European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards (2024)

732-Citizens' Engagement & Awareness-raising 4. Citizens' Engagement & Awareness-raising

Silence that Tore Down the Monument

gDppVbQq

Entry details

General information

Main country of application	Croatia
Registration number	HA2024-HR-06

Brief description of the project

> This project and exhibition revitalizes Vojin Bakić's monumental sculpture, demolished in 1992, using Augmented Reality. The stainless steel masterpiece, crafted from 1958-1968, once Europe's largest abstract sculpture, fell during the Yugoslav War. Commemorating its thirtieth anniversary, it confronts the systematic eradication of anti-fascist monuments. Meteorological data discredits the media's erroneous reports on its demise. Through a multimedia endeavor, featuring a temporary LED screen and AR-enabled QR code, the sculpture's legacy is revived and honored, while the focus of the exhibition is on the processes of construction and demolition of the monument through various documents, films, photos, and newspaper articles.

Start date of the project	2022-09-05
Website(s) of the project/nominee	https://silence-monument.com
Facebook page of the project, if any	https://web.facebook.com/tisinaspomenik
Twitter page of the project, if any	https://twitter.com/tisina_spomenik
Instagram page of the project, if any	https://www.instagram.com/tisina_spomenik/?hl=en
Any other relevant social media	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMIqn8OH6YqjWwBRgMviWTQ
Does the site or heritage in question have national/regional/local cultural heritage designation or protection status in its country?	No

Is the site or heritage in question included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, either as a single World Heritage Site or as part of one larger site?	No
If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to the public?	Yes

If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to people with disabilities?

> The site has been derelict and not in use for decades with access roads covered up with wild plants and trees. Actions taken up within this project made it accessible.

Contact details

Name of the entrant	Eugen Jakovčić
Entrant's position	Spokesman
Organisation of the entrant	Serbian National Council
Address of the entrant	Gajeva 7, 10000 Zagrbe, Croatia
Email address of the entrant	eugen.jakovcic@snv.hr
Please confirm entrant's email	eugen.jakovcic@snv.hr
Additional email addresses	

> snv@snv.hr

Telephone of the entrant (fixed line)	+38514886368
Telephone of the entrant (mobile number)	+385994615255
Website of the entrant	https://snv.hr
Organisation of the owner	Serbian National Council
Name of the project leader	Milorad Pupovac
Project leader's position	President
Organisation of the project leader	Serbian National Council
Email of the project leader	snv@snv.hr
Telephone of the project leader	+385994615255

Other relevant participants

Sandro Đukić - CCN images - author
Davorka Perić - Serbian Cultural Society (Prosvjeta) - curator
Lana Lovrenčić - Institue for the history of art - professional associate & author of the Discursive Program
Milorad Pupovac - Serbian National Council - authorr of the project concpet
3D Modeling & AR Supervision: Boris Hergešić (Dream Box)
Programmers: Ivica Škrobo, Franjo Badurina
Video and Photo Documentation: Viktor Zahtila
Communications and Social Media: Aleksandar Blažina
Website: Mihael Giba
Visual Identity: Igor Stanišljević (Parabureau)
Production Assistant: Vesna Janković

Concise summary

Concise summary

The "Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonia" in Kamenska, Croatia, a towering thirty-meter stainless steel sculpture created by Vojin Bakić from 1958 to 1968, stood as Europe's largest abstract sculpture, a testament to Bakić's avant-garde vision. Tragically, it met its demise in 1992 during the Yugoslav War, enduring a five-day assault and nine attempts at destruction.

This initiative seeks to resurrect the monument through Augmented Reality (AR) technology, employing artist Sandro Đukić's expertise. It strives to reclaim the silenced history and spotlight the enduring presence of this significant work. Meteorological data refutes earlier claims that the monument fell due to natural causes, dispelling the prevailing narrative.

A temporary installation on a colossal LED screen, designed by Đukić, will reanimate the monument, offering a window into its original glory. Additionally, a permanent fixture featuring an informational panel and a QR code, facilitated by AR, will further ensure the enduring presence of the monument.

This project challenges revisionism and advocates for a positive embrace of an anti-fascist legacy. It aims to celebrate not only the ideological underpinning of the original monument but also the artistic prowess of Vojin Bakić. By fusing modern technology with historical significance, the project endeavors to honor Bakić's legacy and the enduring values embodied in his creation.

In examining the meticulous craftsmanship and symbolic essence of the original sculpture, the project confronts the process of "damnatio memoriae." Over 2000 anti-fascist monuments have met a similar fate since 1991, underscoring the imperative to remember and learn from history. Through the meticulous reconstruction and innovative use of AR technology, the project strives not only to resurrect a lost masterpiece but also to foster a deeper understanding of the socio-political epoch it represented.

This monumental endeavor promises to resonate far beyond its physical manifestation, potentially serving as a paradigm for similar endeavors in the realm of historical preservation and cultural resurgence. It is a tribute to Vojin Bakić's indelible contribution to Croatian modernist sculpture and an impassioned call to preserve the legacy of anti-fascist ideals.

As part of the project Silence that Tore Down the Monument, the exhibition will focus on the processes of construction and demolition of the sculpture, as well as the social context and media reactions that follow the creation and disappearance of Vojin Bakić's sculpture Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonia.

Objectives and work undertaken

Aims and objectives of the project/initiative

> The project firstly resurrects from oblivion Vojin Bakić's "Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonia", with an artistic installation in place of the demolished memorial. Using Augmented Reality technology the original monument was restored through a new work of art created by the multimedia artist Sandro Đukić.
> On the thirtieth anniversary of the physical destruction of Bakić's monument, which paradigmatically points to a policy of systemic destruction of anti-fascist monuments commemorating the National Liberation Struggle and the negligence that facilitated this destruction and persists to this day, the project breaks the silence and shows that despite it being demolished, the monument and the events it commemorates are, to this day, ingrained into peoples' consciousness and world art history (Kultermann, Venturi, Read).
> The project's title shines a light on the Silence from the meteorological data on the day of the destruction of the monument and ties it to the silence of the governing institutions and the media around that destruction. In this way, the project not only raises awareness of the cultural and artistic value of Bakić's monument but underlines the lack of response to its destruction. Even though the perpetrators of this act are known (the monument was torn down by the Croatian Army), even though this act is a violation of the Hague Convention, no one was ever prosecuted for this crime.
> Through the exhibition and the symposium, the project fights against all forms of revisionism and advocates for a positive stance towards an anti-fascist past.

Any historical and technical research undertaken for the project/initiative

> Although at this stage of the project, no new historical research was undertaken, the project relied on desk research, available archival materials and documents, photo documentation as well as existing testimonies.
>
> In the realm of technical research pertaining to 3D modeling, specialized software was employed to meticulously craft and animate a representation of the sculpture intended for application. Vintage photographs captured from diverse perspectives, alongside archival drawings, were integrated within Autodesk Maya software. While precise alterations to the model's dimensions were unattainable through digital means, the grandiose scale of the monument tested the limits of technological capability. Striking a delicate equilibrium between conceptual notions of the object's size and the constraints of the available technology, we diligently adhered to the fidelity of the original design.
>
> Leveraging the robust capabilities of the Google engine, the lighting of the 3D model faithfully emulates the ambient environment in which the actual monument originally stood, accounting for factors such as light intensity, color reflections, and prevailing weather conditions. This approach ensures that the digital reconstruction remains in close proximity to the authenticity of the original piece. Despite its digital nature, this project entails an engagement with tangible spatial considerations and encounters real-world elements.

Activities carried out and stages of implementation of the project/initiative

> The stages of implementation were as follows:
>
> Setting up of the studio at the gallery of the Serbian Cultural Society Prosvjeta. From this studio the creative team: Sandro Đukić, Davorka Perić, Lana Lovrenčić and Eugen Jakovčić, alongside professional associates, gathered relevant documents and archival materials, digitised and processed visual materials and data, envisioned and produced the virtual installation as well as the exhibition.
>
> The launching event brought together more than 400 participants. Alongside people from the villages surrounding the monument the event was attended by members of the Association of Antifascist Fighters and Antifascist of Croatia, artists, curators and cultural workers working with modernist art and socialist heritage, peace activists and civil society representatives, representatives of the Serbian national minority in Croatia and many interested members of the general public. Before the launching of the virtual installation the participants had an opportunity to visit other memorial sites in the vicinity of the monument (the famous mosaic "Battle of Šušnjari" by painter Edo Murtić, the demolished monument "Signpost" by sculptor Stevan Luketić as well as the site of Ustaše crimes against local serbian civilians during WWII at the village Dočić). The culmination of the event was the launching of the virtual resurrection of the monument on site followed by a sound art installation by contemporary musician Marko Paunović.

The virtual installation followed an exhibition documenting the original monument and its virtual resurrection. The exhibition curated by Davorka Perić and Eugen Jakovčić was open to the public for two weeks at the Prosvjeta gallery in Zagreb. The exhibition was followed by a symposium. Through a series of lectures as well as one round table speakers addressed various topics artistic approaches to commemoration, protection of socialist heritage to use of digital platforms in archiving socialist heritage.

Challenges or problems encountered and solutions found to overcome them

The first challenge encountered was the availability of materials about the monument. Through years of neglect, all the construction documentation has been lost. We managed to construct a virtual 3D model from archival photos of the site with the use of Autodesk Maya.

The second great challenge was the accessibility of the site as it was overgrown with plants and the surrounding forest. We managed to clear the site through cooperation with the Požega Slavonian County and the Croatian Forests. The most significant contribution was by the local community, over 50 locals volunteered and took part in the action of clearing up the site.

Lastly, we were faced with the continuous lack of support and collaboration on part of relevant institutions, namely the Ministry of Culture in gathering relevant documentation about the monument. Here we managed to overcome this obstacle by relying on the benevolence of individuals working in institutions.

Results and impact

Summary of the main results achieved and knowledge that has been gained. List the ways that the project/initiative contributes to the preservation and/or enhancement of the historical, cultural, environmental, educational and/or social values of the heritage in question. Mention the project's impact on conservation policy and practice, if any.

The main and biggest result of the project is the virtual reconstruction of the monument through a 3D model which was shown at the location but can also be accessed via a QR code and an application making it thus widely accessible.
This is also its most innovative part which contributes to the use of digital and AR technologies in heritage conservation. By developing an app which is free and accessible to all, as well as turning the project website into an archive on the monument, anyone can learn about the monument and see its original state.
ALso, the decision to employ AR technologies underlines the lack of the original sculpture on the location, pointing to the systematic destruction and negligence over antifascist memorials in Croatia. In this way the project fosters values of not just antifascism, but also multiculturalism, tolerance, democracy and mutual aid which were at the core of the People's Liberation Struggle during WWII. Lastly, this is the first use of AR technology to resurrect demolished antifascist monuments in the geographies of former Yugoslavia and as such this action paves the way for a different approach to the revitalisation of these heritage sites. Rather than just restoring the monuments, which would erase the violence of their destruction, this project pushes the idea of a non-space or a negative space into conservation practices. In this way the site of the monument lives on as a space open for new interpretations, new practices of commemoration and togetherness.

Aspects of the project that can be considered innovative within its area or field.

The innovation in the project is the use of AR technology to reconstruct a demolished monument, which is a first of this kind at a site of a demolished antifascist monument in the geographies of former Yugoslavia. This made it possible not only to reinterpret the monument in a contemporary manner, but also to underline its lack, thus transforming the space of the monument into a non-space, a space of utopia. In this way, the site of the monument was torn away from oblivion and from layers of historical revisionism. It was also given back to the community, the surrounding villages and its inhabitants, to reclaim it as a historical site as well as a space for future encounters and activities.

Measures to ensure the sustainability/future viability of the project (in terms of future plans and funding).

In our endeavor, we received invaluable support from the local heritage protection office. This pivotal collaboration has paved the way for us to embark on the journey of reinstating heritage protection for the site. This not only signifies a commitment to preserving its historical significance but also ensures that the diligent hands of the local communal company will oversee its maintenance.

Furthermore, we are diligently crafting a program that will grace the location on special occasions. This initiative serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it aims to foster a sense of community and bring people together in celebration. Secondly, it plays a crucial role in keeping the site firmly entrenched in the cultural community's collective consciousness. This dynamic program promises to be a vibrant tapestry of events, breathing life into this cherished location and forging enduring connections within the community.

Environmental sustainability of the project and contribution to climate action (in terms of results, techniques, materials employed, methodologies etc.), if relevant.

In terms of environmental sustainability of the project, given that the project relies on AR and digital technologies the carbon footprint is rather low. But the bigger long-term impact is in the reuse of good practices of conservation that were pioneered in Yugoslavia at the time of the erection of the monument. The monument was part of a wider "memorial area", a conservation category coined in socialist Croatia combining historical heritage sites, with natural landscape preservation and sustainable spatial planning. In terms of techniques, approaches and methodologies, these practices nowadays seem like science fiction and can significantly contribute to the reframing of conservation politics towards being more environmentally aware.

Dissemination of the project's results and knowledge gained and any outreach or educational activities.

In terms of dissemination, our presence has been resoundingly impactful. We've garnered attention across an extensive array of mainstream media outlets, securing spots on five to six major television stations during coveted prime-time news slots. Beyond this, our influence extended to an array of television culture programs and news segments, and we've also made significant strides in the realm of online streaming television. The collective viewership on our webpage and digital channels stands at an impressive count of over 100 thousand individuals.

Furthermore, we're currently in the process of a promising initiative aimed at inviting students to experience our exhibition over the next two weeks. This includes not only students from the fine arts discipline but also those with a history major. This collaborative effort not only promises to enhance the depth of engagement with our exhibition but also fosters a dynamic exchange of perspectives and insights.

Participation in the initiative (number of participants/audience/users per year and/or, in the case of websites and digital platforms, information regarding visitor numbers and online interaction).

- 50 volunteers cleaned the location
- 400 people attended the event
- over 200 visitors visited the exhibiton so far
- on our online platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, web) we have reacehd gaine dover 150 thousand visitors
- the project was shown on various TV channels, including 5 major mainstream networks
- on our YouTube channel we have accumilated close to 20 thousand views and facilited many cultural discussions

Involvement of youth, community and/or non-traditional audiences.

The involvement of the local community in this project hinged on two pivotal aspects. Firstly, there was a concerted effort to engage and empower the national minority community, fostering their active participation in the initiative. This was achieved by creating a platform that celebrated their cultural heritage and encouraged unity around shared spaces. Secondly, the project itself was deeply rooted in the collective memory and enduring traditions of anti-fascism.

This historical context holds immense significance for the local community, as it represents a period when diverse national groups collaborated harmoniously. Preserving this sentiment serves as a poignant reminder and an earnest endeavor to

reconstruct and foster a more profound mutual understanding. In essence, it is a dedicated effort to revisit the powerful concept of collaboration, which remains integral to the fabric of the community's identity.

Contribution to intercultural dialogue and to the protection of cultural diversity.

Promoting Awareness: The project brings attention not only to the unique artistic work of sculptor Vojin Bakić, but moreover to the values of antifascism which include: tolerance, peace and internationalism.

Facilitating Conversations: The project provides space for conversation about antifascist and Yugoslav cultural heritage.

Education and Information Sharing: Through the discursive program and the web the project shares stories about forgotten histories and fascist crimes in the Požega region. It also educates about the destruction of socialist heritage in modern day Croatia.

Artistic Expression: The artistic installation transcends cultural, political and ethnic barriers of the communities living in the area of the monument in this way transforming the memorial site into a place of dialogue and understanding.

Addressing Controversial Issues: The project openly addresses contentious topics that relate to difficult heritage, seeking to find ways in which this heritage could become part of the social tissue of Croatia.

Transferability of the initiative to other contexts and its scalability potential.

Throughout the project's development, intriguing questions arose regarding what aspects to preserve and advance. While maintaining the physical space is crucial, preserving the underlying concept holds even greater significance. We've taken steps to achieve this by implementing a QR code and augmented reality feature at multiple locations. Currently, we've secured agreements with the Museum of Contemporary Art in both Zagreb and Belgrade to host an exhibit featuring a QR code for one year in Zagreb and six months in Belgrade. Looking ahead to early 2024, the exhibition will expand to Vienna. In tandem, we plan to replicate the monument in front of the gallery, a move aimed at nurturing the collective idea that unites us. This initiative embodies our commitment to not only safeguarding a space, but also nurturing a lasting concept. Moreover, we are actively exploring partnerships with local schools to integrate educational programs about the project.

European and international dimension

European significance of the project/initiative/nominee.

The Silence That Destroyed the Monument can serve as a prototype for a contemporary kind of cultural preservation in Europe. The augmented reality app not only commemorates historical sites - it makes them visible and digitally accessible. It is a technologically innovative educational tool that future generations could use to engage with and learn about heritage in a modern way. The construction of great monuments in the former Yugoslavia aimed at regional revitalization. Likewise, restoring heritage sites by virtual technology can attract tourists and cultural enthusiasts, encouraging them to visit these locations, learn about their history, and engage with the local communities. Finally, growing this project to include other heritage sites in the region will connect various regional stakeholders into a cultural network. This will encourage transnational cultural cooperation, which is a core European value that also reflects the spirit in which antifascist monuments in Yugoslavia were originally built.

Costs of the project/initiative

Costs of the project (in euro), financial and management arrangements, funding partners and/or the type of funding.

The project cost around 70000 EUR: 2/3 of the amount was spent on technical production of the artistic installation. The rest of the costs included fees for professional associates, technical equipment, clearing of the site, transport, production costs of

the event, the exhibition and the symposium, production of the website, PR. The project was fully financed by the Serbian National Council through public funding received for its annual activities from the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The financial administration and management of the project was conducted by the financial department and the Zagreb office of the Serbian National Council. Through cooperation with the Požega Slavonian County as well as the Croatian Forests parts of the preparatory activities (clearing of site etc.) were directly covered. Over 50 volunteers contributed to the clearing of the site and the preparation of the virtual reenactment of the monument. In kind contributions towards PR and dissemination have been made by the weekly print Novosti and VIDA production which are both sisterly organisations of the Serbian National Council.

Funding provided by the European Union or the EEA/Norway Grants (including programme, year and amount of the Grant), if any.

So far the project did not apply for any EU or EEA/Norway grants funding.

Additional information

How would winning the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award benefit you, your project and/or your organisation?

Funds will transform the vacated monument site into a cultural stage. This project includes a SkyLink hotspot, benches, and a marker with a QR code for the dismantled monument. It enhances commercial and creative aspects, reinvigorating communal rituals and connecting with the local community.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, what will the monetary award be used for?

A program will transform the vacated monument site into a cultural hub, utilizing cleared space. Projects include SkyLink, concrete benches, and dismantled monument markers with a QR code for revisiting. This site drives future events, impacting commerce and creativity, in a contemporary era. Restoration revives communal rituals, connecting locals anew.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, who will be the recipient of the monetary award?

The recipient of the monetary award will be the Serbian National Council.

How did you find out about the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Europa Nostra website
Is this the first time that this entry has been submitted to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Yes
On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with this online submission form?	✓ 9
By submitting your data, photographs and other material to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards you agree to the processing and sharing of your data in accordance with Europa Nostra's Privacy Policy.	✓

Please check the box to indicate you agree with the Privacy Policy.

Log in to european-heritage.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.



DSC08798.JPG 3.5 MiB



DSC08843.JPG 4.0 MiB



DSC09253.JPG 4.6 MiB



DSC09201-2.jpg 5.3 MiB

DOCX

European Herita... 1.5 MiB

PDF

LR SNV 2023.pdf 200 KiB

PDF

Vesna Meštrić re... 150 KiB

PDF

231013160954_0... 549 KiB