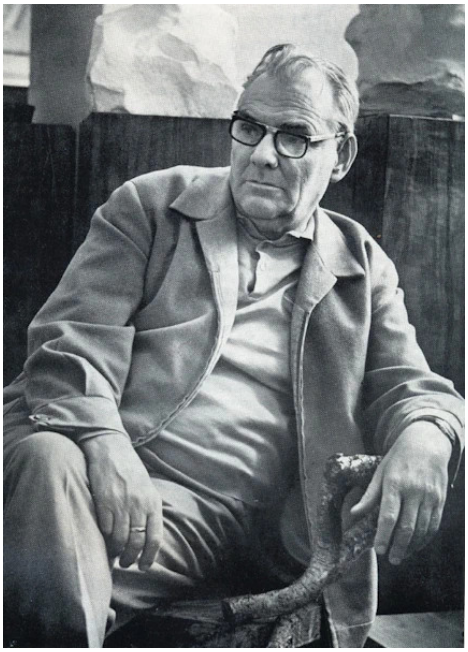
Yevgeny Vuchetich - Russian Sculptor



Yevgeny Vuchetich, one of the greatest masters of Soviet monumental sculpture, was born in 1908 in Yekaterinoslav, Russia. Producing works that were in harmony with the official art understanding of the Soviet Union throughout his life, yet remained extremely powerful and original within that framework, Vuchetich wrote his name into history most notably with the "The Motherland Calls" sculpture in Volgograd and the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin. These works represent the pinnacle of 20th-century monumental sculpture, not only in terms of technique and scale but also in the emotional weight and symbolic power they carry. In every work from Vuchetich's hands, the deep traces of the destruction and loss caused by World War II, as well as the excitement of the eventual victory, can be felt.

The Motherland Calls: One of the World's Tallest Sculptures

Vuchetich's largest and most impressive work is "The Motherland Calls" sculpture rising on Mamayev Kurgan in Volgograd. Completed in 1967, this massive structure earned the title of the world's tallest sculpture in its completion year, standing 85 meters tall including the sword, and 52 meters for the figure itself. Erected on the grounds where the Battle of Stalingrad took place, this sculpture depicts a female figure holding a sword and calling her people to battle with her arms wide open. The figure's facial expression, body posture, and the strength of the hand holding the sword simultaneously convey both the ruthlessness of war and the excitement of resistance. Seeing this sculpture accompanied by the panorama of the Volga River and the city from Mamayev Kurgan is an indescribable experience.

Producing this work represents an extraordinary achievement from a technical perspective as well. The internal skeletal structure, consisting of concrete and metal supports, was designed with engineering calculations to withstand tens of thousands of tons of pressure. The figure is hollow,

containing stairs and visitor access areas inside. Maintained today through years of restoration work, this sculpture remains among Russia's most visited monumental structures.

Berlin Soviet War Memorial and Other Works

Vuchetich's Soviet War Memorial in Berlin's Treptower Park, completed in 1949, is also one of the most impressive works in the history of world sculpture. The Soviet soldier figure standing on a broken swastika and holding a child in his arms was erected in memory of approximately 80,000 Soviet soldiers who lost their lives in World War II. The scale, composition, and emotional intensity in this work offer one of the most powerful summaries of the original interpretation Vuchetich brought to monumental sculpture. This preference for evaluating the victory of war within a human framework rather than merely celebrating it elevates the work to a dimension beyond propaganda.

Contribution to Sculpture and Legacy

Vuchetich's contribution to the art of sculpture lies in his unique ability to meet monumental scale with emotional depth. His ability to weave feelings of loss, pain, and human solidarity into the same works while handling the themes of victory and power demanded by Soviet ideology carries him far beyond being a mere propaganda artist. Today, his works continue to be a highly productive reference point both in terms of art history and in discussions of collective memory and national identity.

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Workshop: Heykel.org - Publication Date: 2026-04-26 21:19:38 - PDF Date: 24/11/2026