

Melania Trump statue set on fire in Slovenia

[theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/09/melania-trump-statue-set-on-fire-in-slovenia](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/09/melania-trump-statue-set-on-fire-in-slovenia)

July 9, 2020

A wooden sculpture of first lady Melania Trump near her home town of Sevnica, Slovenia, has been removed after being set on fire during the US independence day weekend, according to the artist who commissioned the sculpture.



Brad Downey, a Berlin-based American artist, said he had the life-size sculpture – now blackened and disfigured – removed as soon as police informed him on 5 July, a year after it was unveiled.

“I want to know why they did it,” said Downey, who had hoped the statue would foster a dialogue about the political situation in the United States, highlighting Melania Trump’s status as an immigrant married to a president sworn to reduce immigration.

Wooden Trump statue burned to the ground in Slovenia

In Washington, the office of Melania Trump did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has pledged to take a hard line on anyone destroying or vandalising US historical monuments, as political activism against racial injustice has swept across the country.

Statue of Melania Trump torched in her native Slovenia
<https://t.co/8cm3YoRZb8> pic.twitter.com/MDhGsR4sZ6

— New York Post (@nypost) [July 8, 2020](#)

Downey, 39, said he had filed a police report and would like to interview the culprits, if found, for a film he is preparing ahead of his exhibition due to open in Slovenia in September.

“The investigation in this case has not been completed yet so we cannot reveal details due to the interest of further procedures,” police spokeswoman Alenka Drenik said.

Although the statue’s face was rough-hewn and unrecognisable before the fire, the figure was painted with a pale blue wraparound coat resembling the one Melania Trump wore at the swearing in of her husband in 2017.



▲ The Melania Trump statue evokes her outfit during the 2017 inauguration of her husband, Donald.

Photograph: ddp USA/REX/Shutterstock

The figure was carved with a chainsaw by local folk artist Ales Zupevc from the trunk of a living linden tree.

In January, a large wooden statue resembling Donald Trump, designed by a local artist last year, was burnt in Slovenia's city of Moravce, east of the capital, Ljubljana.