memories of it. One reason for this is wildlife – today the central local index of the border. As animals cross it to feed in local fields, they stimulate memories of the materiality of isolation. In one village, such materiality was reinvented not merely as a memory site, but to re-establish the biosecurity functioning of the gone border.

László Mód | University of Szeged, Hungary

Mobile heritage? Memorial trees of the Doberdo frontline

Memorial trees of World War I are special pieces of cultural heritage that were cut at the battlefront near the village of San Martino del Carso (Martinščina) during the war. After their removal from the landscape, they were delivered to the hometowns (Szeged, Temesvár/Timisoara) of Regiment 46 and 61. They were musealized and integrated into the historical collections of the local museums. The memorial trees played a different role in the memorialization and heritage construction during the postwar period. Sometimes they were forgotten and abandoned. They came into the spotlight on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of World War I when they were delivered back to the former battlefront and exhibited in the local museum of San Martino del Carso. These projects were completed by Hungarian and Italian civil associations which have been cooperating for a long time in the reconstruction of the war landscape and the renewal of the memorial sites. The paper would like to analyze how memorial trees became temporarily a common cultural heritage that connects symbolically the former enemies.

Olga Nešporová | Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic

The forest cemetery in Northern Bohemia – a place of memory, history, and reconciliation

The presentation focuses on a case study of a special cemetery in Haida/Nový Bor located in the northern part of the Czech Republic. Founded in 1908 and still in use today, it both evokes memories and serves as a special "haven" on the outskirts of the town. I combine ethnographic field research with a study of written sources. I will argue that this cemetery has the potential to reconcile unpleasant episodes of the history of the German population (expelled after World War II) and the Czechs who inhabit the town. The cemetery serves this purpose partly unintentionally at the family level and, even more importantly, at the level of the town and its citizens. I will describe the topography of the cemetery and focus on several memorials that were placed there in connection with both world wars, in terms of their reinterpretation, destruction, and renovation following the political changes over time. Developments after 1989 initially intensified past grievances, while the last decade has witnessed a certain degree of reconciliation. The cemetery retains memories of past inhabitants while, at the same time, serving the living as a park and a place to be proud of. It is a special place that combines historical, cultural and natural aspects.

Jernej Gregorač | Aarhus University, Denmark

Marching on memory: Preservation of memory and heritage on the Trail of remembrance and comradeship in Ljubljana

Ljubljana`s memorial path, the Trail of Remembrance and Comradeship (PST), commemorates the tragic events of World War II in Slovenia when the city was completely surrounded by a barbed wire fence. Thanks to continuous initiatives to preserve this memory, it nowadays serves not only as a memorial to the events of World War II but also as a monument of the Yugoslav post-war socialist legacy, as well as a well-integrated area of the city. In my presentation, I will address the trail as an example of heritage on the intersections of the tangible and the intangible, urban and natural, and memory and contemporary use. I will mostly focus on the processes that shaped the trail under Yugoslav socialism and on how the trail maintains its significance in this day and age by enabling recreational possibilities and raising environmental awareness.

PANEL 2 | Re-imagining material heritage part II

Chair | Monika Stobiecka, University of Warsaw, Poland
Venue | Atrium ZRC SAZU, Novi trg 2

Jasna Popović | Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain

Brutal destiny of Yugoslav brutalist buildings – case of Belgrade: What are the social and what are legal reality and future of the best-known examples of Yugoslav brutalist heritage in Belgrade

There are many ways of looking at Yugoslav heritage – with nostalgia or resentment, happiness or sadness. But one thing is certain, the era has left an important, even ever-present mark on the region´s history and heritage, tangible and intangible. One of the most visible, without any doubt, are the giant examples of brutalist architecture scattered all across ex-Yugoslavia. As they are sharing their destiny with the societies around them, they are often neglected and put aside as a relic of ancient times, a reminder of something that wants to be forgotten. Over the past few years, two cases have especially sparked the interest of the public, civil society, business sector, and finally, legal professionals in Belgrade, Serbia: BIGZ building and Genex Towers. From contemporary artists and associations of tenants to urban planners, these buildings are an inspiration to many, often opposed interests, initiatives, and ideas. The article sets out to examine different aspects of their social reality – citizen participation and activism generated around them on the one side and the legal aftermath of the confrontation of these interests on the other. Finally, it seeks to answer a more philosophical question: How do we feel about the heritage from our past era, and how do we construct heritage narratives around it?

Monika Stobiecka | University of Warsaw, Poland

Closure or erasure? The reconstruction of the Saxon palace in Warsaw

In 2021 the Polish president, Andrzej Duda proposed to the Parliament the idea of reconstructing the Saxon Palace in Warsaw. This neoclassical royal residence, originally designed in baroque style, was destroyed after the Warsaw Uprising during World War II by the German army. The original palace was an impressive complex located in the historical centre of Warsaw. It reflected the complicated history of Poland: especially various colonialisms together with the dawn of noble democracy in the 18th century. After World War I, a part of this site became a memorial to the Unknown Soldier. Shortly before the second war started, the Saxon Palace was the headquarters of the Cipher Bureau and therefore, it is remembered as the site where Poles cracked the Enigma code for the first time. In 1939, the Palace was taken over by the German Wehrmacht and was eventually destroyed. The only part of the monumental complex that survived the explosion was the Unknown Soldier Memorial which still stands as a significant site of memory – not only to the soldiers but also to the resilience of Poles during World War II. The recent decision on the reconstruction of the Palace caused heated political debates. The Unknown Soldier Memorial for many Poles stands as a great monument to the former glory of the Polish kingdom and the fall of the Second Polish Republic during World War II. However,

in the eyes of conservative-populist members of the ruling party, Law and Justice, the reconstruction would have a more profound meaning: it would signal Polish sovereignty, define the Polish identity, have major architectural importance, and finally, provide closure to World War II. In my presentation, I will argue that the heritage values that are inscribed onto the Saxon Palace and its reconstruction are imagined projections (Anderson 1983), and the planned reconstruction will lead to further politicization of the historic centre of Warsaw. I will further prove how the political usage of heritage is shaping the general experience of heritage in Central-Eastern Europe.

Frank Rochow | Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany

The wider context: Habsburg fortifications beyond their local heritage value

Fortresses and fortifications in Central and East Central Europe of the 19th century are difficult heritages. They served as instruments of former imperial polities to maintain their rule over a certain territory. As centres of suppression and hubs of imperial infrastructure, they usually occupied outstanding geographical positions within the urban landscapes of those towns and cities they were designed to dominate. With the dissolution (or geographical shrinking) of the continental empires after World War I, these buildings lost their imperial contexts. The following (nation-)states appropriated these structures, often continuing their military usage and thus perpetuating their exclusion from the civic life of the urban communities. This paper explores the problems that arise from the disrupted history of imperial fortifications and fortresses in Central Europe at the examples of Cracow (Poland) and L'viv (Ukraine). As both fortifications were initially planned in the 1850s, they constituted essential parts of an overall imperial defence strategy of the Habsburg monarchy. Accordingly, their existence and former function can only be understood in connection to each other. However, these regional ties, which are deeply inscribed into the cultural landscape of Central Europe, are rarely taken into consideration today. Instead, a local perspective prevails. By analysing the debates about their heritage value and possible usages for these sometimes vast and architecturally problematic complexes today, potential for a reformulation of local military heritage sites as anchors of a regional Central European identity will be evaluated. The comparison between Cracow and L'viv allows for critical assessment of the role of different local and regional stakeholders in defining and maintaining heritage in urban environments in Central and Eastern Europe.

Hanna Mezei | Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives,
Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

Synagogues as heritage in the post-socialist Hungary

After World War II, the situation of synagogues was unique in Hungary in comparison to other countries in East Central Europe. While most of the synagogues had been demolished in Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Germany, such destruction did not take place in Hungary. However, the problem of abandoned synagogue buildings has been on the agenda ever since, and in relation to that the question of redefining the role of synagogues in cultural heritage. It was a general policy during the 1960s to force certain congregations or the National Bureau of Hungarian Jews to sell the buildings of the synagogues to the government. The government then utilized either the building or the plot, which subverted the memorial sites of the once-prosperous

Jewish community. Since the transition to democracy, more public attention has been paid to synagogues, to their role in local heritage, and their value as historical monuments. But there is no systematic effort to preserve or restore synagogues in general. I will present two synagogues in Hungary as examples to illustrate how heritage conservation processes have evolved in the post-socialist period. One of these is the case of the synagogue in Tokaj, a town in northeastern Hungary. From the 1980s onwards an attempt has been made to renovate the local synagogue, which was finally completed in the early 2000s with EU funding to be used as a cultural center. The other case is the synagogue in Kiskunhalas, a town in Central Hungary, where the renovation of the synagogue was carried out with assistance from civil society after the democratic transition. These two cases are typical examples of the changing role of synagogues in cultural heritage in Hungary.

Emina Hodžić | University of Zagreb, Croatia

Searching for the Suleiman bridge: Constructing Ottoman heritage in Darda village in Croatia

There are still many controversies surrounding the Suleiman Bridge or the Great Osijek Bridge which connected Osijek and Darda in the 16th and 17th centuries and whose construction was ordered by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. This paper aims to examine the practices of constructing and interpreting the Ottoman heritage in Darda, a small village in Eastern Croatia where the recent archaeological research of the remains of the Suleiman Bridge took place. The paper traces the ways of including the Ottoman heritage as a complex and multi-layered cultural phenomenon into the everyday life of the local community, but also the way it has been treated in the public sphere and the way its position changed over the past decade. For this purpose, the Tarda Festival in Darda, a local historical festival dedicated to the period of the Ottoman Empire is analysed. Based on this example, we can detect the transformation of the Ottoman heritage from marginal to acceptable. Various participants are included in these processes, from members of the local community, and NGOs, to the government organizations from Croatia (Darda Municipality, National Tourist Board, Ministry of Culture) and Turkey (TIKA, Yunus Emre Institute), as well as the European Union. The analysis is based on the results of the ethnographic field research conducted in Osijek and Darda, internet sources, newspapers and literature. In 2022, the Archaeological Site of Suleiman Bridge was put on the List of Protected Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia.

PANEL 3 | Pain, but shame no more: Heritagization of the former psychiatric institutions and institutions for people with disabilities

Chair | Ana Reberc, ZRC SAZU, Slovenia
Venue | Atrium ZRC SAZU, Novi trg 2

Round table and film screening The Museum of Madness (director Amir Muratović)

Participants | Sonja Bezjak, Amir Muratović, Rajko Muršič, and Florian Schwanninger

Round table will address the heritagization of former institutions for people with mental and other disabilities. These places have often been characterized by marginality and stigma and housed in infrastructures already burdened with a specific or troublesome legacies. The round table will mention two such cases; castle Cmurek in eastern Slovenia and castle Hertheim in Upper Austria who have both been recently transformed into heritage institutions; first into Museum of Madness and the other into Place of learning and remembrance. The speakers will describe the evolution of such institutions and comment on the processes of the heritagization of this particular form of difficult heritage.

PARTICIPANTS:

Sonja Bezjak, sociologist, working at the Social Science Data Archive at the Faculty of Social Sciences. She is a co-founder of the Museum of Madness and its director inas a volunteer capacity. Her research interests and activism span the fields of cultural heritage and social justice.

Amir Muratović studied film and television directing at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television and at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana. He is the author of numerous documentaries, including The Museum of Madness.

Rajko Muršič is a professor of ethnology/cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. His research focuses on the anthropology of popular music, theories of culture, epistemology, urban anthropology, methodology of anthropological research, sensory studies, digital ethnography and the use of algorithms and system theory.

Florian Schwanninger is an Austrian historian. Since 2005 he has worked at Hartheim Castle – Place for Learning and Remembrance (from 2014 on as a director). His main fields of research and publications are Nazi euthanasia, resistance to National Socialism, history of social movements, Upper Austrian regional history, and culture of remembrance after 1945. He is also co-curator of the redesign of the exhibition "Wert des Lebens" (Value of Life) at Hartheim Castle.

PANEL 4 | (Trans)national heritage

Chair | Daša Ličen, ZRC SAZU, Slovenia
Venue | Prešeren Hall, Novi trg 4

Martina Bofulin | ZRC SAZU, Slovenia

Chinese restaurants: Locating migration heritage beyond the immigration/ emigration lens

In the last few decades, migrants' past experiences and memories have become increasingly recognized as a heritage. While this can be seen as a positive shift towards a more inclusive evaluation of the past, migration heritage is still overwhelmingly portrayed through a binary between the country of origin and the country of settlement. This tendency obscures the multiple transnational connections migrants sustain with different locations along the migration process. Highlighting the example of the Chinese restaurant, this paper examines these as not only the ubiquitous element of an urban landscape but also as the crucial institutions that have shaped how Chinese migration has been received, viewed, and remembered. The paper, therefore, argues in favor of forgoing the national(istic) approach to heritagization and calls for a focus on the connections formed during centuries of Chinese migration between China and the world.

Anja Moric | ZRC SAZU, Slovenia

Difficulties with heritage in the Kočevska region (Gottschee): Shared heritage, heritage of a (hidden) minority or migration heritage?

Kočevska (Gottschee), a mixed-language area in southeastern Slovenia, stands out among Slovenian regions for its often tragic history. The 600-year coexistence of Slovenes and Gottscheers (i.e. Gottschee Germans) in the Kočevska region was interrupted by ethnic differentiations, which intensified especially after the end of World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The conflict reached its climax with the resettlement of the majority (11,500) of Gottscheers to the then-German Reich in 1941/42 based on an agreement between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. After World War II less than 600 Gottscheers remained in Slovenia. Only ruins remained of many derelict villages, while most churches and chapels were demolished in the post-war period due to ideological, anti-religious, and anti-German sentiments. However, the Gottscheer cultural heritage has not disappeared. Since Slovenia's independence in 1991, several Gottscheer associations have been founded in Slovenia and their social and cultural activities have intensified. Moreover, the elements of the (tangible and) intangible cultural heritage from the Kočevska region have spread all over the world, because apart from Slovenia, they are preserved also in the USA, Canada, Austria, and Germany, where the Gottscheer emigrated after the World War II. Based on extensive ethnographic research conducted among Gottscheers in Slovenia, Austria, Germany, the USA, and Canada, this presentation will draw attention to the heritage of the hidden minority of Gottscheers in Slovenia, the understanding and maintenance of the multi-ethnic cultural heritage of the Kočevska region, its representations and reinterpretations in the contemporary Kočevska region as well as in Gottscheer emigrant communities

around the world (symbolic spaces, commemorative practices etc.). It will also address the collective memory of the Gottscheers and the Slovenes, which influences their perception of the (shared) cultural heritage and from which emigration legislation is derived, which excludes Gottscheers abroad from the concept of Slovene emigration.

Neža Čebron Lipovec | University of Primorska, Slovenia

Unveiling place-attachments and heritage dissonances in contested territories of post-socialist northern Istrian built heritage: "Group memory talk"

Contested territories represent a particular challenge for the conservation of built heritage, especially where the power positions of hegemonic groups are inverted, and heritage becomes a central tool of identity-building. Despite obvious processes of symbolic marking and negating in space, many objects survive and have undergone different heritagisation processes, and today frame different heritage discourses. Among the latter, obvious asymmetries appear between authorised and subaltern and dissenting discourses, as well as among the latter themselves. Such is the case of the historic cores of the three small cities of Northern Istria, particularly of Koper/Capodistria, both in relation to historic architecture as well as towards the modernist one, belonging to the socialist past of the region. In this contribution, we shall present two methods that are still being developed within an ongoing project, namely the "group memory-talk" and "group memory-walk". These correlated methods aim primarily at identifying the shared and contested meanings of historic sites, but can act also as a platform for "mutual recognition" (Kisić 2016) of the different groups involved. This method-in-progress is a combination of existing other ones (focus group, impromptu group interview, photo-voice), and works with groups. Key elements of place-attachment(s) arise from the interactions, as well as the obvious dissonances but also latent or unexpected consonances. The outcomes can serve the practical conservation work as has been identified in some cases already. The method stems from an older initiative (I'm telling the story of the town) carried out by the author in Koper in 2012–2014. The approach and the case studies offer an insightful view of the heritage processes in post-socialism.

Katja Hrobat Virloget | University of Primorska, Slovenia

Heritage, lieux de oubli and massive migrations: The case of Istria

The paper will reflect on the borderland heritage linked to massive migrations. The case study is the heritage that was left in the Istrian towns after the so-called "exodus". After the massive migrations of mostly Italians after World War II and massive immigrations, former Yugoslavia's Istria (especially towns) experienced a complete transformation of ethnic, social, and cultural characteristics of the population. The Italians as the previous majority of the urban population have found themselves as a national minority. Knowing that heritage becomes heritage only through the process of heritageization when the material remains of the past are ascribed with symbolic values of the present, the question arises what does heritage mean today to this potpourri of Istrian society? The Istrian case speaks about silenced memories, alternative heritage discourses, the appropriation and interruptions of histories, etc. What does this heritage today mean to the new majority of the urban population, which is not bound to the urban environment by "deep roots" or intergenerational memories? An interesting case study is a memorial plaque from Koper/Capodistria, which can be defined

as “lieu d’oubli” or a place with no meaning for the contemporary inhabitants. Today almost nobody understands a touching inscription reminding of the catastrophic change in a town, except the ones who have gone and few of those who have remained. Reflections will be made also on heritage which can become a “scream” of the silenced, their demonstration of the primacy of residence, on the (dis)continuity of the intangible heritage, on heritage as a nationalization tool, etc. From the discussion on bilingual towns’ names, a question also arises: why are we today afraid of the heritage of the Italian urban past and today’s minority?

PANEL 5 | Art, tourism and heritage

Chair | Pavel Horák, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic
Venue | Prešeren Hall, Novi trg 4

Ivo Strahilov | Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

From the margins to the mainstream? Queering heritage through art and activism in Eastern Europe

This paper explores the intersection of heritage, art, and gender, focusing on how contemporary art and activism challenge, contest, and negotiate established elements of national heritage through queer reinterpretations. By examining recent artist and activist projects in the Balkans and the broader Eastern European region, the study highlights the ways in which these interventions remix and redefine traditional heritage in queer terms to assert a more inclusive understanding of national heritage and belonging while referencing international LGBTQ+ symbols and solidarity. Additionally, the paper traces the emerging trends of heritagization in relation to vernacular LGBTQ+ history and the building of queer archives. The analysis takes into account the hostile reactions from far-right parties and conservative circles towards these initiatives, situating them within the context of increasing ethnonationalism and powerful anti-gender campaigns, which also rely on and strengthen specific heritage discourses. Thus, the paper delves into the concepts of disidentification and counterpublics, as articulated by José Esteban Muñoz, and their application to queer art in Eastern Europe by Anna T. Drawing upon this framework, the study explores how these creative practices engage in the remaking of mainstream symbols to both challenge normative discourses and related invisibility, and open up spaces for alternative expressions of belonging and resistance. Lastly, the paper sheds light on the role of heritage in the region and its performative potential for queering national identity.

Magdalena Marija Meašić | University of Rijeka, Croatia

Prokofiev's Soviet operas in the 21st century: To perform, or not to perform, that is the question

It was during Stalinism that opera got recognized as a particularly fruitful soil to spread ideology, leading to it getting dramatically reshaped in the process we now refer to as the Stalinist or Soviet operatic project. Suddenly the artistic evaluatory apparatus started functioning based on completely different aesthetical norms, and the operatic author obtained a dual nature – he was at the same time an artist as much as he was an ideologist. This paper aims to question the ambiguous status of Soviet operas on Soviet subjects in the 21st century. More precisely, should those operas, whose main purpose was the strengthening of Soviet myth building and the construction of the new Soviet historicity, be permitted to the stage and wide audience, and if so, should the final judgment be based on their aesthetic value or their ideological eligibility? Furthermore, in which way should they be incorporated into the artistic continuum – as an artifact, representing a particular time in the Soviet and Russian cultural trajectory, or should they be approached merely as pieces of art, completely ignoring the complex network of political and ideological connotations surrounding them? All of

these questions will be provoked by closely examining the artistic persona of Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) and his two operas about a Soviet subject, "Semyon Kotko" (1940), depicting the Civil War (1917–1923) in a Ukrainian village, and "The Story of a Real Man" (1948), based on a story of a real-life Soviet hero Aleksey Maresyev (1916–2001) amid World War II, both of which are getting performed to this day. What do these operatic revivals reveal about Prokofiev's artistic persona, Russia's current aggressive politics, the role of art in the 21st century, and the (in)correct treatment of the difficult heritage in general?

Renata Komić Marn | ZRC SAZU, Slovenia

Musealisation of art heritage objects in Slovenia 1945–1965: Contexts, identities, reception

In the autumn of 1947, a special commission took control of the national assets of cultural and historical importance that had been collected at the Federal Collecting Centre (FZC) in Ljubljana. The art historian and conservator France Stele, Director of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, was appointed as an expert in fine arts. The reason for the creation of the commission was simple: the inventories, and in particular the recording of loans of paintings and objects to various individuals, organisations, and public institutions, that had been carried out from autumn 1946 to autumn 1947, were not satisfactory and did not allow for proper supervision of distribution and stock. Therefore, from 15 October 1947 onwards, France Stele compiled lists of paintings, sculptures, and works on paper remaining in the FZC's warehouses in Ljubljana, indicating for each object to which state institution it should be assigned. In the proposed paper, Stele's vision of a new network of Slovenian museums is presented. The plan included the establishment of several new thematic museums or special collections within existing ones, and a gallery at the newly founded Academy of Fine Arts, with the National Museum, the National Gallery, and the Academy Gallery in Ljubljana as the central institutions. However, subsequent developments show that this vision did not represent the cultural needs of the newly created state, the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Stele's plans can be understood as a part of an urgent and hasty measure that was introduced after 1947 to distribute a large amount of confiscated and nationalised cultural goods collected during and after World War II. The FZC in Ljubljana was finally emptied only in 1951. However, some of the art heritage objects that had been kept there have still not found a suitable home.

Mateja Habinc | University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Appropriations of a socialist past in contemporary event tourism

The analysis of contemporary events and festivals taking place in three national parks, Triglav National Park (Slovenia), Kozara National Park (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Sutjeska National Park (Bosnia and Herzegovina), will be a starting point for the discussion about the variety of appropriations of the socialist past of those environments. The events that are nowadays presented as traditional events will be considered and the following questions will be asked: what is considered a tradition of the mentioned parks, to what period, social group, and contexts in general this tradition is linked, what is present and at the same time missing when the socialist past of those three parks is considered? Triglav National Park, Kozara, and Sutjeska National Parks have very diverse histories and the reasons for founding all three parks vary as well. How this is

linked with their contemporaneity and especially with the contemporaneity of the events their organisers present as traditional will, therefore, be addressed in the presentation. What is marginalised from which past, what is on the other hand exposed and perhaps also used as a marketing strategy and how the appropriations differ will therefore be the main focus of the presentation.

Marjeta Pisk | ZRC SAZU, Slovenia

Intangible cultural heritage in Slovenia: Between the state and heritage communities

Intangible cultural heritage, which received special institutional attention in most socialist countries, includes traditional music and dances. Although Slovenia, which at the time was still part of Yugoslavia, did not have a state folklore ensemble, unlike most socialist countries, the protection and presentation of folk dances and music was always the domain of state and cultural institutions. This meant that certain genres were favoured, expert judgments were made, and certain life practices were deemed non-traditional. The emergence of folklore groups, through their organised activities and competitions, led to a demarcation between living practices and those officially recognised as traditional. Using the example of the folklore festival Jurjevanje in Črnomelj, I will show how there has been a shift from the traditional bearers of ritual to the folklore group, which can now be understood as a heritage community. How has the institutional maintenance of certain genres of intangible heritage changed not only their forms but also heritage communities? I will trace the transformation of the Green George (*jurjevanje*) ritual in Črnomelj and its bearers from a ritual to a festival and to a new form of local event.

PANEL 6 | Post-socialist legacies beyond obvious

Chair | Martina Bofulin, ZRC SAZU, Slovenia
Venue | Prešeren Hall, Novi trg 4

Jasna Galjer and Sanja Lončar | University of Zagreb, Croatia

Architecture and its social role: From generator of local and national development to marginalized and dissonant Heritage

This paper is dedicated to the architectural heritage, numerous in European countries, that includes multifunctional spaces and buildings for (adult) education and culture such as reading rooms, workers' and people's universities, community and people's centers, cultural centers, clubs, etc. This architecture, created in the 19th century, has since assumed different social roles in connection to different historical periods and political, social, and cultural contexts. Also, it has been used in different ways to meet the needs of socio-economic, ideological, political, cultural, or artistic, educational, and cultural production. In the presentation, the focus is on multifunctional sites, spaces, and buildings for (adult) education and culture that were built in Croatia in the second half of the 20th century, during the socialist period. During the last 30 years, changes in socio-political systems, war events, deindustrialization, and depopulation have resulted in transformations of these buildings in terms of their use, maintenance, financing, organization, and management, activities, societal perceptions, and roles. Due to the post-socialist transition, these buildings have been found in a new context – becoming unwanted heritage, or continuing their activity, sometimes under different names and within different educational and cultural contents. Following on from previous research (Galjer, Lončar and Rubić 2018; Galjer and Lončar 2019; Galjer and Lončar 2021), the authors bring insight into the functioning of the construction and use of community centers on the local level, in the socialist and post-socialist period. The authors analyze three case studies from different regions in Croatia: Pula and its surroundings (Istria region), Koprivnica and its surroundings (Podravina region), and Sisak and its surroundings (Central Croatia), in order to indicate the similarities and differences in the planning and construction of the buildings and institutions, as well as the changes they have undergone until today. Based on the results of the analysis, the authors discuss the changing social roles of architecture in local, national, and international contexts.

Nina Vodopivec | Institute of Contemporary History, Slovenia

Industrial heritagization in Slovenia: Industrial workers and their experiences

Based on the study of memories and experiences of textile workers in Slovenia over the last 20 years in the context of the post-socialist transformation, I show the gap that exists in the field of industrial heritagization in Slovenia. Social and political representations of industrial processes in Slovenia are associated with socialism and therefore treated within this socio-political relationship with the past political regime. Although industrial workers have eventually found their place in some plays, films, and regional museums, their memories and everyday experiences remain absent from the broader socio-political or even academic space. This paper critically examines heritagization from the perspective of industrial workers, their experiences,

and their interpretation in the context of the country's political-economic restructuring. To this end, the case study of the Mura garment factory in Murska Sobota, which collapsed in 2009, is presented. Industrial workers' narratives of the factory's loss are explained in the context of dispossession, the anthropology of labour, literature on deindustrialization, post-socialist and transitional studies, my own long-term research on industrial workers, the history of Yugoslav self-management and contemporary representations of industrial workers, and the search for a postindustrial future in the city and the region. The question of who has the right to be heard, how these representations are interpreted, and also who might ultimately represent the factory will be discussed.

Patrik Mravik | Ferenczy Museum in Szentendre, Hungary

Crossroad – a participative approach to deal with postsocialist heritage after COVID-19

Crossroad is a research project which started in early 2022 by the Ferenczy Museum (Szentendre). The aim of the experiment was to create a discussion in the local community to deal with the postsocialist heritage of the city. The title came from the name of the actual road (road number 11), built in the late 1970s. This road cut the city into two pieces, in the name of socialist modernization. The old city center (east side) became one of the biggest tourist attractions in the Kádár era, and the west side developed into a peaceful and green small town. The wide and dangerous highway remains a huge problem today, however, the history of the construction and the social effects of the socialist past are also not processed by the community. The definitive political decision that intruded on the people was against most city architects' initiatives, and several people lost their homes in effect. Beyond the physical conversion, as a symbol of socialist modernization, the road formed the perceptions of the city as well. There is the myth of the nostalgic old city, the center of Hungarian art, full of passion and kindness on the one hand. On the other hand, the local community who is living on the other side faces the recent tendencies of professional tourism and commercialization. Crossroad-project attempts to deal with this complex heritage through three major methods. The first part is a historical analysis of the construction and the social consequences (oral history interviews and newspapers' content analysis). The second part aims to understand the citizen's recent attitudes toward the townscape and perceptions of the city through a questionnaire. The third part deals with the children's perceptions of the city, through mental mapping. In my presentation, I will present the observations of the research, the potentials, and the barriers of a participative museological project dealing with postsocialist heritage in Eastern Europe after COVID-19.

Ioana Baskerville | The Romanian Academy – Iasi Branch, Romania

The show of the self and the other

The paper will take into account a comparison between living forms of winter masking still popular in Romanian areas and the ethnographic documents of this phenomenon belonging to the Folklore Archive of Moldavia and Bucovina – a database of documents on beliefs and customs of rural inhabitants in northeastern Romania resulting from fieldwork research undertaken by local folklorists since the 1970s until today. The Romanian folk carnival performed in rural localities between Christmas and New Year showcases a

bewildering heterogeneity, having received not only urban cultural influences, but also foreign ones coming from the West as well as from the East, i.e. from German and Hungarian sources through Transylvania and Bucovina regions, and Byzantine-Oriental influences due to the long period of Ottoman domination over the Romanian Principalities. If the Western forms have more of a religious content, the oriental ones belong to a secular incipient urban environment and were brought to the courts of the Wallachian and Moldavian kings by their Greek and Turkish guests. During the communist times, these ritual performances were instrumentalized and simplified to fit in the nationalist cultural propaganda, while their ritualistic features were overshadowed and their contribution to the national heritage was emphasized. In contemporary settings, these performances offer the possibility to observe the long-term negotiations between ethnic Romanian features and many other cultural influences – especially given the Romanian culture's position between the West and the East –, and how these various cultural features contributed to the intricate heritage-making process of these customs. Additionally, these rituals included and displayed the intercultural relationships specific to the various societies and communities of the Romanian lands during different timeframes. The ethnic other(s) are therefore essentialized and transformed within these carnival rituals, and their presence and roles in contemporary performances may raise allegations of intolerance and discrimination.

PANEL 7 | Politics of heritage

Chair | Jiří Woitsch, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic
Venue | Prešeren Hall, Novi trg 4

Elena-Maria Cautiș | University of Ferrara, Italy

Whose heritage? The making of the Transylvanian landscape

The totalitarian communist regime and its subsequent fall in Romania has caused deep societal fractures in terms of changing demographics and negotiating cultural identities, with its reverberations still felt today. Whilst this represents a generalized state, as Romanian citizens attempt to reclaim or build new identities, the Transylvanian region offers a strong reflection of both the consequences of these changes and deeper historical challenges. The region's most notorious heritage is that of the so-called Saxon inhabitants, who fled the country during and, in large numbers, right after the fall of the regime. The demographic gap was filled by other ethnic populations, who often found themselves in conflict with this inheritance. I argue that this conflict could be analyzed as a conflict of cultural values. On the opposite side of this relationship, later trends have emerged as romanticizing movements of this heritage. Beyond the romantic aura of the Transylvanian landscape, lies an assemblage of social relations marked on one hand by social inequalities and in a continuous negotiation with the environment. The strictly conservationist paradigm within the heritage sector in the country has been focused on preserving or restoring a status quo with respect to cultural values, rather than seeking to explain the relationships manifested in the current landscape. The aim of this paper is to explore the entanglements that have led to the building of the official heritage and the heritage apparatus in Transylvania, with a particular focus on rural landscapes. The question that I am focusing on is: what kind of worlding practices are current heritage practices in the region and could these be improved? These reflections are key if we want to imagine alternative scenarios which seek to tackle social inequalities, whilst tending to blur the nature/culture divide.

Hanna Schreiber and Julia Krzesicka | University of Warsaw, Poland

Rethinking "politicization" in UNESCO heritage regimes or: Why bending the rules helps to protect "the spirit of the Convention"

The "politicisation" of decision-making processes regarding UNESCO heritage lists is the source of most (if not all) tensions in the regime. The very process of politicisation in GHRs has already been extensively researched and defined as driven by countries' political influence and national strategic interests, namely, international recognition, prestige, and the associated potential economic boost and tourism revenue (Bertacchini et al. 2016). In heritage research discourse, politicisation is widely seen as a problem because it challenges the very idea behind the establishment of the UNESCO Heritage Conventions 1972 and 2003, often recalled as "the spirit of the Conventions" which is to safeguard "heritage of Humanity" instead of "making deals" about inscriptions. Consequently, the promoted solution is to avoid "the political" at all costs (Brumann 2021: 20) and respect and follow the allegedly apolitical experts' recommendations on what to

inscribe or not, which are made to the Intergovernmental Committees by the Evaluation Body in the case of the 2003 Convention and by advisory bodies such as ICOMOS (cultural elements) and IUCN (natural elements) in the case of the 1972 Convention. In this paper, however, I would like to show that contrary to the existing approach, "politicisation" is crucial for achieving the needed consensus, for going beyond bureaucratic rules, and for showing an understanding of the diversity of political, social, and economic conditions of different states and diverse geographical regions. The paper is be based on the author's long-term participant observation in UNESCO meetings as well as semi-structured interviews conducted with actors of UNESCO heritage regimes.

Jasna Fakin Bajec | ZRC SAZU, Slovenia

The intangible cultural heritage of Nova Gorica as seen by local people and professionals

"How to understand cultural heritage in the modern, global world?" is a key question that researchers of heritage practices must continually ask themselves. The role, meaning, and significance of cultural heritage change according to current socio-political, cultural, and economic demands and different national and international needs and interests. In contemporary society, there is still a wide gap between what is set out in international and national conventions and strategies to protect cultural heritage and the reality in the communities where people live. Most people from civil society, political and administrative spheres still associate cultural heritage only with the preservation and protection of material achievements, while the social, cultural and developmental potentials of intangible or "living" cultural heritage are insufficiently recognised. An important part of intangible heritage is also the personal and collective memories of people who, through various cultural practices (researching local history, storytelling, teaching, warning, protesting, or resisting) build relationships in communities, emotional responses, and values toward objects that are publicly designated as tangible heritage. The question is whether the various professionals and policy-makers are able to listen to the people who preserve their personal and collective heritage through various actions. How should intangible heritage be understood in the context of integrated or holistic protection and management of cultural heritage, in which experts, policy-makers, civil society, and entrepreneurs should work together? How can civil society be empowered and encouraged to see intangible heritage as a resource for reflection on their own and local identity, collective experiences and knowledge, and as a resource for well-being in the future? The aim of this paper is to reflect on the processes of making intangible cultural heritage in Nova Gorica – a Slovenian city often referred to as "young", "new", "border city", "modernist" or "rose city", and which, due to its short history (75 years) associated with the socialist and post-socialist system, is still in search of symbols to straighten its urban identity. Since the original inhabitants of the city were from the surrounding rural areas, and after a few years residents from other republics of the former Yugoslavia migrated to the city, today's residents have a different attitude towards the past, the appreciation of human achievements and what could be the "living" heritage of the city. Are their thoughts related to the discourse conducted by the professional and political public?

Janine Schemmer | University of Klagenfurt, Austria

Experiencing dynamic margins – the regional museum SMO

Throughout the twentieth century, the inhabitants of the area were confronted with global conflicts as well as with nation-state ideologies. The Italian nation-building process turned a Slovene-speaking population who had lived in the valleys for centuries into an ethnic minority. In the nineteenth century, measures were taken to prevent the inhabitants from speaking the standard Slovene dialect. During the fascist dictatorship, these policies came to a head. Speaking Slovene was forbidden altogether, affecting politics and individual positioning ever since. The SMO, short for *Slovensko multimedialno okno*, carries its aims in its name: the Slovene name emphasises language as a connecting element in the border region; as a multimedia museum, it pursues an interactive approach; *okno* stands for window and refers to cross-border relations. Focusing on intangible heritage, the museum enables visitors to understand the cultural landscape and stages it as a unifying element – through storytelling, visual representations, and soundscapes. In doing so, it casts new light on long-standing conflicts. I would like to reflect on how the exhibition counteracts hegemonic discourses and transcends the boundaries of established narratives as well as the common understanding of the center and periphery through sensory and aesthetic experience.

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