

Political Kitsch

Defensive Remembrance

War memorials are intended to commemorate fallen soldiers. Many are characterised by exaggerated heroism and a supposed eternal value. Due to the extreme emotional charge and oversized design, they become political kitsch.

The oldest war memorials in Germany were erected in 1813 to commemorate the fallen soldiers of the Napoleonic Wars. Monuments built after the end of the Franco-Prussian War (1870/71) were the first to honour the survivors. From 1933, newly erected war memorials were intended to promote the German people's willingness to make sacrifices.

After 1945, monuments changed. Minimalist designs replaced the giant figurative representations. At the same time, meticulously rehearsed changing of the guard and ritualised wreath-laying ceremonies became an emotionalising part of the culture of remembrance.