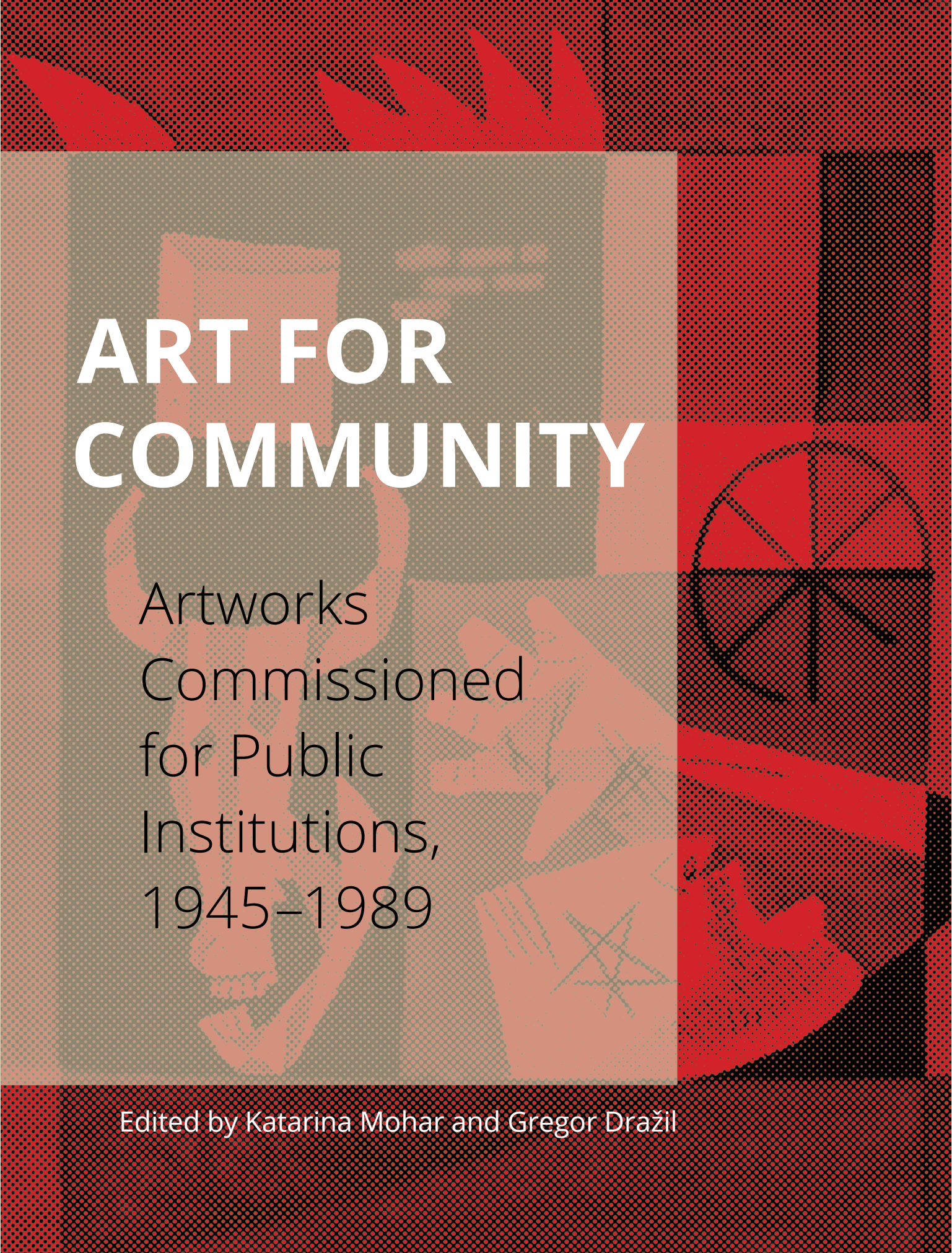




ART FOR COMMUNITY

Artworks
Commissioned
for Public
Institutions,
1945–1989

Edited by Katarina Mohar and Gregor Dražil



Založba ZRC



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Ljubljana, 2026

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Cover image: Ivo Šubic, unrealised sketch for the mosaic in the building of the People's Assembly of the People's Republic of Slovenia.
Photo: Andreja Rakovec, ZRC SAZU.

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ART FOR LEISURE ARCHITECTURE: ARTWORKS COMMISSIONED FOR HOTELS IN ISTRIA AND THE KVARNER GULF IN THE 1960S

Patricia Počanić

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The rise of mass tourism in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf took place decades before the Second World War, but the golden age of Croatian and Yugoslav tourism occurred in the postwar years, with the state regulation of workers' leisure time. In postwar Istria and the Kvarner Gulf, tourism was one of the most important economic activities, which led to the construction of numerous workers' resorts during the 1950s (the period of social tourism), as well as resort towns, complexes, camps, and hotels during the 1960s and 1970s (with the rise of commercial tourism). The development of tourism infrastructure in postwar Yugoslavia depended on several key factors. After initially adopting the Soviet political and economic model, Yugoslavia distanced itself following the 1948 break with the USSR, which gradually led to increased Western influence, financial aid, and a degree of ideological liberalisation. During the early 1950s, state decentralisation and workers' (later social) self-management were introduced, and market liberalisation and the gradual acceptance of consumer culture created a specific framework for tourism that combined Eastern and Western models. Yugoslavia's ambivalent position in the Cold War, together with the establishment of new political and economic ties through the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, shaped the country's often-cited unique "third way". Consequently, newly built tourism facilities were expected to reflect the modern achievements of the young state and its socio-economic progress. Tourism, and therefore tourism architecture, thus embodied a combination of economic, cultural, and ideological aspirations.

In parallel with the socio-political and economic development of the country during the 1950s and 1960s, the synthesis of all the arts (architecture, painting, sculpture, and applied arts/design) was advocated at all levels of governance, as well as in professional art associations, especially for newly constructed socially owned buildings. Hotels and other tourist facilities were also affected by these initiatives, which led to close collaboration between architects and artists in an effort to create a "total work of art." Considerable investments also shaped the development of leisure architecture in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf, where architects and artists

similarly applied a synthesis approach. Based on archival, periodical, and field research, this article presents the socio-historical circumstances of tourism and tourist architecture and art in the 1960s in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf. Through several hotel case studies, it asks how, by whom, and through which modalities artworks were commissioned or acquired for hotel interiors, as well as which types of works were selected and why.¹ The article also explores the relationship between architecture and art, and the role of investors and the state in shaping the narratives surrounding these artworks, all set within the broader context of the internationalisation of Yugoslav tourism.

A brief history of tourism in Croatia, Istria, and the Kvarner Gulf

The process of democratising and popularising travel, which began before the Second World War, underwent significant growth during the 1950s and 1960s in both the general European and Yugoslav contexts (the leisure boom), with tourism becoming a clear symbol of a more liberal consumer culture.² In postwar Europe, including Yugoslavia, tourism emerged as one of the most important economic and social phenomena. As such, the development of tourism architecture, infrastructure, and interior art and design was closely tied to the country's economic, cultural, and foreign policy agendas.

The development of tourism in Yugoslavia, including Croatia, unfolded in three distinct phases. In the first phase (1947–1951), under the influence of the Five-Year Plan and the Soviet economic model, state priorities were focused on the development of heavy industry, whereas tourism, as a tertiary sector, was largely marginalised.³ The second phase began following the 1948 break with the USSR, the easing of ideological pressure, and the introduction of workers' self-management in 1950. This period saw the emergence of social tourism, driven by the legal recognition of the right to paid annual leave as early as 1946, along with the construction of state-run workers' resorts and private holiday homes along the Adriatic coast, supported by subsidised accommodation and travel allowances (*regres*).⁴ The third phase, starting in the mid-1960s, marked a shift from social to commercial and mass tourism, propelled by a series of social, political, and economic reforms. These included the construction and regulation of the Adriatic Highway, the 1963 "decision to abolish visa requirements for all countries with which Yugoslavia maintained diplomatic relations,"⁵ the adoption of state strategies such as the Seven-Year Tourism Development Plan (1964), and the establishment of numerous hospitality schools, training courses, lectures, and

professional journals dedicated to tourism and hospitality, which supported the growth of both private facilities and “commercial tourism in socially owned enterprises.”⁶ In the golden decade of Croatian tourism (1965–1975), which coincided with the third phase of Yugoslavia’s economic development, tourism and hospitality became leading sectors, reflecting the country’s domestic and foreign policy efforts to adopt a “Western model” of consumer and commercial culture as a marker of socio-economic progress.⁷ During the 1960s and 1970s, tourism became a key instrument of modernisation, a source of foreign capital, and an expression of the ideological and economic aspirations of the Yugoslav authorities – integrating elements of Western consumer culture into the socialist context of Yugoslavia.

The contradictions inherent in the convergence of the socialist economic model and consumerism reflect the broader ideological framework and Cold War dynamics of the period. Studies show that tourism during the 1950s and 1960s acted as an instrument of cultural diplomacy aimed at foreign, predominantly Western, visitors.⁸ From the end of the Second World War, Yugoslavia, despite adopting the Soviet model of governance, remained open to international tourism.⁹ Following the Informbiro Resolution, when the state sought to justify its legitimacy both to domestic audiences and to Western governments, tourism was largely directed toward domestic, social forms, but the 1950s saw a steady increase in foreign visitors.¹⁰ The authorities’ interest in international tourism mirrored Yugoslavia’s foreign policy: the conflict with Moscow, despite security and espionage concerns, led to a focus on tourists from the West (particularly Western Europe, the United States, and Scandinavia), and the mid-1950s normalization of relations with Soviet bloc countries corresponded with an increase in visitors from that region.¹¹ Moreover, the government viewed the policy of non-alignment not only as a factor in the development of international tourism but also as an ideological representation of its convictions (brotherhood, unity, and peace).¹² New agreements with foreign travel agencies across the West, the opening of borders in the 1960s, and the launch of a plan for the development of tourism along the Adriatic coast (the upper and lower Adriatic), initiated in 1967 in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the Yugoslav government, demonstrate the interweaving of Yugoslav and Western political and economic interests.¹³ In this context, tourist architecture served the authorities as a stage for everyday diplomatic interactions and as a prerequisite for the country’s economic prosperity.



Figure 1. Yugoslavia, *Carta Turistica*, tourist map depicting Istria and Kvarner, 1969. Source: Hrvatski muzej turizma, inv. no. HMT-602.

The aforementioned economic and socio-political circumstances also had an impact on Istria and the Kvarner Gulf [Figure 1], which experienced a high level of tourism development in the postwar period, building on a long-standing tourism tradition shaped by favourable geographical, climatic, and transportation conditions. Its complex nineteenth- and twentieth-century history, transportation infrastructure, and proximity to Central European countries facilitated the early development of tourism.¹⁴ Although tourism progress resumed after the Second World War, it was temporarily interrupted until 1954 due to the exodus and resettlement of the Italian population, postwar reconstruction, the nationalization of hospitality facilities, and the division of the Free Territory of Trieste into Zones A and B.¹⁵ Following market liberalisation in the 1950s and 1960s, decentralised tourism policy shifted toward foreign markets, and international overnight stays soon surpassed domestic ones.¹⁶ By 1981, the Kvar-

ner Gulf, with seventy-eight tourist destinations, and Istria, with forty-two, were among the most developed tourist regions in Yugoslavia.¹⁷

Among the many towns and settlements, Pula and Rijeka emerge as the largest and most significant economic, administrative, and social centres. However, for the purposes of this research, greater relevance is attributed to towns such as Opatija, which retained its status as an established tourist centre in the postwar period due to its long-standing tradition of health and hospitality tourism, as well as Poreč, Rovinj, and Umag with their century-long tradition.¹⁸ The postwar tourism boom in these towns was marked by construction of 144 holiday resorts in Istria by 1975.¹⁹ During the “golden age” of tourism, numerous accommodation and ancillary facilities were built, including A-, B-, and C-category hotels, campsites, holiday resorts, and recreational and entertainment centres. The period also witnessed the establishment and expansion of major hotel and tourism companies, such as Kvarner, Istraturist, Jadran, Jadranturist, Mošćenička Draga, Plava Laguna, Rabac, Riviera, Slavija, and Progres-

Valalta, which invested in hotel complexes. As socially owned enterprises with both an economic and ideological role, they were included in state initiatives for art in public spaces. Although the Istrian peninsula is divided among three countries today, and the Kvarner Gulf region administratively includes Gorski Kotar, due to the abundance of examples, this research focuses on the Croatian part of Istria. A selection of cases has been analysed, highlighting various modes of furnishing, acquisition, and commissioning, as well as the diverse use of media and artistic expression in tourist architecture.²⁰

Models of acquisition and commissioning, and state initiatives in interior design and furnishing

Building on interwar practices, as in both Eastern and Western bloc countries, the interior design of buildings reflected two fundamental principles: one rooted in the artistic-theoretical vision of a “synthesis of the arts,” and the other linked to state initiatives allocating a percentage of investment budgets to artworks. In the Yugoslav and international context, the idea of synthesising all arts in the postwar period implied the unification of painting, sculpture, design, and architecture into a single, total work of art.²¹ The idea of synthesis is grounded in the theoretical concepts and practices of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artists,²² and it underpins the modernist notion of a synthesis of the arts. Within the framework of postwar neoconstructivism and neoconcretism, Le Corbusier conceived this synthesis as the unification of painting and sculpture under architecture.²³ Alongside Le Corbusier, other architects and theorists associated with CIAM promoted the idea of synthesis, as well as artistic groups such as Espace, Forma Uno, and MAC.²⁴

It was precisely these artists, theorists, and architects that inspired the Zagreb-based painters, sculptors, and architects in the group EXAT 51 (Experimental Atelier 51), who approached abstract art and the synthesis of the arts not only as a project of total spatial aestheticisation but also as a means of social transformation.²⁵ Members of EXAT 51 played a key role in establishing the Studio for Industrial Design (*Studio za industrijsko oblikovanje*, SIO), which promoted the creation of a modern standard through well-designed industrial objects and environments.²⁶ Several members of EXAT and SIO, such as Ivan Picelj, Vjenceslav Richter, and Aleksandar Srnec, were also active in the international New Tendencies movement, engaging with neoconstructivist, neoconcretist, kinetic, optical, and computer art.²⁷ In light of the theoretical principles of these artists and groups, many advocated the integration of architecture and the

visual arts. However, this was by no means exclusive to them; many other artists working in both figurative and abstract art similarly engaged in these practices because the state, from its inception, actively promoted interior design in public buildings (including hotels) for ideological, economic, and social purposes.²⁸

The practice of commissioning artworks and furnishing public spaces in Croatia and Yugoslavia changed and intensified after the Second World War. With the establishment and political structuring of Yugoslavia, the state became the primary commissioner of artworks intended for public spaces and institutions.²⁹ Although individuals and certain communities could, in principle, purchase or commission artworks, acquisitions and commissions were predominantly carried out through government bodies at the federal and republic levels,³⁰ via dedicated committees or juries responsible for evaluating and approving the acquisition or commission.³¹ Therefore, cultural policy and legal and regulatory frameworks, in addition to various forms of cultural institutionalisation (such as departments for agitation and propaganda, cultural authorities at the federal and republic levels, independent cultural institutions, professional associations of visual artists, and other associations and cooperatives) played a crucial role in the acquisition and commissioning of artworks. For the purposes of this article, this process can be broadly categorised into two types: acquisitions and commissions of artworks.

Acquisitions were usually organised and carried out by acquisition committees at the federal, republic, and local levels of government, but artworks could also be purchased through cultural development fund committees, via direct acquisition from the artist, and, less frequently, through private acquisition.³² Acquisitions were generally made for artworks not specifically created for a particular building. However, as the examples in this article show, in some cases there is a clear connection between the subject matter of the artwork and the specific space. On the other hand, artworks commissioned for newly built or renovated buildings (such as schools, hospitals, administrative buildings, and hotels) were usually procured through competitions (tenders, either open or closed) and evaluated by tender committees.³³ Because commission tenders were usually organised for artworks intended for specific spaces, several initiatives and by-laws were introduced in Croatia and Yugoslavia concerning the allocation of a percentage of investment construction project budgets for artwork.³⁴

Although no official law mandating the allocation of a percentage of investment construction budgets for artworks was enacted in Yugoslavia, during the 1950s and 1960s several drafts of regulations, laws, and

recommendations were developed as guidelines for furnishing public buildings with artworks.³⁵ These initiatives were led by ministries, secretariats, and associations such as the Association of Fine Artists of Yugoslavia (SLUJ) and the Association of Fine Artists of Croatia (ULUH), aiming to regulate the commissioning of artworks and the allocation of a fixed percentage of funds for visual art within the investment construction projects.³⁶ The efforts of these associations, along with legal and regulatory acts, addressed these topics in a complex and detailed manner. The following key points can be highlighted: these documents primarily aimed to define the status of public buildings (administrative buildings, institutions, and enterprises), the status of public artworks (oil paintings, murals, frescoes, mosaics, tapestries, reliefs, sculptures, and stained glass), the work of federal and republic committees, the role of juries and the organisation of competitions, and the percentage of construction investment to be allocated for artworks – most commonly set at 1%. Hotels were also considered public (or social) institutions, and a percentage to be set aside for artworks – generally around 1% – was likewise proposed for them, particularly in the case of tourist facilities, lower-category hotels, holiday resorts, bathing establishments, mountain lodges, tourist offices, and similar establishments.³⁷ However, the percentage varied and could range from 3% to 5% in the case of top-tier hotels, or the A category.³⁸ This effectively placed hotels at the same level as monumental buildings, such as national assembly halls. The goals of such initiatives varied, but the most common justification for furnishing public institutions with artworks included the humanisation of living and work spaces, presentation of the state, the development of contemporary art, and the realisation of the synthesis of all the arts (painting, sculpture, design, and architecture), with the aim of stimulating the economy or securing the livelihood and social status of artists.³⁹ These very goals guided artists, architects, art historians, and commissioners in the construction and furnishing of numerous new hotels across Croatia – including Istria and the Kvarner Gulf – during the golden age of Croatian tourism development.

Artworks in hotel interiors in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf

The following pages present a select number of examples from the area to illustrate the various modalities of acquisition and commissioning, the various types of artworks (paintings, sculptures, reliefs, prints, mosaics, and stained glass), and the roles of architects, artists, large hotel companies, and the state in shaping modern hotels on the Adriatic coast, particularly in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf. The examples are or-

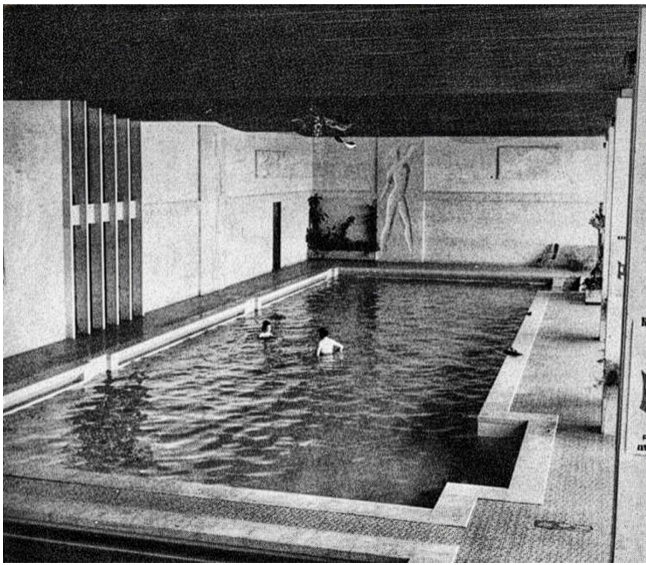


Figure 2.
Aleksandar Rukavina,
reliefs by the pool, Hotel
Adriatic, Umag, 1967.
Source: "Kamen Pazin,"
Arhitektura,
nos. 107–108 (1970).

Savudrija, and Umag, invested in the construction of the eleven-storey Hotel Adriatic, based on a design by the Umag-based architect Ilijo Zlatar and carried out by Industrogradnja.⁴⁰ As a first-class A-category hotel, it featured modern common areas such as a nightclub, casino, aperitif bar, and seawater swimming pool. Several artists were commissioned for the interior and exterior decoration. One of them was the Umag sculptor Aleksandar Rukavina (pseudonym Žohar), who created multiple works for the hotel.⁴¹ During the 1960s, Rukavina worked on a series of relief compositions for the interiors of public institutions in Istria, but his first experience integrating sculpture into architecture took place precisely at the Hotel Adriatic.⁴² In 1967, he was tasked with decorating the walls of the indoor pool, where he created white stone reliefs featuring sea and human themes [Figure 2].⁴³ The reliefs feature stylised figures of a nude woman and man, a fish, and a seahorse, rendered in a refined and slightly geometric style, with at times varying degrees of mimesis. Rukavina adapted the work to the space in both format and composition, placing the elements on vertically oriented panels that echoed the wall perforations surrounding the indoor pool. Following this commission, in 1970, Istraturist commissioned Rukavina to decorate the hotel bar, for which he created figurative reliefs organised into two thematic cycles: *Duga* (The Rainbow), based on a story by Dinko Šimunović, and a cycle with ethnographic elements.⁴⁴ In his reliefs, Rukavina employed stylised figuration to convey a narrative encompassing the hardships of everyday life, local traditions, and the

ganised topographically, starting from northern to southern Istria and then from the western to eastern Kvarner Gulf. The following case studies highlight instances in which modern artistic experimentation, the humanisation of leisure architecture, state presentation to foreign tourists, and support for artists are evident.

Starting from northern Istria, one of the most notable examples is the artistic furnishing of the Hotel Adriatic, located at the tip of the Punta resort in Umag. In 1964 the newly established Istraturist hotel and tourism company, responsible for the coastal area of Novigrad,

region's history. In addition to these reliefs, the aperitif bar was decorated with paintings by Šestić and Batušić, and the hotel restaurant featured a figurative mosaic by the painter and sculptor Maria Benedetti Keržić, depicting the goddess Fortuna and a ship at sea.⁴⁵ Outside the hotel, near the road entrance, a sculpture by Janez Pirnat Nejašmić was installed in 1966 as part of an initiative by Aleksandar Rukavina and the Municipality of Buje: *Grožnjan, grad umjetnika* (Grožnjan, the Town of Artists).⁴⁶ These works reveal that the investors were public enterprises as well as local authorities, and that the aim of both the commissioners and the artists was to present the region's history, customs, and identity through art, using a clear visual language, narration, integration of interior and exterior through form and content, and the installation of artworks in shared areas.

Many examples in Poreč testify to the importance of the town as a tourist destination in postwar Croatia. After the construction of social tourism infrastructure during the 1950s, Poreč entered a phase of mass tourism primarily aimed at foreign visitors. This period was characterised by the establishment of two major hotel companies – Riviera (1953) and Plava Laguna (1957) – which oversaw the construction of numerous accommodation facilities.⁴⁷ One of Riviera's most notable projects is the Hotel Neptun (1967–1968) in Poreč, designed by the architect Julije De Luca as an example of successful architectural interpolation.⁴⁸ De Luca, who already had experience in interior design, opted to include works by the renowned Croatian sculptor Dušan Džamonja in the hotel's main restaurant. For the restaurant wall, the sculptor created an abstract wooden relief [Figure 3] in which he multiplied segments of circular forms composed of small wooden beams, producing a rhythmic and vibrating structure that harmonised with the white grid pattern of De Luca's ceiling design.⁴⁹ One of these reliefs is still preserved today in the restaurant interior



relief [Figure 3] in which he multiplied segments of circular forms composed of small wooden beams, producing a rhythmic and vibrating structure that harmonised with the white grid pattern of De Luca's ceiling design.⁴⁹ One of these reliefs is still preserved today in the restaurant interior

Figure 3. Dušan Džamonja, relief in Hotel Neptun, Poreč, 1968. Source: "Hotel Neptun u Poreču," Čovjek i prostor, no. 194 (1969).

of the hotel, now known as Valamar Riviera, along with a metal relief in which the artist repeated the grid pattern and incorporated hemispherical forms. In addition to Džamonja, another prominent artist and member of the postwar group EXAT 51 contributed to shaping the hotel's identity. This was Aleksandar Srnec, who was responsible for the visual identity of the hotel.⁵⁰ Both the Riviera hotel company and the architect De Luca chose not only to engage those artists who had produced numerous public artworks across Croatia during the 1950s and 1960s, but also leading figures of abstract art whose works would resonate with the modern tastes of foreign – largely Western – tourists.

Alongside Riviera, Plava Laguna was the most important hotel company in Poreč and its surroundings, and it actively promoted the synthesis of all the arts in its hotel construction projects. Starting in 1965, Plava Laguna invested in the construction of several hotels and tourist entertainment centres in the Zelena Laguna area (Parentium Hotel, 1966; Lotos hotels: Zorna, Plavi, Gran Vista, and Istra, 1967; International Club, 1967).⁵¹ These developments emerged during what was described as “the most successful investment cycle in the entire history of Plava Laguna's operations.”⁵²

The Parentium Hotel, designed by Branko Žnidarec and built between 1966 and 1967, was also equipped with numerous artworks, many of which are still preserved in its newly renovated interior. Edo Murtić created four oil paintings that are located at the reception desk and in the dining area of the Parentium Hotel.⁵³ In 1969, he also created an abstract enamel composition [Figure 4] for the dining room. At the centre of the composition, on a blue background, energetic lines in black, blue, red, yellow, green, and orange converge – colours whose intensity enlivens the space. Dušan Džamonja contributed a sculpture for the hotel lobby, Tomo Gerić created paintings, Goranka Vrus Murtić made tapestries, and the furniture was designed by Mirjana Šimanović.⁵⁴ In addition to these interior works, sculptures were also installed outdoors. Josip Diminić, the artist behind numerous monuments found throughout Istria, created the sculpture *Istarski vol – spomenik poljima Istre* (Istrian Ox – A Monument to the Fields of Istria; 1967–1977, Figure 5), located in front of the Parentium Hotel.⁵⁵ The piece represents the strength and resilience of the robust body of the Istrian native cattle breed known as the boscarin. Created without a pedestal, it appears to emerge and grow directly out of the red Istrian soil. However, considering its form, dedication, and title, the sculpture seems to harmonise more naturally with the landscape, earth, and pine forest than with the modern architectural complex of the tourist



Figure 4. Edo Murtić, enamel composition, Hotel Parentium, Poreč, 1969. Source: Hotel Parentium: Plava laguna, Poreč, Jugoslavija, tourist brochure.

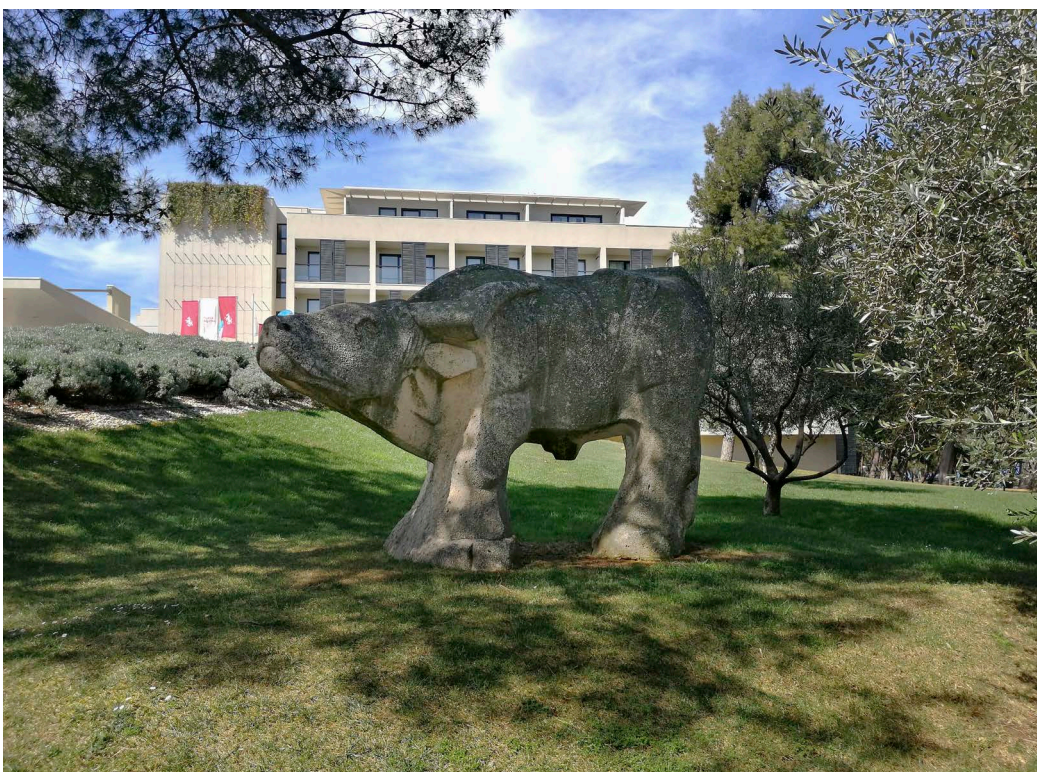


Figure 5. Josip Diminić, Istarski vol – spomenik poljima Istre (Istrian Ox – A Monument to the Fields of Istria), Hotel Parentium, Poreč, 1967–1977. Photo: Patricia Počanić, 2024.



*Figure 6. Edo Murtić,
Obelisci (Obelisks), Hotel
Parentium, Poreč, 1967.
Photo: Patricia Počanić,
2024.*

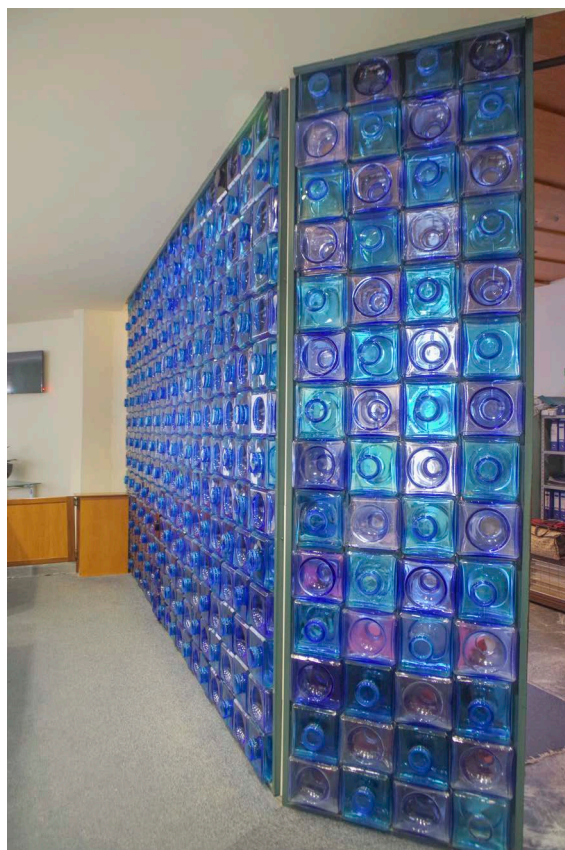
resort. In addition to these works, in 1967 Plava Laguna commissioned Murtić to create a unique series of sculptural mosaics [Figure 6] in a valley near the Parentium Hotel, nestled among pine forests and archaeological sites.⁵⁶ Murtić created 140 square metres of mosaic surfaces mounted on twelve faces of reinforced concrete obelisks, each fourteen metres tall, forming a unified sculptural group. He was assisted in creating this complex project by workers from the Zagreb-based Novogradnja construction company.⁵⁷ Murtić had long been envisioning and sketching out such a concept,⁵⁸ finally bringing it to realisation at Zelena Laguna. He translated the dynamism of his brushstrokes and colour palette – white, grey, vivid red, blue, and orange – from painting into sculpture, a process that took six months.⁵⁹ By bringing his work into open space, Murtić created a dynamic, site-specific artwork that shifts appearances with each change of perspective. The three vertical structures blend harmoniously into the landscape of the surrounding pine forest while also standing out as visual markers within the newly built tourist

resort near Poreč. The choice of mosaic as a medium should certainly be understood within the context of Murtić's broader oeuvre and his other interior works, but it can also be interpreted in relation to the history of the city. Poreč has a long-standing tradition of mosaic-making, with the most renowned examples found in the Euphrasian Basilica. This connection is more than a distant analogy, as evidenced by another 1967 commission from Plava Laguna. The company commissioned the sculptor Nenad Krivčić to recreate some of the most significant mosaics of the Poreč region on the walls of the "Istrian Atrium" of the Hotel Plava Laguna, based on a selection by Antun Šonje, the director of the Poreč Regional Museum.⁶⁰ In these cases, similar modes of commissioning artworks were employed: the commissioner was primarily the company, sometimes in coordination with municipal authorities and professionals. Engaged artists ranged from

locally trained, academy-educated practitioners to prominent figures such as Edo Murtić, who produced the largest number of abstract works for public institution interiors across Croatia and, later, in some Soviet Bloc countries. In addition, the involvement of another SIO member, Mirjana Šimanović, indicate the establishment of a modern standard in hotels. The partial preservation of these artworks (particularly site-specific pieces) and the fact that recent renovations have not maintained the integrity of the original concepts indicate limited appreciation of their significance.

The Rovinj area also features numerous examples of artistic furnishings in hotel and resort interiors, with the Jadran hotel company (founded in 1953)⁶¹ having played a significant role in the acquisition and commissioning of artworks for hotel interiors in the region. One notable example was Jadran's investment in the interior of the Hotel Eden in Rovinj. In 1969, the architect Ivo Bartolić, who also designed the newly built Hotel Istra and its interior on nearby Red Island (*Crveni otok*), invited the architect Miroslav Begović to collaborate on the design of the Hotel Eden in Rovinj.⁶² Completed in 1971, the hotel layout was a composition of broken-up volumes harmoniously integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Figure 7. Raul Goldoni, glass wall, Hotel Eden, Rovinj, ca. 1970. Photo: Patricia Počanić, 2019. Today, the wall is concealed behind a reception-area partition.



In the early 1970s, the renowned artists Edo Murtić and Raul Goldoni – who had previously collaborated on numerous public interior projects during the 1950s and 1960s – integrated their works directly into the architecture of the hotel.⁶³ Acting as a kind of artistic coordinator, Goldoni developed the interior design concept for the hotel's communal spaces. As part of this design, he created a decorative glass wall [Figure 7], similar in colour and form to his work in the House of Socio-Political Organisations (*Zgrada društveno-političkih organizacija*) in Zagreb. The wall positioned behind the central reception desk featured convex and concave glass cubes in varying shades of blue, forming a transparent surface that not only let light into the adjacent office space but also transformed the interior throughout the day as the light refracted through the prisms. Murtić's colourful tapestry [Figure 8], today displayed in the ground-floor breakfast room, is composed of abstract shapes and vibrant zigzag lines that



Figure 8. Edo Murtić, tapestry, Hotel Eden, Rovinj, 1970. Photo: Patricia Počanić, 2026.

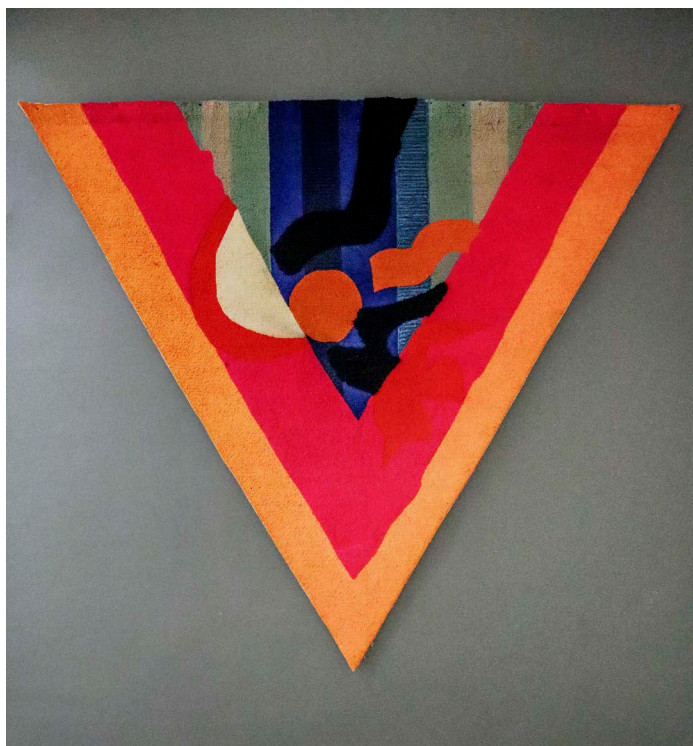


Figure 9. Tapestry attributed to Edo Murtić, Hotel Eden, Rovinj. Photo: Patricia Počanić, 2026.

Figure 10. Zlatko Prica, mosaic on the wall of the indoor swimming pool, Hotel Eden, Rovinj, 1971. Photo: Patricia Počanić, 2026.



Figure 11. Dušan Džamonja, sculpture in front of Hotel Eden, Rovinj. Photo: Patricia Počanić, 2026.



vertically slice across the multicoloured surface. Together with another smaller tapestry [Figure 9], now located near the wellness area, it represented the artist's new explorations in the early 1970s. Alongside these works, the wall of the indoor swimming pool still features a mosaic [Figure 10] by Zlatko Prica, who also created a monumental mosaic for the House of Socio-Political Organisations. Dušan Džamonja is represented by an abstract metal sculpture [Figure 11] placed in front of the hotel.

The works in the Hotel Eden testify to a continuity of abstract experimentation in interior design, as well as the ongoing collaboration between Goldoni, Murtić, Prica and Džamonja across numerous projects. Unfortunately, the latest renovation, with a new reception area, blocks the view of Goldoni's work, undermining the original interior concept and its play of light.

The Jadran hotel company was also responsible for an initiative that further sheds light on the process of purchasing and commissioning art for hotel interiors. During the 1960s, Jadran established collaboration with artists from the Rovinj art colony, and in 1969 it acquired 670 artworks (mostly oil paintings and watercolours) to furnish the common areas and guest rooms of its hotels.⁶⁴ This example illustrates the synthesis of the arts as a means of supporting artists' welfare. Many artworks in Yugoslavia were purchased to secure the social and material position of artists, who relied on state acquisitions to provide means for living and producing their work. Although this model was often criticised by professionals, who argued that it could compromise the quality of artistic output,⁶⁵ such initiatives were generally viewed positively because they were part of a supervised state-managed programme. According to contemporary newspapers, this purchase was "the largest one-time acquisition of artworks ever made by a Yugoslav company."⁶⁶ The acquired works were by artists such as Vilko Šeferov, Ljubo Škrljug, Stojan Aralica, Ljubo Ivančić, Vasilije Jordan, Zdenka Balić, Zora Matić, and Bruno Mascarelli.⁶⁷ The artists were highly satisfied with the collaboration because it provided them with steady work and financial security, and the company acquired the artworks at very favourable prices.⁶⁸ The initiative was praised by Pero Djetelić, a representative of the Republic Secretariat for Education and Culture, who regarded this as a model of good practice. He emphasised the secretariat's view that other companies should invest in artwork because it offers "the most direct connection to our culture and art."⁶⁹ The artists involved in this acquisition constitute the cultural milieu of Rovinj and were long-term participants in the colony, carrying out several public initiatives in the 1960s to secure their livelihoods.⁷⁰ Although such acquisitions could compromise artistic quality and were often motivated by extrinsic concerns (i.e., economic security), they remain significant, especially given that many uncontrolled direct purchases from artists occurred simultaneously. Unfortunately, it is not known which works were acquired or whether they have been preserved.

In Istria and the Kvarner Gulf, several other companies also played a significant role, such as Rabac, Mošćenička Draga, Kvarner, and Jadran. For

some of them – such as the Rabac hotel and hospitality company – the work of architects such as Zdravko Bregovac played a key role. Bregovac created numerous examples of tourist architecture that, at the time, provoked strong reactions from professional circles. His work within the firm Opatija-projekt transformed and innovated tourist architecture throughout Croatia. As a member of EXAT 51, he upheld the ideal of a synthesis of all the arts. In many hotels built during the 1960s, he personally designed the interiors (including the furniture) and actively encouraged and persuaded investors to include artworks in hotel interiors.⁷¹ In the interiors of these hotels, he engaged numerous artists, including members of the SIO such as Aleksandar Srnec, Boris Dogan, and Inge Kostinčer-Bregovac.⁷²

Bregovac's contribution to Opatija's tourist architecture tradition was the Hotel Ambassador, built between 1964 and 1966, during the peak of Yugoslav commercial tourism.⁷³ Designed by the architectural office Opatija-projekt, with the Kvarner hotel company from Opatija as the investor, and construction carried out by the Jadran construction company from Rijeka, the hotel is a prominent example of modern architecture.⁷⁴ Its typology, design, and execution were intended to meet contemporary tourism standards in both form and function. Classified as an A-category hotel, it was conceived as a luxurious building for both domestic and foreign guests. Its lavish character was further enhanced by a rich selection of artworks integrated into the architectural design of the interior.

Among the artists involved in designing the interior of the Hotel Ambassador were Zlatko Bourek, Boris Dogan, Dušan Džamonja, Ivo Kalina, Diana Kosec, Inge Kostinčer-Bregovac, Zvonimir Lončarić, Edo Murtić, Šime Perić, Ivan Picelj, Aleksandar Srnec, and Milan Vulpe. These were established painters, sculptors, and designers, most of whom had previous experience furnishing public buildings during the 1950s and, more specifically, tourist architecture during the 1960s. With the investor's approval, Bregovac selected the artistic collaborators, and the art historian and critic Boris Vižintin served as the artistic advisor in the selection of works for the hotel's interior design.⁷⁵ The artworks created for the hotel interior served various functions and largely reflected architectural relationships and the intended use of specific spaces. Some of the works, through their freeform style and relaxed interpretation of content, directly echoed the function of the areas they were designed for. For instance, Zlatko Bourek created six panels of black-and-white drawings with a humorous undertone for the aperitif bar interior. Boris Dogan created the wall painting *Leptiri umiru sa suncem* (Butterflies Die with the Sun) for the hotel's Golden Salon – a figurative depiction of butterflies on a golden

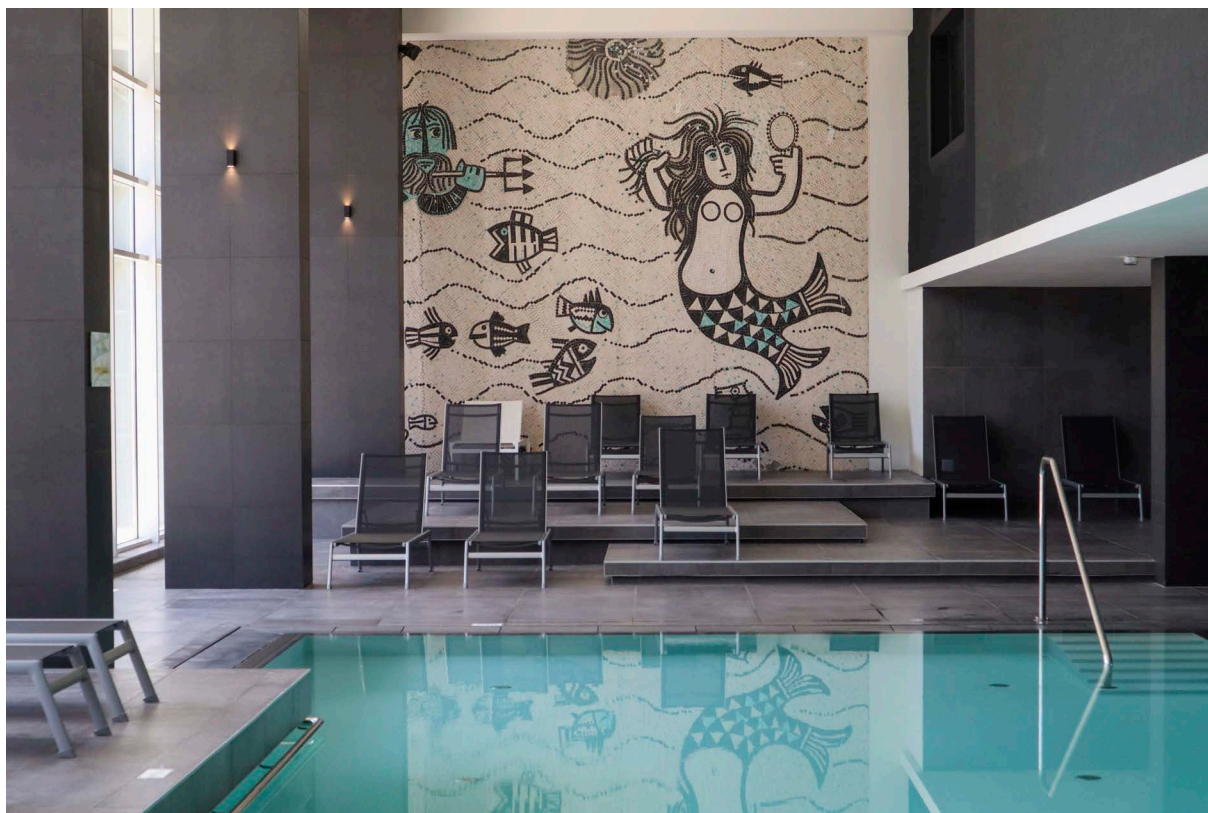


Figure 12.
Zvonimir Lončarić,
mosaic on the wall of the
indoor/winter swimming
pool, Hotel Ambassador,
Opatija, 1966.
Photo: Patricia Počanić,
2022.

background, linking the salon's prestigious character with his own artistic explorations. Dogan also produced a ceramic series of 120 tiles featuring humorous and grotesque culinary elements and themes for the so-called Red Restaurant. Zvonimir Lončarić was the creator of what is today the only artwork preserved in its original location: a mosaic [Figure 12] depicting an underwater mythological world, created on the wall of the indoor swimming pool. His distinctive sense of humour, irony, simplified elements, and formal synthesis are evident in this work as well, which thematically relates to the surrounding environment.

The hotel also features several abstract works created by notable representatives of abstract sculpture and painting, such as Dušan Džamonja and Edo Murtić, as well as members of EXAT 51, SIO, and the New Tendencies movement, including Ivan Picelj and Aleksandar Srnec. Džamonja placed a sculptural composition [Figure 13] on the wall of the bridge-salon, consisting of repeating chain links and a wooden centre. This simple, refined, and abstract solution, according to Džamonja's concept, was in direct communication with the interior because the positioning of the work (determined before its creation) allowed for a dance of light and

Figure 13.
Dušan Džamonja, relief
in the bridge salon, Hotel
Ambasador, Opatija,
1966. Source: Vanda Ekl,
“Likovniki in notranja
arhitektura opatijskega
hotela Ambasador,”
Sinteza: revija za likovno
kulturo, nos. 5–6 (1967).

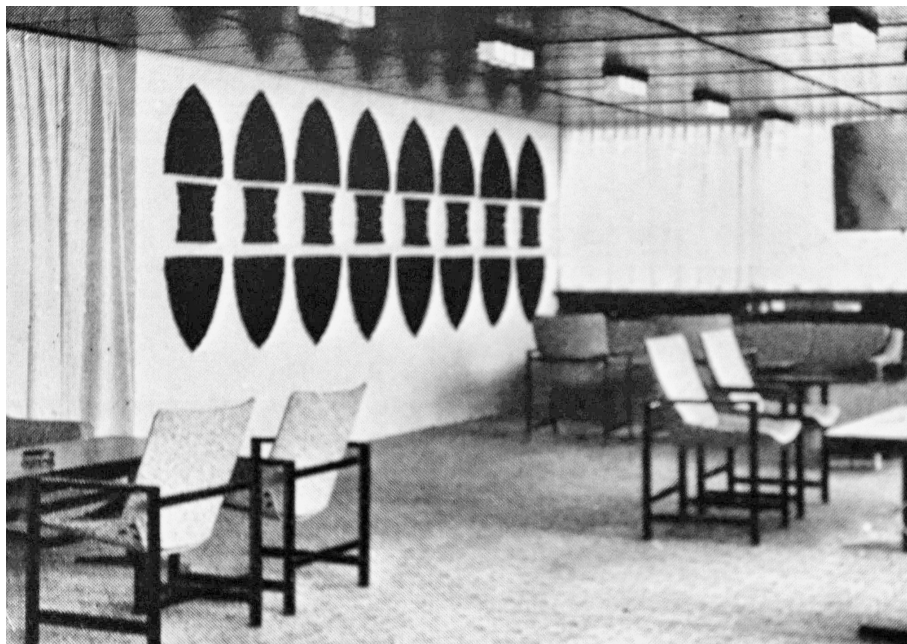
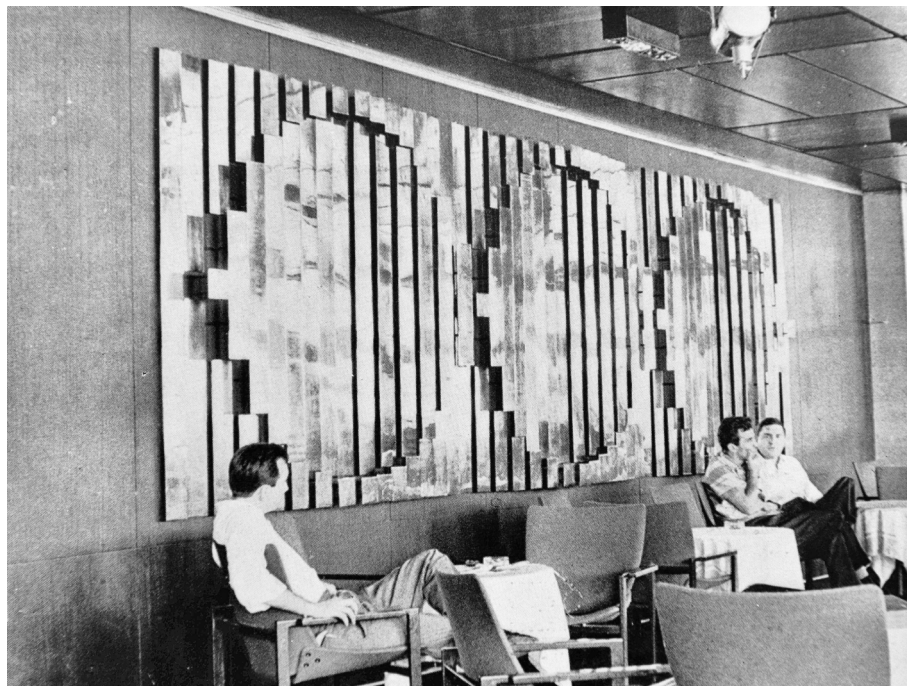


Figure 14. Ivan Picelj,
wall painting in the
restaurant, Hotel
Ambasador, Opatija,
1966. Source: Vanda Ekl,
“Likovniki in notranja
arhitektura opatijskega
hotela Ambasador,”
Sinteza: revija za likovno
kulturo, nos. 5–6 (1967).



shadow. Picelj created a wall painting [Figure 14] for the interior of the Golden Restaurant on a laminated veneer board, where he repeated a modular unit of circles intersected by lines growing thinner from the centre to the edge, which then repeats horizontally and vertically, at right angles, giving the entire composition a sense of movement. In this way, Picelj explored programming qualities within the context of the New Tendencies movement. In the night bar adjacent to the sunroom (also known

Figure 15.
Aleksandar Srnec,
relief in the night bar,
Hotel Ambassador,
Opatija, 1966. Source:
Vanda Ekl, "Likovniki in
notranja arhitektura
opatijskega hotela
Ambasador," Sinteza:
revija za likovno kulturo,
nos. 5–6 (April 1967).



as the dancing area), Srnec covered the wall with a metal relief [Figure 15] made of yellow and grey strips of varying heights. The relief maintains Srnec's post-EXAT research, in which he uses his experience with geometric abstraction as a tool in considering the analytical dissection of forms. Depending on the penetration of light into the interior, the relief dynamically altered the space in various ways. The established painter and muralist Edo Murtić painted the wall in the so-called American Bar [Figure 16] and also created two oil paintings for the hotel's restaurant. These are examples of gestural abstraction, in which Murtić used strong brushstrokes and intense colours to complement the ambience intended for foreign visitors (in both name and function). The idea of a synthetic integration of art and architecture, as seen in these examples, was also reflected in product design. Bregovac's vision of the synthesis of all the arts was reflected in his commissioning of artists for the modern graphic design (Milan Vulpe), uniforms, and work attire (Inge Kostinčer-Bregovac and Diana Kosec). For the interior furnishings, Bregovac engaged local craftsmen and sourced electronic devices and furniture predominantly from domestic, Yugoslav factories.⁷⁶

In addition, copies of renowned Yugoslav medieval frescoes were commissioned for the banquet hall and the mezzanine ceremonial hall. These were created by Šime Perić, based on frescoes from Sopoćani, Nerezi,

Figure 16. Edo Murtić, mural in the American Bar, Hotel Ambassador, Opatija, 1966. Source: CCN-images Archive.



Rakotule, and Beram. This use of a historical narrative within the framework of the modern synthesis of the arts can be attributed to Yugoslav cultural policy. In the late 1940s and 1950s, copies of medieval frescoes from across Yugoslavia were made for the newly opened Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade and for Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions abroad in the postwar years.⁷⁷ Frescoes, along with other medieval art, played a central role in the state's cultural diplomacy, and these exhibitions were seen as a platform to affirm the historical and artistic significance of the art of the unified people's republics, as well as the ideological aspirations of the state.⁷⁸ Thus, the display of fresco copies from various parts of Yugoslavia reflects the effort to provide historical legitimacy to the newly formed socialist state in the eyes of foreign tourists. Examples from the Hotel Ambassador indicate that high modernism, as well as neo-avant-garde tendencies, programmatic art, and visual research of the 1960s, were not only intended for the "sacred" spaces of museums and galleries. In fact, contemporary art could be seen by domestic visitors and, even more importantly for the state, by foreign tourists. On the other hand, the walls of the hotel were seen as a platform for the affirmation and presentation of the state and its history. Modernist artistic language and fresco copies were both employed to appeal to and "educate" Western tourists, signaling Yugoslavia's modernity and historical importance.

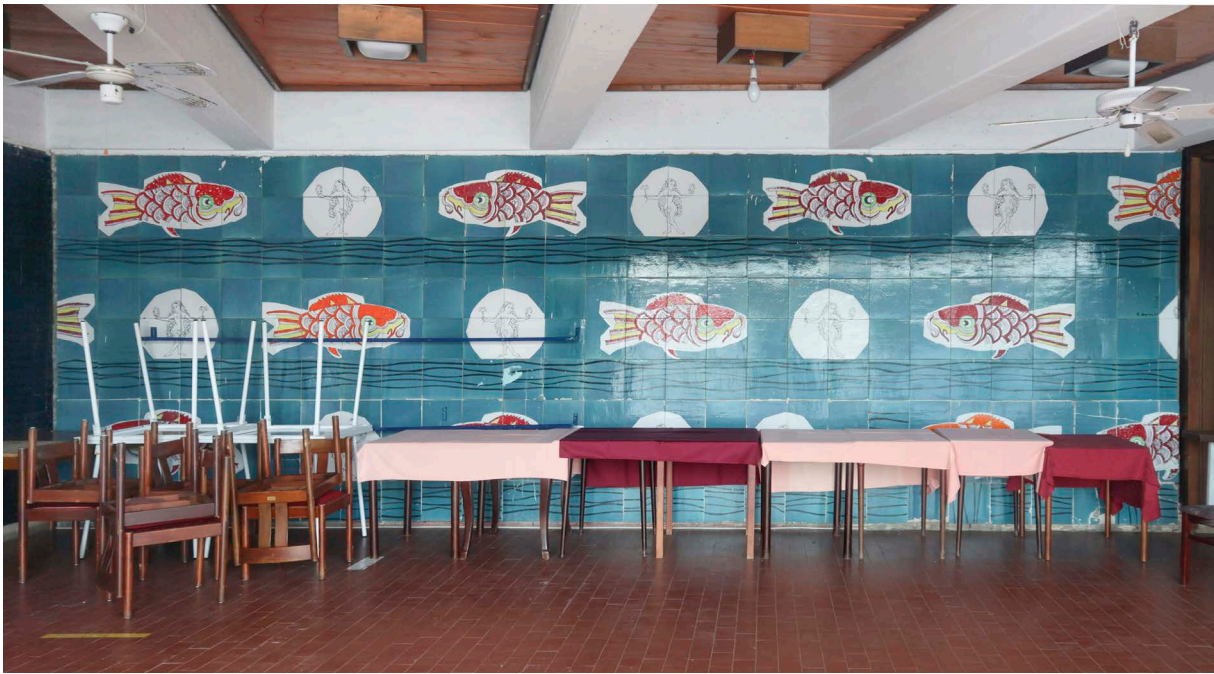


Figure 17. Boris Dogan, mural in the buffet, Uvala Scott, Kraljevica, 1967. Photo: Patricia Počanić, 2022.

Artworks were also used to equip numerous hotels in the Kvarner Gulf area, in towns such as Rijeka, Crikvenica, Kraljevica, and Novi Vinodolski, and on the islands. A large number of artists were involved in furnishing the interior of the award-winning hotel complex Uvala Scott (Scott Bay), located near Kraljevica. The project was developed by the Civil Engineering Design Institute (GPZ) between 1966 and 1967, with Igor Emili serving as the chief architect (alongside a team of twenty-one collaborators).⁷⁹ Emili designed a coastal settlement that was both urbanistically organised and articulated through modernist architecture. He conceived a fully functional town, with small apartment units at varying levels and with all necessary communal facilities.⁸⁰

To furnish the large number of rooms, the architect and the investor engaged a wide range of artists. In the central building, the artistic collaborators were Mario Černe, Boris Dogan, Stevan Luketić, and Šime Vulas.⁸¹ Boris Dogan created a polyptych for the café, featuring a narrative about the life of Alexander Scott (who owned the bay in the nineteenth century) across six panels using intricate drawing techniques.⁸² In the buffet area of the central section, Dogan also created a ceramic wall decoration with marine and mythological elements [Figure 17], which is still preserved in the interior. Because the buffet overlooks the sea, the artist aimed to integrate the work into its surroundings. In the large dining hall, two works were incorporated into the architecture as sculptural treatment of the wall surface: Šime Vulas created a wall composed of vertically arranged wooden segments, and Stevan Luketić designed a composition of metal geometric forms that animate the space through the effects of light and remain remarkably contemporary.⁸³ In the tavern and at the reception area, sculptural reliefs were created by Vladimir "Vlado" Potočnjak,

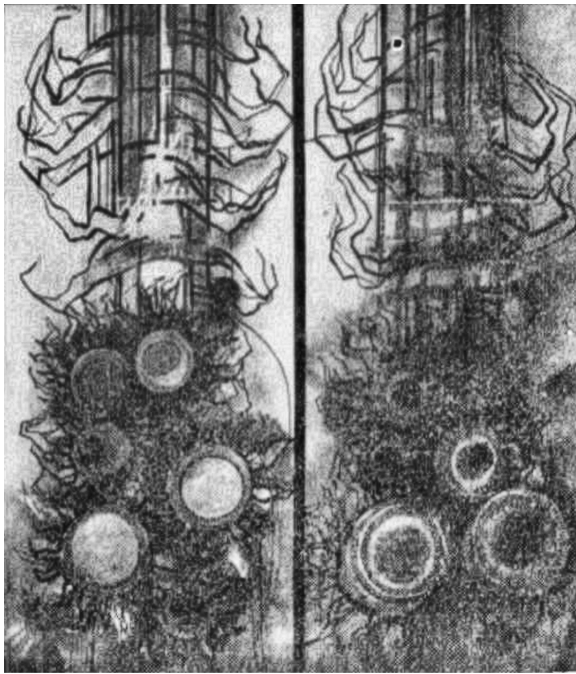


Figure 18. Vladimir Potočnjak, *Pomorski čičak* (Coastal Thistle), Uvala Scott, Kraljevica, 1967–1968. Source: Franković, “Hotel ‘Uvala Scott.’”

a self-taught painter and sculptor who spent his entire working life in Rijeka and produced an impressive number of works in the interiors of public buildings throughout the Kvarner Gulf region.⁸⁴ In the tavern, he installed *Morsko dno* (Seabed, 1968), a large-scale wooden relief sculpture (18 m²) made of charred wood, full of indentations, imprints, shapes, and figures that form a depiction of the seabed.⁸⁵ In addition to this piece, for the reception area Potočnjak created the panel *Pomorski čičak* (Coastal Thistle, 1968; Figure 18) on Formica sheets.⁸⁶ The two-part panel features a symmetrically arranged thistle – a frequent element in his painting and sculpture, which he explored both figuratively and abstractly, always aiming to evoke the aged and dried quality of the flower scorched by the blazing sun.⁸⁷ In the main reception area, Zdenko Balabanić created a decorative

panel depicting scenes of Rijeka’s bourgeois life, horsemen, and the City Tower.⁸⁸ In the exclusive club, artworks were created by Bogdan Borčić, Boris Dogan, Francina Dolenc, Dušan Džamonja, Oton Gliha, Ivo Kalina, Nives Kavurić-Kurtović, Ivan Lacković, Ivan Lovrenčić, Edo Murtić, Zlatko Prica, and Josip Veštek.⁸⁹ Each artist interpreted the theme of the white horse in his or her own distinctive visual approach. Although all the artworks were based in figuration, they ranged from realistic to abstract variations. The chosen theme referred to the history of the bay, specifically the biography of Alexander Scott, who built a summer residence, a fisherman’s house, and a stable there in the first half of the nineteenth century. The current fate of these works remains unclear, and at the time of this research it was not possible to establish their exact condition or location. The works by Dogan and Luketić appear to have been preserved within the interior, likely due to their integration into the architecture, and Potočnjak’s work at the reception desk seems to have been partially retained. Nevertheless, the artworks created for the interior of Uvala Scott stand as a strong example of an attempt at the synthesis of all arts, both formally and thematically – thus achieving a fusion of art and life, particularly within this architectural concept of a self-contained town.

Total works of art for the (leisure) community

Cases of the artistic furnishing of hotel interiors in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf in the years after the Second World War reflect the socio-historical and economic circumstances of the period, Yugoslavia's foreign policy, various modalities of art commissioning, and the role of the state and socially owned enterprises. They also reveal the varied motivations behind the continuous advocacy for integrating artworks into leisure architecture along the Adriatic coast. Considering the state's foreign policy and its focus on international visitors, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, the architecture and furnishings of newly built hotels were adapted to the tastes of modern tourists, primarily from the West. Artworks were commissioned or acquired through several models: by investors, through direct acquisitions between architects and artists, or via initiatives by cultural institutions, local and state authorities, and artists organised through art colonies.

The artists selected for commissions and acquisitions can be grouped into three main categories: 1) academy-trained artists connected to a town in the region of the commission (e.g., the sculptors Josip Diminić and Aleksandar Rukavina completed a series of commissions in Istria; in Rovinj, works were acquired from artists associated with the Rovinj Art Colony; and Edo Murtić carried out numerous commissions in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf in the late 1960s, eventually settling there); 2) artists who established their profile through numerous large-scale state commissions for monuments and public institution interiors, such as Dušan Džamonja, Edo Murtić, and Raul Goldoni; and 3) artists, architects, and designers who were members of groups such as EXAT 51, SIO, and the New Tendencies movement, and who, beyond commissions, advocated for the synthesis of all the arts and the integration of architecture and art according to modern, plastic principles (e.g., Zdravko Bregovac, Ivan Picelj, and Aleksandar Srnec). Although there were some artists outside these categories, this classification makes it possible to draw several conclusions. In addition to academy training and public recognition, local contacts and personal networks were important in selecting artists. Furthermore, experience with numerous high-profile state commissions contributed to their selection. Finally, the choice of artists whose work was rooted in new, neo-avant-garde approaches to integrating art and life reflects both the sensitivity of the state and investors to new forms of art, as well as the working conditions of artists, whose projects could often be realised only with state support. It is also important to note that the research does not include the artists' reflections on state commissions, except in relation to specific projects they carried out. Nevertheless, it

is noteworthy that some artists, such as Diminić, Rukavina, Murtić, and Džamonja, recorded artworks created for interiors in their biographies and catalogues, whereas others, such as Picelj and Srnec, did so to a lesser extent (though this may reflect individual diligence). However, given the lack of information and discussion of state commissions in reviews of their oeuvres, it appears that such commissions were often secondary in their artistic research priorities. It can be assumed that the involvement of multiple stakeholders (architects, investors, and authorities) diminished the perceived value of the artists' individual contributions.

The motivation for furnishing hotels can be identified in four main parameters: modern artistic exploration, the humanisation of spaces, state presentation, and the welfare of artists. In almost all of the examples presented, the commissioners respected the artists' modernist expression (from figuration and abstraction to optical investigations), and it can be concluded that this artistic freedom was further supported by the desire to build hotels in line with contemporary, mostly Western standards. Furthermore, the furnishing of hotel common areas, accessible to both local residents and tourists, as well as the execution of large-scale in-situ works, attest to the ideological and artistic commitment to the humanisation of public spaces. This formed part of broader artistic advocacy for the synthesis of all the arts, which intensified in the postwar period in many countries of the East and West. These efforts were accompanied by Yugoslav state ambitions to humanise living spaces and workspaces, as well as to bring art into direct contact with the masses for the purpose of public enlightenment. The form and content of the artworks largely reflect state presentation and the connection between tourism and foreign policy. The need for state presentation is evident in the funding of A- and B-category hotels, which featured works aligned with modern artistic trends, including frequently debated abstraction and contemporary visual experiments. This was part of the state's strategy to present itself to foreign visitors as a nation capable of successfully competing with the Western market. Comparing these examples with other cases in the interiors of public institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, and administrative buildings) in Croatia,⁹⁰ one can observe that modern art, including neo-avant-garde works, was generally more widely accepted in leisure architecture, as in the case of major state commissions for administrative buildings. However, one does not find examples of socialist realism or themes commemorating recent history (e.g., the National Liberation Struggle), prominent figures, or specific events, as is the case in public buildings for larger public use (e.g., hospitals and educational institutions). Nevertheless, ideological ambitions to

promote fraternity, unity, and a shared historical narrative are evident in the appropriation and commissioning of ancient and medieval heritage. In examples such as the commissioning of mosaic replicas in the Plava Laguna hotels in Poreč or frescoes in the Hotel Ambassador in Opatija, the artworks were selected to reinforce the historical legitimacy of the young multinational socialist state. The concept of the synthesis of the arts and state presentation were also reflected in the procurement of materials, electronic devices, and other equipment, and industrial design, most of which were sourced from Yugoslav factories, thereby supporting domestic production and demonstrating its capacity to create high-quality interiors. Finally, the motivation for furnishing hotel interiors can also be seen in the ambition to ensure artists' welfare. Cases such as the Rovinj-based Jadran Company, which organised and oversaw the acquisition of numerous works from prominent artists associated with the Rovinj Art Colony, demonstrate how such initiatives served both to secure the quality of the artworks and to support the livelihood of the artists. For all these reasons, it is evident that the artworks acquired or commissioned for hotel interiors during the 1960s in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf, and throughout Croatia and Yugoslavia, reveal a complex intersection of modern artistic research, humanisation of spaces, state presentation, and concern for artists' welfare.

Funding

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Endnotes

- 1 This chapter is based on research conducted for the author's doctoral dissertation "State as Patron – Commissions and Acquisitions of Artwork for Interiors of Public Institutions in Croatia from the Early 1950s to the End of the 1960s" (Zagreb: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, 2025). Certain parts of the research, related to the history of tourism in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf, as well as the operations of hotel enterprises, have been expanded for this chapter.
- 2 Igor Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem: o povijesti dokolice i potrošačkog društva u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2005), 28, 35. A summarised overview of the development of tourism can be found in the tourism chapter of the doctoral dissertation by Patricia Počanić, *State as Patron – Commissions and Acquisitions of Artwork for Interiors of Public Institutions in Croatia from the Early 1950s to the End of the 1960s* (PhD diss., Zagreb: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, 2025); and in Patricia Počanić, "Luksuz na jugoslavenski način – Hotel Ambasador u Opatiji," *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 46 (2023): 207–226.
- 3 Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 44.
- 4 For more on the concepts of social, commercial, and mass tourism, as well as the related literature, see Počanić, "Luksuz na jugoslavenski način," 207–226. For more on the history and legalisation of the eight-hour workday in Europe and Yugoslavia, see Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 74–77; Igor Duda, "Workers into Tourists. Entitlements, Desires, and the Realities of Social Tourism under Yugoslav Socialism," in *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s–1980s)*, ed. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2010), 35.
- 5 Boris Vukonić, *Povijest hrvatskog turizma* (Zagreb: Prometej, 2005), 138.
- 6 Žarko Domljan, "Poslijeratna arhitektura u Hrvatskoj," *Život umjetnosti* 10 (1969): 30, 32; Maroje Mrduljaš, "Building the Affordable Arcadia: Tourism Development on the Croatian Adriatic Coast under State Socialism," in *Holidays after the Fall: Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia*, ed. Elke Beyer, Anke Hagemann, and Michael Zinganel (Berlin: JOVIS, 2013), 172; Duda, "Workers into Tourists," 38, 80; Metod Šuligoj, "Neke ključne okolnosti (proteklog) razvoja turizma u Istri," in *Retrospektiva turizma Istre*, ed. Metod Šuligoj (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2015), 32.
- 7 Vukonić, *Povijest hrvatskog turizma*, 132, 153.
- 8 Igor Tchoukarine, "Jugoslavenski put do međunarodnog turizma: otvaranje, decentralizacija i propaganda u prvoj polovici 1950-ih," in *Sunčana strana Jugoslavije. Povijest turizma u socijalizmu*, ed. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2013), 125–154; Sune Bechmann Pedersen and Christian Noack, "Crossing the Iron Curtain: An Introduction," in *Tourism and Travel during the Cold War: Negotiating Tourist Experiences across the Iron Curtain*, ed. Sune Bechmann Pedersen and Christian Noack (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 1–20; Sune Bechmann Pedersen and Elitza Stanoeva, "Tourism Diplomacy in Cold War Europe: Symbolic Gestures, Cultural Exchange and Human Rights," *Contemporary European History* 34, no. 1 (2025): 125–141.
- 9 Tchoukarine, "Jugoslavenski put," 127–128.
- 10 Tchoukarine, "Jugoslavenski put," 137.
- 11 Tchoukarine, "Jugoslavenski put," 130, 133, 139, 141.
- 12 Tchoukarine, "Jugoslavenski put," 134.
- 13 Karin Taylor and Hannes Grandits, "Turizam i stvaranje socijalističke Jugoslavije: Uvod," in *Sunčana strana Jugoslavije. Povijest turizma u socijalizmu*, ed. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2013), 32; Tchoukarine, "Jugoslavenski put," 133, 137.
- 14 Ivan Blažević, *Povijest Istre i Kvarnera* (Opatija: "Otokar Keršovani," 1987), 22, 24, 305; Šuligoj, "Neke ključne okolnosti," 25.

- 15 Šuligoj, "Neke ključne okolnosti," 31, 32.
- 16 Šuligoj, "Neke ključne okolnosti," 32.
- 17 Blažević, *Povijest Istre i Kvarnera*, 22, 24, 305; Šuligoj, "Neke ključne okolnosti," 25.
- 18 For more on the history of tourism in Opatija, see Vukonić, *Povijest hrvatskog turizma*, 40, 43, 52, 54, 64, 119. On the history of tourism in Poreč, Pula, Rabac, and Rovinj, see Zrinka Zadel and Elena Rudan, "Povijesni razvoj smještajnih kapaciteta i poduzetništva u obalnom dijelu Istarskog poluotoka u Hrvatskoj," in *Retrospektiva turizma Istre*, ed. Metod Šuligoj (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2015), 160–162, 166–167.
- 19 Zadel and Rudan, "Povijesni razvoj," 171.
- 20 The research focuses on the Croatian part of the Istrian peninsula and the Kvarner Gulf, excluding Gorski Kotar, which is administratively part of this area. The author's doctoral dissertation includes a greater number of examples from towns and cities in Istria, such as Buje, Buzet, Labin, Pazin, Plomin, Poreč, Pula, and Rovinj, as well as in the Kvarner Gulf region, primarily in Rijeka, Crikvenica, Kraljevica, and Opatija, in addition to mentions of smaller examples from Senj and the islands. Given the large number of tourist destinations and examples of tourism architecture, the study focuses on the cases most pertinent to the research question.
- 21 Jasna Galjer, "Ideja sinteze i konflikt modernizma. Od Le Corbusiera i grupe Espace do grupe Exat 51 i Vjenceslava Richtera," in *Arhitektura in politika, Arhitekturna zgodovina 3: Zbornik povzetkov znanstvenega simpozija*, ed. Renata Novak Klemenčič (Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, 2016), 109–118; Maroje Mrduljaš, "Architecture for a Self-Managing Socialism," in *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, ed. Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018), 45; Počanić, "State as Patron," 75–95.
- 22 This ranged from the Romantic idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk, through the concepts of the Arts and Crafts movement, various forms of Art Nouveau and its workshops, and associations such as the Deutscher Werkbund, to the advocacy of different strands of historical avant-garde movements. Of particular significance was the promotion of collaboration among architects, sculptors, and painters; the integration of art and life; the self-constructed synthesis of all aspects of daily existence; and the concept of the "total work of art", as championed by proponents of De Stijl, the Bauhaus, and Vkhutemas. See Norbert M. Schmitz, "Synthesis and Total Artwork," in *Bauhaus*, ed. Jeannine Fiedler and Peter Feierabend (Köln: H. F. Ullmann, 2006), 302; Victor Margolin, *World History of Design*, vol. 1 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 227, 235; Patricia Počanić, "Između ideje i realizacije: prilog poznavanju umjetničkih djela u interijeru Zgrade društveno-političkih organizacija – Kockice," *Život umjetnosti: časopis o modernoj i suvremenoj umjetnosti i arhitekturi* 110, no. 1 (2022): 109–112.
- 23 Počanić, "Između ideje i realizacije," 110.
- 24 Jerko Denegri, *Prilozi za drugu liniju. Kronika jednog kritičarskog zalaganja* (Zagreb: Horetzky, 2003), 27–28; Galjer, "Ideja sinteze i konflikt modernizma," 109.
- 25 Denegri, *Prilozi za drugu liniju*, 27–28; Ljiljana Kolečnik, "Konfliktne vizije moderniteta i poslijeratna moderna umjetnost," in *Socijalizam i modernost: umjetnost, kultura, politika 1950.–1974.*, ed. Ljiljana Kolečnik (Zagreb: Muzej suvremene umjetnosti and Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2012), 147; Mrduljaš, "Architecture for a Self-Managing Socialism," 45, 49; Maroje Mrduljaš, "Toward an Affordable Arcadia: The Evolution of Hotel Typologies in Yugoslavia," in *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, ed. Martino Stierli and Vladimir Kulić (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018), 78–83.
- 26 Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić and Patricia Počanić, "Novi standard – Studio za industrijsko oblikovanje i suvremeno stanovanje 1950-ih," in *Fragmenti dizajnerske povijesti: dokumenti*, vol. 2, ed. Marko Golub (Zagreb: Hrvatsko dizajnersko društvo, 2022), 41–61.
- 27 Denegri, *Prilozi za drugu liniju*, 32.
- 28 Počanić, "State as Patron."

- 29 Počanić, "State as Patron," 95–197.
- 30 With the establishment of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945, governments were set up at the federal and republic levels. In the context of this study, the terms *federal* and *state* are used to denote the level of authority governing Yugoslavia as a whole, and *republic* refers to the highest level of authority within the People's (later Socialist) Republic of Croatia.
- 31 Počanić, "State as Patron," 141–197.
- 32 Počanić, "State as Patron," 141–197.
- 33 Počanić, "State as Patron," 141–197.
- 34 Počanić, "State as Patron," 141–197.
- 35 Počanić, "State as Patron," 184–197; Patricia Počanić, "Narudžbe i otkupi umjetničkih djela za interijere javnih institucija u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih," *Peristil* 62, no. 1 (2019): 183–184.
- 36 Počanić, "State as Patron," 184–197; Počanić, "Narudžbe i otkupi," 183–184.
- 37 Arhiv Jugoslavije, Beograd, Fond 318, Savezni Sekretarijat za obrazovanje i kulturu (AJ-318), folder 147; Savez likovnih umetnika Jugoslavije. Udruženje likovnih umetnika Srbije, *Projekt zakonskog teksta o umetničkim radovima na novogradnjama*, Beograd, 14 May 1956, 1–2.
- 38 AJ, Fond 318, Folder 147, *Projekt zakonskog teksta o umetničkim radovima na novogradnjama*, 1–2.
- 39 Počanić, "State as Patron," 511–518.
- 40 Goran Prodan, "Iljko Zlatar," in *Istrapedia* (Istarska županija, 17 September 2020), accessed June 3, 2026, <https://www.istrapedia.hr/it/natuknice/4119/zlatar-iljko>; Mirko Otočan, *Povijest turizma i kulturne baštine Umaga* (Umag: "Josip Turčinović"; Buje: Matica hrvatska, Ogranak, 2015), 76, 111.
- 41 In 1958, Rukavina completed his sculpture studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, where his professors were Grga Antunac, Vjekoslav Rukljač, and Vanja Radauš. He was also a permanent collaborator at Radauš's master workshop (1959–1962).
- 42 Juraj Baldani, *Aleksandar Rukavina* (Umag: Mjesna zajednica Brtonigla, 1987), 40.
- 43 Baldani, *Aleksandar Rukavina*, 40.
- 44 Baldani, *Aleksandar Rukavina*, 40. The cycle The Rainbow consists of four reliefs depicting scenes from the literary work of the same name: 1) a scene portraying a girl with her mother and father beneath the moon, 2) boys playing with a dog while the girl watches from inside the house, 3) a conversation between the girl and a witch-like figure in a room interior, and 4) the girl running with outstretched arms under a rainbow, accompanied by realistically rendered folk elements. The second cycle consists of four copper reliefs with themes from folk life and medieval heritage: *Hrvatski troplet I* (Croatian Interlace I), *Hrvatski troplet II* (Croatian Interlace II), *Svirač na guslama* (Gusle Player), and *Svirač u mih* (Bagpipe Player). The interlace and musicians are presented against untreated backgrounds, with faceless figures and traces of geometric stylization.
- 45 Otočan, *Povijest turizma i kulturne baštine Umaga*, 76, 111, 112.
- 46 The information is inscribed on the pedestal of the sculpture itself.
- 47 Zadel and Rudan, "Povijesni razvoj," 171. Both companies were responsible for the construction of tourism infrastructure, including entertainment centres, sports facilities, and campsites (among them naturist camps), which helped position Poreč as a leader in both sports and naturist tourism.
- 48 Julije De Luca, "Hotel Neptun u Poreču," *Čovjek i prostor* 16, no. 194 (1969): 1. The building was constructed on Marshal Tito Coastal Road (*Obala Maršala Tita*) at the site of a structure that had been destroyed during the Second World War bombings.
- 49 The circles resembled Džamonja's similar works in metal, such as the one he created for the Youth Centre in Belgrade.

- 50 "Hotel Neptun," 1.
- 51 Boris Vukonić, *Plava laguna 1957. – 2007.* (Poreč: Plava laguna, 2007), 66, 71.
- 52 Vukonić, *Plava laguna*, 71.
- 53 Dubravka Erceg, "Skulptura i slika u jednoj cjelini," *Vjesnik*, 2 August 1967, 6.
- 54 Today the hotel also houses another abstract enamel composition by Edo Murtić, several of his prints, and mobile graphics by Miroslav Šutej. It is likely that these works were relocated from other hotels and acquired at a later time.
- 55 "Diminićev svijet spomeničke skulpture," *Čovjek i prostor* 25, no. 298 (1978): 26.
- 56 M., "Primjer Poreča. Turizam i kultura – zajedno," *Večernji list*, 18 February 1967, 9.
- 57 B. Sterle, "Murtićev 'svjetionik' u Zelenoj laguni," *Vjesnik*, 24 June 1967, 7.
- 58 Dubravko Horvatić, "Ni na nebu ni na zemlji," *Telegram*, 13 October 1967, 5; T. H., "Sa slikom u prostoru," *Večernji list*, 25 December 1966 (Arhiv za likovne umjetnosti HAZU, Edo Murtić File, Newspaper Clipping Collection).
- 59 Erceg, "Skulptura i slika," 6.
- 60 M., "Primjer Poreča," 9.
- 61 The company Jadran-turist d.d. Rovinj was founded in 1953 under the name *Turističko društvo Rovinj* (Rovinj Tourist Society), and in 1954 it was renamed *Ugostiteljsko poduzeće Jadran* (Jadran Hospitality Company). In 1956, it acquired properties on Saint Catherine Island (*Otočić Sveta Katarina*) and adopted the name Jadran Rovinj. M. Ferenčić, "Jadran-turist d. d. Rovinj," in *Istarska enciklopedija*, ed. Miroslav Bertoša and Robert Matijašić (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2005), 351; Branimir Crljenko, "Hoteli – velike galerije," *Novi list*, 6 September 1969, 10.
- 62 "Hotel 'Eden' u Rovinju," *Čovjek i prostor* 20, no. 238 (1973): 4–7; Borka Bobovec, Luka Korlaet, and Nino Virag, "Arhitekt Ivo Bartolić. Prolegomena opusu," *Prostor* 23, no. 1 (49) (2015): 169.
- 63 Sketch for interior design, Hotel Eden, Rovinj. Tonko Maroević and Ive Šimat Banov, *Raoul Goldoni. Retrospektivna izložba 1942.–1983.* (Zagreb: Umjetnički paviljon, 2004), 108, 110.
- 64 Crljenko, "Hoteli – velike galerije," 10.
- 65 Počanić, "State as Patron," 138, 162.
- 66 Crljenko, "Hoteli – velike galerije," 10.
- 67 Crljenko, "Hoteli – velike galerije," 10.
- 68 Crljenko, "Hoteli – velike galerije," 10.
- 69 Crljenko, "Hoteli – velike galerije," 10.
- 70 *Umjetnička kolonija – Rovinj / Colonia artistica di Rovigno* (Rovinj: Muzejska zbirka Rovinj, 1969).
- 71 Bregovac left a lasting mark on specific areas and locations, and during the 1960s he completely transformed the landscape of Rabac by building hotels, resorts, and tourist complexes, including the resort village of Sveti Andrea (1963), the Hotel Lanterna (1965–1966), the resort village of Girandella (1967–1969), and Maslinica (1968–1970), as well as the Fortuna (1971) and Apollo (1971) hotels. Počanić, "State as Patron," 335–336.
- 72 Počanić, "State as Patron," 335–336; Magaš Bilandžić and Počanić, "Novi standard," 42–61.
- 73 A detailed study of the architecture and artworks in the Hotel Ambassador was published in Patricia Počanić's article "Luksuz na jugoslavenski način," 207–226.
- 74 "Hotel Ambassador Opatija," *Arhitektura i urbanizam*, nos. 45–46 (1967): 19–23.

- 75 "Hotel Ambasador Opatija," 21; "Impressum," *Arhitekt Zdravko Bregovac – Hotel Ambasador Opatija* (Zagreb, 1966).
- 76 The professional periodical literature states: "Blankets were made in Tetovo, furniture in Sevnica and in Zagreb and Samobor, elevators and awnings in Belgrade, carpets in Ivanjica (Serbia), armchairs in Gradiška, upholstery fabrics and curtains in Slovenia, bathroom ceramics in Zaprešić, etc." See "Hotel Ambasador Opatija," 20.
- 77 Katarina Mohar, "Slovenian Frescoes at Yugoslav Medieval Art Exhibitions during the 1950s," in *Medieval Murals: New Perspectives and Research Approaches*, ed. Mija Oter Gorenčič (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2024), 307–345.
- 78 Mohar, "Slovenian Frescoes," 322.
- 79 Rastko Schwalba, *Igor Emili* (Rijeka: Muzej grada Rijeke, 1999), 45, 102.
- 80 Boro Pavlović, "Turističko naselje u uvali Scott kraj Kraljevice," *Čovjek i prostor* 15, no. 182 (1968): 2. This included spacious dining halls, a café, a nightclub, a local tavern, an old-style wine cellar, an exclusive club, a seafood restaurant, a mini golf course, a swimming pool, and other amenities.
- 81 Pavlović, "Turističko naselje," 3.
- 82 Pavlović, "Turističko naselje," 3.
- 83 Pavlović, "Turističko naselje," 3.
- 84 Pavlović, "Turističko naselje," 3; Vanda Ekl, *Vladimir Potočnjak: skice za monografiju* (Rijeka: Tipograf, 1984), 8, 12, 20, 45. For other works, see Počanić, "State as Patron."
- 85 Ekl, *Vladimir Potočnjak*, 45.
- 86 Ekl, *Vladimir Potočnjak*, 45.
- 87 Ekl, *Vladimir Potočnjak*, 18.
- 88 Eugen Franković, "Hotel 'Uvala Scott'," *Arhitektura* 22, nos. 97–98 (1968): 16.
- 89 Pavlović, "Turističko naselje," 3.
- 90 Počanić, "State as Patron."

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Umetnost za turistično arhitekturo: umetniška dela, naročena za hotele v Istri in Kvarnerju v šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja

Povzetek

Na vrhuncu jugoslovanskega množičnega turizma v šestdesetih in sedemdesetih letih 20. stoletja so bili v Istri in Kvarnerju zgrajeni številni hoteli, turistični kompleksi in kampi, ki so trajno preoblikovali krajino, gospodarstvo in vsakdanje življenje lokalnih skupnosti. Razvoj turistične infrastrukture je potekal vzporedno z reformami jugoslovanske zunanje in notranje politike, z liberalizacijo trga ter postopnim sprejemanjem potrošniške kulture.

Razvoj turizma v povojni Jugoslaviji in na Hrvaškem je potekal v treh fazah; zadnji dve sta zaznamovali prehod od socialnega h komercialnemu in množičnemu turizmu. V zlatem desetletju hrvaškega turizma, v letih od 1965 do 1975, so bile ustanovljene organizacije, združenja in revije, posvečene turizmu in gostinstvu, s čimer se je spodbujal razvoj zasebnih nastanitev, hkrati pa tudi komercialnega turizma v okviru družbenih podjetij. V tem obdobju je turizem postal pomemben instrument modernizacije, ključni vir tujega kapitala ter izraz ideoloških in gospodarskih teženj jugoslovanskih oblasti.

Dolga tradicija turizma v Istri in Kvarnerju je bila rezultat kompleksnih zgodovinskih procesov, razvite prometne infrastrukture in bližine srednjeevropskih držav. Po drugi svetovni vojni so bili na tem območju zgrajeni številni turistični objekti, obenem pa so bila ustanovljena ali obnovljena velika hotelsko-turistična podjetja, kot so Kvarner, Jadran in Plava Laguna. Z vlaganji v hotelske komplekse so ta podjetja odigrala ključno vlogo pri razvoju turistične infrastrukture.

Vzporedno z družbenopolitičnim in gospodarskim razvojem države se je sistematično uveljavljala ideja sinteze vseh umetnosti – arhitekture, slikarstva, kiparstva in oblikovanja –, zlasti v novozgrajenih objektih v družbeni lasti. Ta prizadevanja so zajela tudi turistično arhitekturo ter spodbudila intenzivno sodelovanje med arhitekti in umetniki, usmerjeno v oblikovanje celostne umetnine. V povojnem obdobju je država postala glavni naročnik umetniških del, odkupi in naročila pa so potekali prek državnih organov na zvezni in republiški ravni oziroma prek posebnih komisij in odborov. Pomembno vlogo so imeli kulturna politika, institucionalizirane oblike kulture

in zakonski predpisi, ki so določali delež investicijskih sredstev, namenjenih za financiranje umetniških del.

Na podlagi tega konteksta ter arhivskih in terenskih raziskav, pa tudi analize sočasne periodike, so v poglavju obravnavani modeli naročanja umetniških del za hotelske interierje, motivi za takšna naročila ter vloga umetnikov, arhitektov, investorjev in države pri oblikovanju njihovih pomenov. Poglavje je zasnovano v geografskem zaporedju od severne Istre proti Kvarnerju, analiziranih pa je več izbranih primerov: umetniška dela v hotelu Adriatic v Umagu, hotelih Neptun in Parentium v Poreču, hotelu Eden v Rovinju, hotelu Ambassador v Opatiji ter v hotelskem kompleksu Uvala Scott pri Kraljevici. Pri vsakem primeru so predstavljeni osnovni podatki in okoliščine gradnje hotela, sledita analiza in interpretacija umetniških del.

Izbrani primeri razkrivajo večplastne pomene, ki presegajo zgolj estetsko funkcijo umetnosti. Umetniška dela v hotelskih interierjih so bila naročena in odkupljena na različne načine: prek investorjev, z neposrednim sodelovanjem arhitektov in umetnikov ali na pobudo kulturnih ustanov, lokalnih in državnih organov ter umetnikov, povezanih z likovnimi kolonijami. Med avtorji, ki so bili angažirani, so bili akademsko izobraženi umetniki z izkušnjami na tem področju umetniškega delovanja, ki so si ugled zgradili s številnimi državnimi naročili, pa tudi umetniki, arhitekti in oblikovalci, zbrani okoli neoavantgardnih umetniških skupin in gibanj. Motivi za opremljanje hotelskih interierjev z umetniškimi deli so bili večplastni: dela so lahko predstavljala sodobno umetniško raziskovanje, prispevala k humanizaciji prostora, sodelovala pri reprezentaciji države ter umetnikom zagotavljala ekonomski in družbeni položaj. Umetniška dela, naročena in odkupljena za hotelske interierje v Istri in Kvarnerju v šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja, zato pričajo o kompleksnem razmerju med umetniško produkcijo in državo.

A substantial body of postwar art created for institutional environments remains hidden in plain sight: in schools, hospitals, municipal offices, factories, hotels, shops, and other spaces of everyday life. Some works remain intact, others survive in altered interiors or as partial material remains, and still others are known only through scattered archival records, photographs, and uncertain

memories. Many have been covered, relocated, destroyed or forgotten, even though they formed an important part of postwar public space and visual culture.

This volume contributes to the transnational study of art

commissioned for public institutions, a field that remains unevenly researched across national contexts. The chapters show how institutions used art to shape their environments and how later changes in use or ownership affected the works' meanings and prospects for preservation.

