

Dissonant Heritage and its Conservation

The Fate of Socialist Architecture on the South-Western Border of Slovenia

Neža Čebren Lipovec

Abstract *Postwar socialist Yugoslav architecture and its assessment in the post-Yugoslav context within the multicultural but also contested territory of northern Istria, particularly the town of Koper/Capodistria, represents an intriguing case of heritage dissonances and a prominent challenge for material-centered conservation practice. As a case study, this chapter analyzes the planning, construction and fate of the socialist “Tomos” skyscraper in the historic city center, which was subject to a major renewal project in the past decade.*

Die jugoslawisch-sozialistische Architektur der Nachkriegszeit und ihre dissonante Bewertung im postjugoslawischen Kontext, insbesondere in der Stadt Koper/Capodistria im kulturell vielfältigen und zugleich umstrittenen Gebiet des nördlichen Istriens, stellen eine große Herausforderung für die materialzentrierte Konservierungspraxis dar. Als Fallstudie analysiert dieser Aufsatz die Planung, den Bau, das Schicksal und die Sanierung des sozialistischen „Tomos“-Hochhauses im historischen Stadtzentrum.

L'architecture yougoslave socialiste d'après-guerre et sa mise en valeur dans le contexte post-yougoslave au nord de la région de l'Istrie, en particulier dans la ville de Koper/Capodistria, représentent un cas intrigant de dissonances patrimoniales, qui constituent un défi majeur pour la pratique de la conservation axée sur les matériaux. Cette étude de cas analyse la planification, la construction, le destin et la rénovation du gratte-ciel socialiste « Tomos » dans le centre historique de la ville.

1. A Challenge: Conservation and (Critical) Heritage Studies¹

In these autumn days of 2024, when the Hotel Jugoslavija, “a symbol of the former common country,”² is being torn down in Belgrade to make space for a new large-scale redevelopment project under the neoliberal paradigm (but is also accompanied by major protests for its preservation), an inquiry into the heritage values and the dissonances of the architecture of socialist Yugoslavia seems not only timely, but also urgent. Since dissonance is inherent to heritage,³ it should be proposed at least as a topic of discussion—if not as a central task—in the field of conservation.

Contemporary theory has in fact redefined the field of conservation: while twenty-five years ago it was still considered “the management of change,” recent considerations define conservation as “the management of creative continuity and socially cohesive heritage practice (rather than management of change),”⁴ in order to reorient material-centered conservation approaches towards social practices in heritage work. This shift in definition illustrates the integration of key notions from Critical Heritage Studies into the field of Heritage Conservation, namely the understanding of heritage as a cultural practice in constant evolution,⁵ which in turn also redefines the management approach from a conventional, top-down one towards a values-led approach first, and finally into a people-focused one.⁶ This shift, in turn, raises two new central questions: How should conservation encompass the

-
- 1 This contribution encompasses research insights gained thanks to the financial support of two Slovene national research projects: “The Potential of Ethnographic Methods in the Conservation of Built Heritage in Contested Sites: The Case of Northern Istria” (Z6-3226, 2021–2023) and “Heritage for Inclusive Sustainable Transformation – HEI-TRANSFORM” (J7-4641, 2022–2025), both funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).
 - 2 Anžin, B. (2024, November 16). V Beogradu Začeli Rušiti Hotel Jugoslavija, Nekdaj Simbol Skupne Države. RTVSLO. <https://www.rtvlo.si/svet/evropa/v-beogradu-zaceli-rusiti-hotel-ju-goslavija-nekdaj-simbol-skupne-drzave/727685> [May 6, 2025], own translation.
 - 3 Cf. Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of Heritage*. Routledge; Tunbridge, J. E., & Ashworth, G. J. (1996). *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*. John Wiley & Sons.
 - 4 Chitty, G. (Ed.). (2017). *Heritage, Conservation and Communities. Engagement, Participation and Capacity Building*. Routledge, 2.
 - 5 Cf. Smith. *Uses of Heritage*; Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage. Critical Approaches*. Routledge; Djabarouti, J. (2024). *Critical Built Heritage Practice and Conservation. Evolving Perspectives*. Routledge.
 - 6 Cf. Wijesuriya, G. (2022). Evolution of Conservation Approaches. Embracing a People-Focused Approach. *Antropología. Revista Interdisciplinaria Del INAH*, 12, 75–86; Madgin, R., & Lesh, J. (2021). Exploring Emotional Attachments to Historic Places. Bridging Concept, Practice and Method. In R. Madgin & J. Lesh (Eds.), *People-Centred Methodologies for Heritage Conservation. Exploring Emotional Attachments to Historic Places. Bridging Concept, Practice and Method* (pp. 1–15). Routledge; Wells, J. C. (2019). Bridging the Gap between Built Heritage Conservation Practice and Critical Heritage Studies. In J. C. Wells & B. L. Steifel (Eds.), *Human-Centered Built Environment Heritage Preservation. Theory and Evidence-Based Practice* (pp. 33–44). Routledge.

'ever-evolving' nature of heritage? And, more importantly, how should it deal with the dissonances that are inherent in heritage?⁷ Territories with a contested history and heritage confront the conservation experts with highly delicate decisions, imbued with immense responsibility, that goes far beyond mere decisions about the materiality of the protected artefact or site. Dissonant Heritage in the "maelstrom of (Central) Europe"⁸ is primarily identified in the post-WWII and post-Cold War period—especially in areas that underwent major population changes, for example within the shift from the capitalist-democratic paradigm to a socialist system framed by communist ideology. Particularly eloquent, yet challenging, dissonances are found in the attitude of the then new authorities towards the historic built environment in the post-WWII context, as well as in the current post-socialist attitudes and heritagization processes related to the traces of the socialist past.

A laboratory for analyzing these quests is offered by the border region of Istria/Istria, set between Italy and Slovenia, and marked particularly by a quite turbulent 20th century—first, during the fascist period under the Kingdom of Italy (1920–1943), then after WWII during socialism (1947–1991)—, when it experienced a thorough restructuring of its demography. Today, this results in highly diverse attitudes towards heritage that span from complete ignorance to strong collective and emotional involvement. Conserving the historic built environment thus becomes a highly delicate task that cannot be limited to officials in national heritage institutes alone. Through the analysis of a symbolic site in the historic city of Koper/Capodistria, we unveil some of the challenges that the conservation field faces when confronted with dissonances. Particular attention is paid to identifying the dissonances and consonances in the narratives, and to which material attributes they refer to. This article focuses on the case study of a prominent building in the city center of Koper, a skyscraper of proletarian studio apartments, that faced different scenarios of fate, and was ultimately preserved and renewed. The focus is placed on the narratives of different groups of the local population. The analysis stems from a sequence of different research moments and methods that span over a decade of research and are based on both newspaper sources and social media chat debates,⁹ as well as individual in-depth interviews, and particularly the so called 'group memory talk,'¹⁰ which departs from conceiving heritage dissonance as a platform "for

7 Cf. Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*; Smith. *Uses of heritage*.

8 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 131.

9 Cf. Mavrič, T., & Čebtron Lipovec, N. (2024). Social Media Groups in Interaction with Contested Urban Narratives. The Case of Koper/Capodistria, Slovenia. *Urban Planning*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.7083> [November 3, 2024]; Liang, X., & Lu, Y., & Martin, J. (2021). A Review of the Role of Social Media for the Cultural Heritage Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031055> [April 17, 2025].

10 'Group memory talk' is a new, composite method that is being developed since 2012, and is based on the concept of 'memory talk' as social memories woven into the fabric of daily

plurality [...], accepting, understanding, dialoguing and negotiating heritage dissonance.”¹¹

2. Koper/Capodistria in the Maelstrom of Post-WWII Europe

The small city of Koper/Capodistria and its architectural landscape are visibly marked by a centuries-long rule of the Venetian Republic *La Serenissima*, later also by the rule of Napoléon Bonaparte, and particularly by the Austrian Empire throughout the 19th century. Today, the main dissonances in heritage derive from its 20th-century history. In fact, after the First World War, it was annexed by the Italian Kingdom, which soon brought it under the rule of Benito Mussolini's fascist regime. After WWII, it passed under Yugoslav rule, but only in 1954—since between 1947 and 1954 it was part of the temporary buffer zone state Free Territory of Trieste, formed during an interim seven-year negotiation period about the demarcation line. Finally, since 1991, Koper/Capodistria has been part of the independent state of Slovenia. The region was historically marked by its multiculturalism and multilingualism since Romance (Italian, Istro-Venetian) and Slavic (Slovene and Croatian) people shared the territory; with the former being prevalent, but not exclusively present in the urban areas, and the latter likewise living in the rural areas. The integration of Istria into Yugoslavia conveyed a major restructuring of the population since the majority of pre-war inhabitants emigrated to Italy, while a new population from inland Slovenia and Yugoslavia started to settle in, especially in the strongly emptied historic urban centers. Particularly illustrative is thus the northern part of the region, Slovene Istria, including the three towns of Koper/Capodistria, Izola/Isola, and Piran/Pirano. Today, the Slovenes are the prevalent group here, alongside a small Italian community, composed of the Italians who remained, and large communities of other ex-Yugoslav citizens and their descendants.¹² Koper in

talk and gossip (Degnen, C. (2005). Relationality, Place and Absence. A Three-Dimensional Perspective on Social Memory. *The Sociological Review*, 53(4), 729–744). It encompasses public gatherings of members of the local community where they share memories related to selected sites, identifying their qualities to be potentially preserved. A first round of such events was carried out in Koper already between 2012–2014 and concerned six sites, while a second round took place between 2022–2024, in relation to four local sites, and using a more elaborate version of the method. Bibliography: Čebren Lipovec, N. (2023). 'Memory Talk' in a Museum in a Contested Land. A Platform for Mutual Understanding and a Potential Method for Built Heritage Conservation, *Ethnologia Fennica*, 50(2), 75–102.

11 Kisić, V. (2017). *Governing Heritage Dissonance. Promises and Realities of Selected Cultural Policies*. European Cultural Foundation, 281.

12 Cf. Hrobat Virloget, K. (2021). *V Tišini Spomina. 'Eksodus' in Istra*. Založba Univerze na Primorskem; Kalc, A. (2019). The Other Side of the 'Istrian Exodus.' Immigration and Social Restoration in Slovenian Coastal Towns in the 1950s. *Two Homelands/Dve domovini*, 49, 145–162.

particular serves as a laboratory of heritage dissonance, because after its annexation by Yugoslavia it became the only port, and port city, of Slovenia, since the former regional port in Trieste remained in Italy. The newly drawn borders thus implied a similarly new reconfiguration of regional centers and connections, transforming Koper into the unofficial capital of the newly formed region 'Slovene Coast,' marked visibly by a new, rather idiosyncratic architectural idiom.¹³

2.1. Symbolic Markers and the Architecture of the Socialist Past

A central aspect of dissonance related to the ideological framework of the post-World War II reality in the Istrian case was marked by the advent of socialism. Tunbridge and Ashworth, in their overview of post-Cold War heritage dissonances in Central Europe, analyzed the rulers' attitudes towards heritage in historic cores with changed ethnic structure during the socialist period, identifying three main approaches: "destroy," "ignore" through neglect and abandonment, and "reinterpret" and reappropriate.¹⁴ They also questioned the heritage value of the socialist heritage; particularly for the case of Kaliningrad, they assumed that in this new, post-Soviet era, the Stalinist architecture of the city would be an "improbable basis of heritage identity"¹⁵ and that "[t]he inevitable decay of the Soviet iconography [...] will remove an obvious dissonance."¹⁶ One could now assume that the case of Yugoslav architecture in Koper might be quite similar. However, observing current attitudes toward the ample corpus of socialist architecture unveils another reality, dense with multiple dissonances—both current and past.

13 Cf. Čebtron Lipovec, N. (2019). Post-War Urbanism along the Contested Border. Some Observations on Koper/Capodistria and Trieste/Trst. *Two Homelands/Dve domovini*, 49, 199–220. <https://doi.org/10.3986/dd.voi49.7261> [November 3, 2024]; Čebtron Lipovec, N. (2019). 'Revolucija Mesta.' *Staro Mestno Jedro v Povojnih Urbanističnih Načrtih za Koper. Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, 55, 245–266.

14 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 138.

15 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 165.

16 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 167.

Fig. 1: Postcard of Koper, aerial view, 1960s



© Author

The post-war architectural landscape of Koper, as well as the whole ‘Slovene Coast,’ was marked by the work of one of the leading Slovene post-war architects, Edo Mihevc (1911–1985). Although functionalist in his choices for some iconic buildings in Ljubljana,¹⁷ in his regional plan for the ‘Slovene Coast,’ he coined a completely different modernism that he termed “Mediterranean and progressive architecture.”¹⁸ His regional plan backed the political-economic plan for a thorough redevelopment of the region, based on a self-managed concept of industrial development and the establishment of the port, while steering several waves of immigration of newcomers from other parts of the Republic and the Federation. The architect’s long-term goal was to ensure “a visual continuity of landscape,”¹⁹ to be achieved using the particular architectural idiom alongside a meticulous insertion of greenery on an urban scale and its preservation on the regional scale, as well as a particularly selective attitude toward the historic tissue of the existing city centers. Among the three northern-Istrian cities, Koper was the one subject to major interventions: These encompassed large-scale demolitions of vernacular architecture and its replacement with modern buildings (in the new Mediterranean and progressive idiom), so that, at first glance, it might fall into the category of “destruction,” as outlined by Tunbridge and Ashworth. However, the destruction was selective and the rebuilding strongly interpretative; a proto-postmodernist

17 Cf. Kresal, J. (2016). *Edo Mihevc – Izbrana Dela*. Beletrina.

18 Čebren Lipovec. Post-War Urbanism Along the Contested Border, 208.

19 Mihevc, E. (1963). Piano Regolatore della Costa Slovena. *Casabella–continuità*, 280, 40–53.

approach could be sensed in the decision to build the modern Koper on top of the historic Capodistria, using buildings of varying heights as an interpretation of the historic city walls. At the same time, on the level of urban design, the architect sought to establish “visual continuity”²⁰ through the use of traditional material (stone) and design (wall cladding; retention of historic details) as well as forms (passages through the buildings, etc.). The approach reveals what Tunbridge and Ashworth call reinterpretation, through which assimilation happens. In fact, the architect’s hygienist functionalist approach was supported by the local authorities of the time, stating that they “have to keep the old, but not at the cost of the quality of life of the inhabitants.”²¹

Among these interventions, one site that assumes the role of a symbolic marker²² is the skyscraper of the Tomos factory. The motorcycle factory was set up in Koper immediately after the annexation of Istria by Yugoslavia in October 1954, as a central engine of regional development in the socialist self-management mode, and quickly became the central employer in the region. The influx of workforce was very intense, so affordable housing was essential. After several options, a modern ten-story high-rise in a clearly modernist, Bauhausian style was built in the very center of the historic town; the plan conceived a whole new neighborhood that was named Belveder.

The construction of the skyscraper, but also of the surrounding nine low-rise blocks between 1957 and 1959, led to demolitions. Formerly, the area was a rather green part of the town that surrounded the Glagolitic monastery of the Third Franciscan Order of St. Gregorius.²³ After the monastery was closed in the early 19th century, the structure was adapted for the facilities of a nearby imperial prison—an Austrian institution that also replaced a former Dominican monastery.²⁴ The decision to demolish the Glagolitic monastery was not a straightforward one, as in the first post-war years the newly formed Slovene organizations, particularly the Historic Society of Zone B, proposed an inverse, celebratory function for the site: to become the Museum of Slavic History in the urban center of Koper, as promoted particularly by the then Slovene director of the local regional museum.²⁵ Finally, the historic building was demolished and replaced with a high-rise composed of ninety studio apartments for the younger workers of the Tomos factory. The building was equipped with an elevator (only the second one in the entire town) and provided all

20 Mihevc. Piano Regolatore della Costa Slovena, 41–43.

21 Čebtron Lipovec. ‘Revolucija Mesta,’ 259–260.

22 Cf. Veschambre, V. (2008). *Traces et Mémoires Urbaines. Enjeux Sociaux de la Patrimonialisation et de la Destruction*. Presses universitaires de Rennes.

23 It was known for having been the only monastery with liturgy in the old Slavic language that used the Glagolitic alphabet.

24 Cf. Čebtron Lipovec. Post-War Urbanism Along the Contested Border.

25 Cf. Čebtron Lipovec. ‘Revolucija Mesta.’

the facilities such as sewerage and running water, which was not yet a standard in those years, including a guardian, a cleaner, as well as a breakfast room in the ground floor glass hall. In particular, it was modern in its schematic geometric appearance and striking due to its size and red color—which has been interpreted as the ‘socialist red,’ although the architect and his circle often explained it as ‘Venetian red.’²⁶ Details of windows were in white and blue, allusive to the Slovene/Yugoslav flag.

In historical perspective, the Tomos skyscraper can be read as a case of *marguage symbolique*,²⁷ and thus an example of long-term disinheritance of both the religious communities as well as the non-Slovene communities in the town, embodying a double culture-based dissonance (religion, ethnicity). However, already at the time of its construction, it was identified by the Yugoslav professional community as a detrimental element in relation to the city’s historical skyline and a symbol of power.²⁸ In fact, the public narratives report on the aim of the skyscraper to tower over the church bell tower—an intention that has so far not yet been retrieved in archival sources. The architect’s disciples interpret the skyscraper itself as a ‘cathedral,’ in which the white block of the staircase represents the bell tower, and the square with the low-rise around it appears as a ‘Mediterranean small-square’ (*pi-azzetta*).²⁹ So, a third, education-related and ideological historical dissonance can be traced, since the intellectual circles (of a clear socialist stamp, but nevertheless) were overrun by the hegemony of party politics.

2.2. The Post-Socialist Fate of the Tomos Skyscraper Site

Despite the historic dissonances of the origin of the site, it remained in use long after the secession of Yugoslavia, and its fate twisted only at the dawn of the neoliberal paradigm, which entered the state and the region after the 2000s: In 2005, the whole neighborhood was subject to a national call for redevelopment proposals, which brought over seventy proponents, among whom several foresaw either the demolition or the cutting in half (from ten to five stories), so as to ‘make it fit’ into the historical skyline. This gesture, in turn, could be read as an “adjustment” (according to Tunbridge and Ashworth) that accommodates the dissonance, in terms of aesthetics as well as symbolism. Yet, the building was emptied in 2015 and bought by an architect-developer in 2020, who renewed the building following the demands of

26 Cf. Kresal. *Edo Mihevc – Izbrana Dela*.

27 Cf. Čebren Lipovec. Post-War Urbanism Along the Contested Border.

28 Cf. Gamulin, G. (1967). *Arhitektura u Regiji*. Društvo historičara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 62.

29 Cf. Brezar, V. (2011). Stanovanjska Arhitektura Eda Mihevca med Funkcionalizmom in Regionalizmom. In N. Čebren Lipovec & J. Kralj Pavlovec (Eds.), *Edo Mihevc* (pp. 15–24). Fakulteta za arhitekturo.

the Heritage Office.³⁰ In fact, the historic city core has been protected as settlement heritage since the 1990s. The protection status implied that all buildings in the protected area were subject to specific deliberations by the Heritage Office as to their eventual changes during restoration or renewal projects; this meant that specific measures regarding the appearance of the building envelope had to be provided. When the redevelopment project started in 2020, the heritage official in charge demanded that the building exterior be entirely preserved, particularly its dimensions, the red color, as well as the design of the facades. In the case of the southern facade, the monumental flat surface, originally scaled down by small Bauhausian-style balconies, was altered with the addition of a metal structure for amplifying the balcony surface.

Fig. 2: *Tomos skyscraper, front facade/south-western view*



© Author, 2025

However, the Heritage Office had no influence over the interventions in the interior, especially on the decision regarding the building's new function. The former proletarian block became the site of new, private, upscale housing, since the studio apartments of the lower floors were joined into larger flats, and as the floors ascend, the number of flats diminishes, allowing for a substantial increase in living space, with the top floor today being a penthouse. The project can be read as a case of gentrification, bearing in mind that other proposals of the 2005 call embraced more invasive physical interventions, and very different programs, such as a hotel, student dorms, a library, and so on.

30 Cf. Gornik Bratož, R. (2021). *Tomosova Stolpnica – Avtomatik Delovišče. Na Prelomu Novih Participativnih Praks v Grajenem Okolju*. Master's Thesis, University of Primorska.

3. Public Reception of the Skyscraper's Renewal Plan and Heritage Discourses

The restoration project had a major media resonance, at least on a local level, mirroring a much-heated debate, and today opens a challenging case for assessing the 'heritage value' of socialist heritage in a post-socialist world. Following Tunbridge and Ashworth's assumption,³¹ one would assume that it would be treated as relic heritage, but in fact it became official heritage.³² Several professional aspects back the decisions of the heritage officials; primarily the conservation principle that all valuable contributions to the heritage value of a site need to be respected and possibly preserved.³³ Secondly, thirty years after the book by Tunbridge and Ashworth was written in an obvious end-of-Cold-War celebratory tone, the historical and aesthetic value of the architecture of socialism has been largely reconsidered, thanks to scholarly research, and in particular due to frameworks such as the DOCOMOMO organization, which put the architectural as well as the social value of this politically charged architecture to the forefront.³⁴ A third important aspect is a novel international awareness and appreciation of the singularity of the architecture of socialist Yugoslavia, marked by its detachment from the Soviet model and its unique ideology of self-managed socialism. This was embodied and represented in its search for new, alternative, and particularly varied modernist architectural idioms that spanned from monumental modernist concrete buildings, brutalist-type megastructures to highly elaborate realizations of regional modernism.³⁵

The case of Koper—with its border position, symbolic potential and turbulent history—thus requires a reading of heritage values by looking at the dissonances in its heritage discourses within the local population, current and former. At first glance, the dissonance between the two ethnic groups—Slovenes and Italians, who, in the postwar period, found themselves in inverted roles of victims and perpetrators—is obvious.³⁶ Yet, ethnographic research reveals several other dissonances that somewhat reevaluate this rather simple dichotomic view.

31 Cf. Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 30.

32 Cf. Harrison. *Heritage*, 16.

33 Cf. Djabarouti. *Critical Built Heritage Practice and Conservation*; Jokilehto, J. (2019). Questions of Authenticity. *Conversaciones... con Herb Stovel*, 8, 55–72.

34 The International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement (DOCOMOMO) was founded in 1988.

35 Cf. Kulić, V., & Mrduljaš, M., & Thaler, W. (2012). *Modernism In-Between – the Mediatory Architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Jovis.

36 Cf. Hrobat Virloget. *V Tišini Spomina*.

3.1 A Post-Socialist Critique

A first insight that emerges from public discourse, especially in various social media groups (such as the Facebook groups *Koper, kot je bil nekoč/Capodistria com'era una volta* (FB KKJBN); *Koper je tudi moj in tvoj*; *Kuopr anbot*), is a politically and ideologically framed and broadly supported critique of the Tomos skyscraper as a material reminder of the 'arrogant' communist regime. Statements such as the following appear almost under every post showing images of the city and its panorama from the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, often reporting the narrative about the skyscraper surpassing the height of the cathedral's bell tower:³⁷

Even from this perspective it is obvious how the ruling authorities of the time spoiled the image of Koper for purely ideological reasons, many of us hoped that in due course these two skyscrapers would be removed, but as we can see today, this has not (yet) happened.³⁸

How beautiful Koper was without that red-block rubbish. The most beautiful thing in this picture is the bell tower, which can be seen from the sea...³⁹

Building a skyscraper in the middle of old Venetian Koper is an intolerable act. And of course, it had to be taller than the bell tower.⁴⁰

It really destroys it in the sense of interfering with the then extremely harmonious urban silhouette with its central vertical dominance in the city tower or bell tower. Unfortunately, the city's 'urban planners' of the time saw in the city tower only a church spire, which they wanted to symbolically cancel out with a new modern vertical—the red tower! Following the Brigadier's principle: 'Tear down the old, build the new,' in their ideological zeal they also wanted to limit as much as possible the extent of church buildings in Koper and, while demolishing the infamous Austrian prisons, they also demolished the Glagolitic monastery, the largest religious building dedicated to Slavic worship in the otherwise Italian Koper...⁴¹

37 All primary sources were originally in Slovene and have been translated into English by the author.

38 FB KKJBN, 24 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/posts/2333093173661716/> [November 3, 2024].

39 FB KKJBN, 5 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/posts/2319505225020511/> [November 2, 2024].

40 FB KKJBN, 5 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/posts/2319649091672791/> [November 2, 2024].

41 FB KKJBN, 5 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/posts/2319506021687098/> [November 2, 2024].

On the other hand, the inverse opinion can be found in these same chats, presenting the socialist past of the city as an important constituent of the local history, and/or as expressions of support for the socialist idea:

If the skyscrapers in the city were demolished today, there would be a revolt again. Let's take this as a peculiarity of Koper, like the peculiarity of the origin of the inhabitants.⁴²

Some see communism in everything that is red. Usually it is the former die-hard communists who are most annoyed. Should it be white?⁴³

Oh, the Austrians have already intervened, and Napoleon before them. Condemnation will do nothing. Only the present can be managed. What will our grandchildren say about the tall buildings next to the marketplace that are just growing. They have closed down Koper. And they really do not have to be so tall right in front of the town center. Were they guilty and are we guilty?⁴⁴

The quotes from the heated online debate show a clear dissonance in the perception within the prevalently Slovene-speaking community of the post-war incomers of the Yugoslav period, mainly from the middle-aged and elderly generation. The dissonance is rooted in ideological grounds, as a critique of communist authoritarianism, but also as a critique of current planning practice under the neoliberal paradigm—an aspect to which we will return.

3.2 Post-Socialist Progressive Nostalgia

Perceptions of former inhabitants of the skyscraper who were also employees of the Tomos factory, however, point out several qualities of the building, referring to its architectural features, use, and particularly its social agenda.

A former secretary that moved from eastern Slovenia in the early 1960s into the block and remained there for over two decades described both the qualities as well as the intrusive first impact of the oversized building:

Well, my first impression when I arrived, first of all, I was confused when I saw that it was in the middle of the city, 'gosh, what a shitty place this is in the middle of the city!?', it totally didn't fit in this old part... I mean, I had no idea before, because

42 FB KKJBN, 22 May 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/posts/2333093173661716/> [November 3, 2024].

43 FB KKJBN, 5 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/posts/2319649091672791/> [November 2, 2024].

44 FB KKJBN, 5 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/posts/2319506021687098/> [November 3, 2024].

I had no idea where it was going to be, I thought it was going to be somewhere on the outskirts of the city, like on Vojko's Street, and that's why it was confusing for me. [...] Then I realized that it was actually... Well, maybe there are architectural reasons for that as well.⁴⁵

The interlocutor's main stance was, however, highly positive, pinpointing the modern standard of the building:

It was made, what would you say, functionally... I would say ideal... The kitchen had windows, the bathroom had windows... And the built-in wardrobes! That, I would say, we cannot forget... We had the washing machine there behind the door in the hall... [...] It was fantastic... Everything was inside, everything, everything, everything... What we paid for it, it wasn't worth mentioning. Thinking about it, there also was a cleaning lady and a guardian inside...⁴⁶

The same stance was then reiterated by other former inhabitants of the block, interviewed for the documentary film *Tomos Skyscraper – A Monument of Time*.⁴⁷ Along with the architectural and use-related qualities, the former dwellers highlighted the social life and solidarity among the residents:

Practically everyone knew everyone, we hung out together a lot, in the home of one or the other... [...] The relationships were genuine... Also, the families, we sometimes took care of each other's children.⁴⁸

Another former employee, who recently published a very telling memoir about life in the skyscraper in a local online magazine, pointed out the qualities of the architectural concept, the high-quality standard of the apartments, but especially the social-welfare idea backing this socialist architecture as a core value of this building:

I joined Tomos as a Tomos scholarship holder in 1963 and after a while I got an apartment in this block. It was built as a bachelor pad for Tomos employees, Tomos guests and Tomos employees who worked in dislocated units around Yugoslavia, and when they came to Koper, they were given a place to stay. Young families and other employees of the municipality of Koper who were waiting for a suitable apartment were also given temporary housing. [...] It was probably the most beautiful and best-equipped bachelor residence in the world. It had a reception on the ground floor and a cleaner who was also the housekeeper. Under the ground floor was a garage, the first and only one in Koper at that time, and probably even more

45 Interlocutor 1, 2013.

46 Interlocutor 1, 2013.

47 Cf. Gornik Bratož. *Tomosova Stolpnica – Avtomatik Delovišče*.

48 Interlocutor 1, 2013.

widely. Both my husband and I were employed, there was a kindergarten in the block, what more could I ask for. The cleaner cleaned and tidied the flat during my working hours, and when I came home from work, I could concentrate on my family. We lived in this block for four years, and our family of four moved into our own flat, which we bought with a loan from Tomos. [...] There were 90 studio flats in the block, and now the building is to be converted into luxury flats. For the citizens of Koper, for students? They would be happy with a non-profit apartment, but they cannot buy a luxury apartment.⁴⁹

The following comment relates to several statements that arose during the 2013 group-memory-talk event dedicated to the factory Tomos as a whole: “Tomos was our mother, our bread.”⁵⁰ The social value of both the factory and the skyscraper can be interpreted through the concept of ‘progressive nostalgia’ that Smith and Campbell defined as “a particular and unashamedly overtly emotional way of remembering that actively and self-consciously aims to use the past to contextualize the achievements and gains of present day living and working conditions and to set a politically progressive agenda for the future.”⁵¹ Such a ‘progressive nostalgia’ perspective is confirmed by comments and critiques about the contemporary authorities, related to the skyscraper’s renewal as an act of gentrification, thus the loss of the once-existing social and community welfare agenda of the state:⁵²

Our mayor, while neglecting the quality of life of the inhabitants of his municipality, especially the young and the deprived, is demanding that the builder who is going to construct the garage under the Museum Square also make prestigious flats in the nearby Mihevc skyscraper ‘for good measure.’ The former Tomos skyscraper, intended for workers, will thus go to the financial elite and to the already rich politico-investors for even faster enrichment. That’s bad for us. And the young are silent. Workers nothing. Municipal councilors do not twitch.⁵³

49 Logar, S. (2018, November 15). Najboljši Samski Dom na Svetu. *Gibanje Skupaj*. <https://www.kupaj.info teme/najboljsi-samski-dom-na-svetu> [November 10, 2024].

50 Interlocutor 2, 2012.

51 Smith, L., & Campbell, G. (2017). ‘Nostalgia for the Future.’ Memory, Nostalgia and the Politics of Class. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23(7), 612–627, here 613. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1321034> [November 4, 2024].

52 To better understand the social value of the skyscraper, we do need to emphasize that the new owner of the building, who was also the architect and developer of the site, after the renewal in 2019, gave part of the ground-floor spaces for a symbolic rent and for temporary usage to the local association Avtomatik delovišče, which is engaged in community involvement and hosts public events, debates, and exhibitions. When the rent was raised two years later, the association had to leave, and the space went into commercial use (Cf. Gornik Bratož. *Tomosova stolpnica – Avtomatik Delovišče*).

53 Facebook group Koper je tudi moj in tvoj, 25 October 2017.

The memories of the former inhabitants of the skyscraper thus embody this ‘progressive nostalgic’ attitude that acknowledges the flaws of the past experience, yet the past is remembered “with a sense of loss tempered with overt pride, empathy and gratitude, which is in turn underlined by a desire to assert a sense of communal belonging and sense of place in the context of rapid deindustrialization and social change.”⁵⁴ So, the dissonance (and disinheritance) is structured along the trajectory of class and age parameters, and is especially present and topical, since imbued with contemporary social concerns.

3.3. The Silenced and Concealed Presence of the Disinherited

The quotes that refer to the ideological and political dissonance, in reference to the Communist ideology that backed the erection of the skyscraper, have been read by the descendants of the former Italian inhabitants as an intentional misappropriation through “deliberate disinheritance”⁵⁵ structured on an ethnic basis, since the demolitions and new construction started half a century ago:

With the Italian population reduced to about a hundred people, and the arrival of about twenty thousand Yugoslavs, Koper ethnically changed its face after 1945. And it also changed its urban planning: the construction of a large industrial port [...], the erection of hideous skyscrapers in the historic center of the city, of tall houses on its outskirts, made Capodistria almost unrecognizable to those who arrived there after decades of absence...⁵⁶

The inappropriateness of the oversized and colorful buildings in the historic core, identified by a vast majority of the newcomers’ community, is highlighted in several statements of the current Italian community, now in fact a minority, such as: “So they made those disgusting skyscrapers, one orange, one violet, one red.”⁵⁷

This position can be traced in the media discourse of the local Italian community. It is often linked to the debates on the past and current attitudes toward the preservation of the historic core, where also contemporary inadequate interventions are commented on—on social media chats—as ignoring the Italian presence. Such was the case (to mention one out of many) of the installation of support wires for Christmas streetlights on historic facades, commented on as:

It is ethical for the heirs of the grand Italian cultural heritage in these lands to work to protect and defend it, first and foremost the institutions of CNI [Comunità

54 Smith & Campbell. ‘Nostalgia for the Future,’ 613.

55 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 136.

56 Semi, F. (1975). *Capris – Iustinopolis – Capodistria. La Storia, la Cultura e l’Arte*. Lint, 241–242.

57 Interlocutor 3, 2022.

Nazionale Italiana] and their representatives in the organs of municipal administration must do so.⁵⁸

Critiques and comments were equally addressing the Slovene professional authorities as well as the Italian political ones. Intrusive interventions in the historic core, such as the demolitions, but particularly neglect, were seen by the remaining Italians as a sign of ignorance and misrecognition of the Italian minority in Slovenia—as reported by Hrobat Virloget in her extensive research on contested memories.⁵⁹ This was most clearly stated in a contemporary restoration project in the nearby town of Piran, when in 2016 a former Venetian palace, locally known as Lasapurdir, was restored to its supposed original appearance.⁶⁰ In fact, the tiny Venetian gothic house was colored, in 1959, in the same strong red tone as the Koper skyscraper, within a project of Edo Mihevc; a gesture that can be read as the preservation of “relics of the past [...] endowed with new and important educational roles.”⁶¹ During this recent restoration project, the conservators looked for earlier coatings and chose a natural pinkish tone, which sparked a major reaction by the current inhabitants of Piran, who even set up a civic initiative aiming to retain the red facade, identified as the symbol of the collective identity of the current, mainly Slovene or Yugoslav-descendant community. In turn, the Italian minority recalled that the red facade of the 1950s was just as intrusive and traumatic for their (namely Italian, or at least pre-Yugoslav) collective identity as the removal of it is now for the current Slovene majority.⁶² This salient case represents a textbook example of ethnicity-based dissonance embodied in the color of a facade, and thus of the fatal role of conservators’ choices concerning only material aspects of authenticity (misinterpreted as ‘original form’) in the processes of symbolic dis- and re-inheritance.

A different view, however, is provided by a descendant of former Italian inhabitants of Koper who left despite their pro-Socialist affiliation. He keeps returning to Koper with his own family and explains his attachment: “It is like being at home. But this has always been like this. In Italian they say ‘the call of the forest’. It’s some-

58 Facebook M. Tremul chat, 28 October 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/mauriziotremul/posts/pfbidocQAWpA9gdekdVMPFm1m8WeikYRekyeDcybyC2tWxvQr8DEDX7dibLPfAzb6X7zv dnl> [November 2, 2024].

59 Cf. Hrobat Virloget. *V Tišini Spomina*, 224–232.

60 Cf. Kosec, M. (2016). Benečanka – Bela ali Rdeča? *Outsider*, 3(5). <https://outsider.si/benecanka-a-bela-ali-rdeca/> [November 10, 2024].

61 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 138; cf. also Čebren Lipovec, N. (2024). All the Colours of a Historic Façade. *Dissonant Heritage Narratives about Historic and Modernist Architecture in Northern Istria. Traditiones*, forthcoming.

62 Cf. Čebren Lipovec. ‘Memory Talk’ in a Museum in a Contested Land; Čebren Lipovec. All the Colours of a Historic Façade; Hrobat Virloget. *V Tišini Spomina*, 232.

thing you have inside. So, we go to Koper on a weekly basis.”⁶³ When asked about the meaning of the built environment in Koper during the period of Yugoslavia, the skyscraper, and its impact today, he replies:

For me, Koper today is like a family. Today Koper is very lively, young... *è vivo* [it is alive]. Others come to Koper from Trieste because here they find something different... *serenità* [serenity], we would say in Italian. [...] Here it is nice, it is clean. And the attitude, if you are an Italian, an Englishman, a tourist, you can come to Koper and you don't have problems. It is not like this in Trieste. In Trieste we have huge problems with racism.⁶⁴

The ellipses in the replies of the interlocutor, belonging to the younger generation, both indicate a clear omission of the debate on a potentially problematic issue. The stress on the cleanliness of the city also projects a clear outsider's and very present-centered view on the issue. What emerges from the different interlocutors and sources, is that the ethnicity-based dissonance is strongly challenged by, primarily, the age dimension, leading to many different positions between the generations. Another factor is the proximity to the place, marking clear differences between the Italian minority and the descendants of the emigrated prewar inhabitants, now *'esuli.'*

4. Non-Conclusions: Conservation as a Platform for Agonistic Interpretation?

The Tomos skyscraper in Koper is hence a neat example of Dissonant Heritage in the notion of Tunbridge and Ashworth: It embodies the historical dissonance of the two main ethnic groups in the northern Istrian region that have shifted in positions of power since the end of the Second World War—when “the successor state needed to create a new Yugoslavian [...] identity, where a numerically dominant core people had been supplemented by the addition of the usually unwilling major minorities.”⁶⁵ However, the analysis of the different sources illustrated that the categories of dissonance were much more complex: The resulting dissonances and related disinheritances go beyond assumed ethnic dichotomies and refer mainly to ideology, age/generation, and proximity to the site. The ‘removal’ of the socialist content of the skyscraper, by means of gentrification, resulted in the exacerbation of the current social asymmetries. Or, in the comparable case of the Piran's red facade, the ‘re-

63 Interlocutor 4, 2024.

64 Interlocutor 4, 2024.

65 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 136.

inheriting' of the pre-Yugoslav community through the reconstitution of the beige-pink face disinherited a large part of the Yugoslav-period incomers in the town: "The attempt to correct one perceived misinterpretation or undesirable disinheritance has the unforeseen effect of reinforcing another in a different area."⁶⁶

The community, as well as its heritage, thus emerges indeed as an assemblage of relationships that span from progressive nostalgia to transgenerational trauma (or the suppression of it), all through to very contemporary challenges, such as social justice and equal accessibility to primary needs such as housing. Still, the challenge for the conservation field remains unresolved. However, as pointed out in the introductory chapters, the key tool for overcoming dissonances—at least by making them be seen or heard and thus acknowledged—rests in the potential of heritage interpretation. This, in turn, has already surpassed the naive need for (forcing) consensus and creating unanimous meanings of heritage, and integrated the concept of agonism into the "agonistic interpretation of heritage,"⁶⁷ which does not aim to fix the heritage narrative, but rather to make visible multiple perspectives and representations, decoding, analyzing, and unveiling the underlying myths of heritage. With regard to conservation, this is then the major task, since it also meets the theoretical frame of authenticity—with the latter consisting of the equal valorization of all key layers of a building's history that compose its genuine, 'truthful' character.⁶⁸ In practice, for the Tomos skyscraper, this means retaining its identified architectural and social qualities, but also finding ways to use new interpretation tools to provide the space to voice alternative views, be it digital tools such as augmented reality, or analogue tools such as panels, boards, or (permanent) exhibitions of historic images. So far, part of the dissonances—namely the social one—has been voiced through two documentary movies: one about the factory Tomos,⁶⁹ the other dedicated to the Tomos skyscraper as a monument of time.⁷⁰ It is a task of collaborative research to design other tools and vehicles for voicing the yet unheard, or concealed, dissonances.⁷¹

66 Tunbridge & Ashworth. *Dissonant Heritage*, 92.

67 Deufel, N. (2017). Agonistic Interpretation. A New Paradigm in Response to Current Developments. *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, 26(2), 90–109.

68 Cf. Jokilehto. Questions of Authenticity; Djabarouti. *Critical Built Heritage Practice and Conservation*.

69 Cf. Mihelič, N. (2018). *Tomos, Narejeno v Jugoslaviji*. Radiotelevizija Slovenija, documentary film.

70 Cf. Gornik Bratož. *Tomosova Stolpnica – Avtomatik Delovišče*.

71 Cf. Deufel. Agonistic Interpretation, 101.

Primary Sources

Oral Sources

- Interlocutor 1, 12.8.2013, Koper, female, 60–70. Interviewer Neža Čebtron Lipovec.
 Interlocutor 2, 19.12.2012, Koper, male, 60–70. Interviewer Neža Čebtron Lipovec.
 Interlocutor 3, 25.9.2022, Koper, female, 70–80. Interviewers Neža Čebtron Lipovec, Benedetta Fabrucci, Francesca Massaro.
 Interlocutor 4, 7.12.2024, Koper, male. 40–50. Interviewer Neža Čebtron Lipovec.

Online Ethnographic Sources (Social Media)

- Facebook Group Koper, kot je bil nekoč/Capodistria com'era una volta (KKJBN), <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1569679486669759/> [May 6, 2025].
 Facebook Group Koper je tudi moj in tvoj, <https://www.facebook.com/p/Koper-je-tudi-moj-in-tvoj-100067738476422/> [May 6, 2025].
 Facebook Group Kuopr Anbot, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/kuoprانbot> [May 6, 2025].
 Facebook Profile Maurizio Tremul, https://www.facebook.com/mauriziotremul/?locale=sl_SI [May 6, 2025].

Bibliography

- Anžin, B. (2024, November 16). V Beogradu Začeli Rušiti Hotel Jugoslavija, Nekdaj Simbol Skupne Države. *RTVSLO*. <https://www.rtvsllo.si/svet/evropa/v-beograd-u-zaceli-rusiti-hotel-jugoslavija-nekdaj-simbol-skupne-drzave/727685> [May 6, 2025].
- Brezar, V. (2011). Stanovanjska Arhitektura Eda Mihevca med Funkcionalizmom in Regionalizmom. In N. Čebtron Lipovec & J. Kralj Pavlovec (Eds.), *Edo Mihevc* (pp. 15–24). Fakulteta za arhitekturo.
- Čebtron Lipovec, N. (2019). Post-War Urbanism along the Contested Border. Some Observations on Koper/Capodistria and Trieste/Trst. *Two Homelands/Dve domovini*, 49, 199–220. <https://doi.org/10.3986/dd.voi49.7261> [November 3, 2024].
- Čebtron Lipovec, N. (2019). 'Revolucija Mesta.' Staro Mestno Jedro v Povojnih Urbanističnih Načrtih za Koper. *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, 55, 245–266.
- Čebtron Lipovec, N. (2023). 'Memory Talk' in a Museum in a Contested Land. A Platform for Mutual Understanding and a Potential Method for Built Heritage Conservation, *Ethnologia Fennica*, 50(2), 75–102.

- Čebrown Lipovec, N. (2024). All the Colours of a Historic Façade. Dissonant Heritage Narratives about Historic and Modernist Architecture in Northern Istria. *Traditiones*, forthcoming.
- Chitty, G. (Ed.). (2017). *Heritage, Conservation and Communities. Engagement, Participation and Capacity Building*. Routledge.
- Degen, C. (2005). Relationality, Place and Absence. A Three-Dimensional Perspective on Social Memory. *The Sociological Review*, 53(4), 729–744.
- Deufel, N. (2017). Agonistic Interpretation. A New Paradigm in Response to Current Developments. *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, 26(2), 90–109.
- Djubarouti, J. (2024). *Critical Built Heritage Practice and Conservation. Evolving Perspectives*. Routledge.
- Gamulin, G. (1967). *Arhitektura u Regiji*. Društvo historičara umjetnosti Hrvatske.
- Gornik Bratož, R. (2021). *Tomosova Stolpnica – Avtomatik Delovišče. Na Prelomu Novih Participativnih Praks v Grajenem Okolju*. Master's Thesis, University of Primorska.
- Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage. Critical Approaches*. Routledge.
- Hrobat Virloget, K. (2021). *V Tišini Spomina. 'Eksodus' in Istra*. Založba Univerze na Primorskem.
- Jokilehto, J. (2019). Questions of Authenticity. *Conversaciones... con Herb Stovel*, 8, 55–72.
- Kalc, A. (2019). The Other Side of the 'Istrian Exodus.' Immigration and Social Restoration in Slovenian Coastal Towns in the 1950s. *Two Homelands/Dve domovini*, 49, 145–162.
- Kisić, V. (2017). *Governing Heritage Dissonance. Promises and Realities of Selected Cultural Policies*. European Cultural Foundation.
- Kosec, M. (2016). Benečanka – Bela ali Rdeča? *Outsider*, 3(5). <https://outsider.si/benečanka-bela-ali-rdeca/> [November 10, 2024].
- Kresal, J. (2016). *Edo Mihevc – Izbrana Dela*. Beletrina.
- Kulić, V., & Mrduljaš, M., & Thaler, W. (2012). *Modernism In-Between – the Mediatory Architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Jovis.
- Liang, X., & Lu, Y., & Martin, J. (2021). A Review of the Role of Social Media for the Cultural Heritage Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031055> [April 17, 2025].
- Logar, S. (2018, November 15). Najboljši Samski Dom na Svetu. *Gibanje Skupaj*. <https://www.skupaj.info teme/najboljsi-samski-dom-na-svetu> [November 10, 2024].
- Madgin, R., & Lesh, J. (2021). Exploring Emotional Attachments to Historic Places. Bridging Concept, Practice and Method. In R. Madgin & J. Lesh (Eds.), *People-Centred Methodologies for Heritage Conservation. Exploring Emotional Attachments to Historic Places. Bridging Concept, Practice and Method* (pp. 1–15). Routledge.

- Mavrič, T., & Čebtron Lipovec, N. (2024). Social Media Groups in Interaction with Contested Urban Narratives. The Case of Koper/Capodistria, Slovenia. *Urban Planning*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.7083> [November 3, 2024].
- Mihelič, N. (2018). *Tomos, Narejeno v Jugoslaviji*. Radiotelevizija Slovenija, documentary film.
- Mihevc, E. (1963). Piano Regolatore della Costa Slovena. *Casabella–continuità*, 280, 40–53.
- Semi, F. (1975). *Capris – Iustinopolis – Capodistria. La Storia, la Cultura e l'Arte*. Lint.
- Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of Heritage*. Routledge.
- Smith, L., & Campbell, G. (2017). 'Nostalgia for the Future.' Memory, Nostalgia and the Politics of Class. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23(7), 612–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1321034> [November 11, 2024].
- Tunbridge, J. E., & Ashworth, G. J. (1996). *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Veschambre, V. (2008). *Traces et Mémoires Urbaines. Enjeux Sociaux de la Patrimonialisation et de la Destruction*. Presses universitaires de Rennes.
- Wells, J. C. (2019). Bridging the Gap between Built Heritage Conservation Practice and Critical Heritage Studies. In J. C. Wells & B. L. Steifel (Eds.), *Human-Centered Built Environment Heritage Preservation. Theory and Evidence-Based Practice* (pp. 33–44). Routledge.
- Wijesuriya, G. (2022). Evolution of Conservation Approaches. Embracing a People-Focused Approach. *Antropología. Revista Interdisciplinaria Del INAH*, 12, 75–86.

Neža Čebtron Lipovec

Assistant Professor and Research Fellow at the Department of Archaeology and Heritage, University of Primorska, Koper (Slovenia)

Research Interests: Heritage Studies, Conservation, Post-War Architecture, Built Heritage in Contested Spaces

Active researcher in Heritage Studies and Conservation since 2007, engaged in over twenty national and international projects (Interreg, Creative Europe, COST). Author of several scientific papers and book chapters on heritage theory and methodology, conservation and architectural history of Istria. Between 2021 and 2023, she led the research project *The Potential of Ethnographic Methods in the Conservation of Built Heritage in Contested Sites: The Case of Northern Istria* (ARIS Z6-3226), and since 2022 she is part of the interdisciplinary project *Heritage for Inclusive Sustainable Transformation – HEI-TRANSFORM* (ARIS J7-4641).

