

Seminar Series: National Histories, Imperial Memories

Online / Brno, Masaryk University

Deadline: Jun 15, 2021

Christian Drobe, Masaryk Universität

National Histories, Imperial Memories. Representing the Past in Interwar Central Europe and Beyond

CRAACE online seminar series, Autumn 2021

In 1918 the multinational Habsburg Empire collapsed. In its successor states, official narratives of history tended to downplay the imperial context and highlight the continuous, distinct history of the nation, projecting modern ideas of national identity onto the past. This view of history was promoted through monuments, commemorations, and countless other products of visual culture. Nevertheless, while 1918 was undoubtedly a watershed moment, it did not suddenly obliterate the shared past. The built and artistic heritage of the Empire was still present and had to be dealt with, whether through appropriation, destruction, or reinterpretation. The nationalities of the former Empire were in constant interaction with each other, whether politically allied or opposed, and they still lived together in multiethnic territories such as Slovakia or Transylvania. Commemorations and representations of the national past were conceived with an eye on the 'others'. Remembrance was polyphonic, with different groups forming their own narratives, even if these were not always officially recognised.

This series of Zoom seminars held from late September to mid-December 2021 will examine how interwar visual culture engaged with the shared imperial past. Each seminar will feature papers of c. 20–25 minutes, followed by a discussion.

Keynote speaker: Nancy Wingfield (Northern Illinois University)

Final event: Contemporary artists and the contested past – Szabolcs KissPál (University of Fine Arts, Budapest) and Martin Piaček (Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Bratislava) in conversation with Edit András (Central European University, Vienna)

We invite proposals addressing the central theme from a variety of perspectives. While the seminar series focuses on interwar post-Habsburg central Europe, we welcome proposals transcending this framework in space (e. g. comparisons with other post-imperial contexts; émigré artists; the non-Habsburg past of successor states such as Poland or Romania) and time (e. g. the prehistory and post-1945 fate of relevant interwar artworks, monuments, or commemorative activities). The scope of possible case studies is similarly broad: it encompasses works of fine art, buildings, monuments, but also film, theatre, festivities, advertisements, popular prints, or any other aspect

of visual culture.

Topics can include, but are not limited to:

- contested heritage: the preservation or demolition of buildings and monuments related to the imperial past
- representations of controversial historical events that have been interpreted in opposing ways by different groups
- representations of the imperial past in the service of the international self-promotion of the successor states, e. g. at international exhibitions
- commemorating the past in multinational localities
- history, place and landscape in visual culture
- transnational artistic collaborations and historical memory
- visual culture and the memory politics of transnational movements, e. g. Communism
- representations of history from the perspectives of disenfranchised ethnic, religious or social groups and their relationship to official memory politics

To submit a proposal, please send an abstract of max. 300 words to craace@muni.cz by 15 June 2021. For more information please contact Nóra Veszprémi: veszpremi@phil.muni.cz

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Reference:

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