

Box 951549, Los Angeles, California 90095-1549
phone 310/825.4288
fax 310/206.7007
www.fowler.ucla.edu

Department of Marketing and Communications

Stacey Ravel Abarbanel
staceyra@arts.ucla.edu
310/825.4288

Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu
310/825-4288

For Immediate Use
January 28, 2013

Spomenik: Photographs of the Monuments of Former Yugoslavia by Jan Kempenaers Opens Mar 17 at Fowler Museum



Futuristic-looking, yet dilapidated *spomeniks*—Serbo-Croatian for monuments—dot the hills and valleys of the former Yugoslavia like abandoned spaceships, tributes to a now-forgotten socialist future that would be free from ethnic divisions. From 2006–09, Antwerp-based artist Jan Kempenaers travelled through the region photographing these striking monuments. Twenty-three of these photographs will be on display at the Fowler Museum from March 17–August 11, 2013.

Erected by Yugoslavian president Josip Broz Tito in the 1960s and 1970s to commemorate World War II,

the *spomeniks* were once the sites of state-orchestrated pilgrimages for adults and schoolchildren and a focus of efforts to construct a cohesive identity for a radically heterogeneous nation. After the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, many of the monuments were destroyed. Today, those that remain have fallen into disrepair and lie deserted and disused, subject to the indifference of a new generation.

Kempenaers photographed *spomeniks* as part of a research project on contemporary landscape and its representation. His approach, focusing on the monuments as enigmatic and somewhat fantastical ruins, deliberately parallels the conventions of the “Picturesque,” an aesthetic vision with roots in eighteenth-century British traditions of painting, poetry, and landscape design that favored rugged and depopulated wildernesses, sometimes dotted with derelict or decaying buildings.

About the Artist

Jan Kempenaers (b. 1968) lives in Antwerp and works in Ghent. He has been affiliated with the School of Arts Ghent since 2006. He studied photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent and the Jan Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. Since the beginning of the 90s Kempenaers has been photographing urban and natural landscapes and in 2011 he completed a PhD in the visual arts. He is currently working on a new project centered on abstract photography.

Some of Kempenaers’s recent exhibitions include *Les Prairies* (Frac Bretagne, Rennes, 2012), *In Search of the Picturesque* (Kiosk, Ghent, 2012), *The Luxury of Dirt* (Galerie Bob van Orsouw, Zürich, 2011), and *Beyond the Picturesque* (SMAK, Ghent, 2009). His publications include *Spomenik*, *Picturesque*, and *Dun Briste*, all created in collaboration with Roma publications in Amsterdam.

Additional Information

Spomenik: Photographs of the Monuments of Former Yugoslavia will be on view in the Fowler Museum's Goldenberg Galleria. Also on display is *Resplendent Dress from Southeastern Europe: A History in Layers*, which features stunning nineteenth- through twentieth-century traditional dress ensembles from twelve small countries and shows the major historical and cultural influences that have shaped European rural dress. Kempnaers' photographs offer a provocative counterpoint to the traditional festive dress on display.

The Fowler Museum at UCLA is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$11 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310/825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

-UCLA-