Monuments of the Soviet Occupation Period (Riga, 30–31 Oct 25)

Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, Oct 30–31, 2025
Deadline: Aug 22, 2025

Ieva Astahovska

Monuments of the Soviet Occupation Period as Dissonant Heritage.

The conference will focus on monuments from the Soviet occupation period, paying particular attention to their ambiguous but significant place in the context of the cultural heritage of the recent Soviet past. Conference participants are invited to discuss these monuments not only as remnants of a past regime, but also as tangible and intangible heritage of the Soviet era and as historical evidence of the occupation, which should be included in the process of explaining and updating history.

The conference organisers invite applications from cultural heritage specialists, art scholars, artists, as well as historians, memory studies researchers, and scholars from other fields working on issues related to monuments as dissonant heritage.

Possible themes include but are not limited to:
- monuments and other memorial cultural objects as evidence and explanatory elements of Soviet history and ideology
- the involvement of artists and other cultural figures in the implementation of Soviet ideology and its representation in monuments
- the relationship between Soviet power and national narratives of the past
- the process of preserving or removing monuments and the controversy/polemics surrounding it in the Baltic States and Eastern Europe since 2022
- the decolonial turn and the impact of postcolonial and decolonial discourse on the monument removal process
- monuments from the Soviet period as reminders of the complexity of the region’s histories
- monuments and memory politics in relation to themes of historical conflicts, tragedies, and traumas
- monuments as evidence of the cultural and historical heterogeneity of the Soviet period, its different historical interpretations, and their various historical, artistic, urban, cultural heritage, and educational aspects
- analysis of examples of the motivation and context of artists and cultural figures in creating monuments, and how these contexts are reflected in the current political situation
- analysis of the relationship between artists and the institutions regulating artistic processes
- legal, political, historical, anthropological, art historical, monument protection and preservation, and heritage and memory aspects related to monument removal campaigns

- the involvement of contemporary art, exhibitions, and art projects in the decolonialisation debate, including the revision of controversial monuments

Submission of applications:
Interested participants are invited to submit a summary of their paper (no more than 200 words) and a short biography by August 22, 2025 to: dissonantmonuments@gmail.com. Confirmation of participation in the conference will be sent by August 29, 2025.

More information at the Latvian Society of Art Historians and Curators website: https://ej.uz/dissonantmonuments.

If you require further information, please write to dissonantmonuments@gmail.com.

The conference is organised by the Latvian Society of Art Historians and Curators in collaboration with the Art Academy of Latvia, the Latvian National Heritage Board, and the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. Conference working group: Ieva Astahovska, Rihards Pētersons, Jana Grostiņa, Dana Stuce.

Reference:
CFP: Monuments of the Soviet Occupation Period (Riga, 30-31 Oct 25). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 16, 2025 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/50385>.