

AMAYA
YUET
SURRIZ

Post-Yugoslav
Historical
and Contemporary
Reflections
on Amateurism

Postjugoslovanski
historični
in sodobni pogledi
na amaterizem

May 30–31 2024

Prešernova dvorana / Novi trg 4
ZRC SAZU / Ljubljana

In the last decade, we have seen increased scholarly interest in the political aspects of amateurism, defined by some as the “amateur turn” (Holdsworth, Milling, and Nicholson 2017; Bryan-Wilson and Piekut 2020). Scholars have revitalized the long-standing discourses of amateurism as the vehicle of democratizing participation in cultural and artistic activities across the class spectrum and as a counter-response to commodified leisure. Simultaneously, new reflections have shifted the focus to the non-professional or anti-professional activities historically attached to the “vernacular” and “low” cultural production, emphasizing the power relations implied in the professional/amateur nexus. As a category unbound to the notions of skill or expertise, amateurism helps in demasking the relationships of inequality based on gender, race, class, education, geo-political context, access to resources, etc. It reveals professionalism as strongly based on its capitalist Global North/Anglophone premises.

With this workshop, we aim to contribute to the ongoing debates about the “professionalized reality” that dominates contemporary social, economic, political, and academic lives (Merrifield 2018) from the perspectives transcending the Western-Anglophone understanding of amateurism. The experience of the Yugoslav socialist project, where amateurism was essential in building new productive and sociopolitical relations based on social ownership and self-management, we believe can bring a fresh perspective on understanding the political potential of amateurism today. This knowledge and experience have been neglected in critical thought, overshadowed by the narratives of the repressive socialist regime or state socialism as a failed experiment.

Our goal is to open a debate about the role of official culture politics in shaping an amateur ethos to intervene in the ongoing discussions about the political potential of the non-professional or anti-professional activities that are way too often associated with an anti-systemic, unofficial ethos. The dominant approach to amateurism as “non-remunerated, self-organised, unofficial, anti-ruling class insurgent artistic efforts” (Bryan-Wilson and Piekut 2020, 8), we argue, neglects the critical importance of amateurism in building new systemic forms of collective organization in wage and non-wage labor. With our focus on post-Yugoslav discourses and practices of amateurism, we hope to enrich the contemporary debates on the political potential of amateurism by reclaiming its attachment to the political project of socialism, where it stood at the center of the emancipation of all social strata and was integrated into the funding and organizing model based on social ownership. Therefore, scrutinizing the concept and practice of amateurism through the post-Yugoslav lens shows how the “professionalized reality” of global neoliberalism cannot be separated from the work of the neoliberal nation-state, capitalist production, and the processes of privatization and dispossession.

While fully taking into account that amateurism is an unstable category that denotes various practices and cultural productions associated with non-professional or anti-professional artistic activities, we aim to discuss its dynamic and diverse applications during Yugoslav socialism and its contemporary implications. While acknowledging that amateurism is often attached to the notion of vernacular—native, local, and indigenous—we are interested in how the agency of the amateur is helping us to understand the strivings for equality across social strata. We invite contributions focusing on the various fields of cultural production, including (but not limited to) performing arts (music, dance, theatre), film, graphic arts, and other artistic expressions.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

• Thursday, May 30th

9.00 Coffee and welcome

9.30 – 11.00 • *Negotiating Professional-Amateur Divide*

Yugoslav People's Art

Bojana Videkanić, the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Type Plans and Self-Build: The Parallel History of Yugoslav Post-War Architecture

Martina Malešič, the Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana

Chair: Ana Hofman

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 14.00 • *Moving Images and Bodies of Amateurism*

The “Constant Crisis” of Yugoslav Amateur Film:

Delineating the Scopes of Film Amateurism as a Useful Cinema

Hanna Stein, the University of Graz

The Uncontrollable Laughter: Moving Images of Amateurism

Vesna Madžoski, *SKVER*

Spontaneity and Creativity in the Creation of Amateur Theater

Ana Vrtovec Beno, the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU, Gorenjska Museum

Chair: Jasna Fakin Bajec

14.00- 16.00 Launch break

16.00 – 17.30 • *In-between Commercial and Participatory*

Yugoslav Comic Book Production: Challenging the Amateur vs. Professional Dichotomy

Tanja Petrović, the Institute of Cultural and Memory Studies, ZRC SAZU

Literature Builds Children, Children Build Literature: Literary Education in Socialist Yugoslavia and Children's Literary Agency

Katja Kobolt, the Institute of Cultural and Memory Studies, ZRC SAZU

Chair: Ksenija Bogetić Pejović

• Friday, May 31st

9.30 – 11.00 • *Politicization of Amateurism*

Failure is Very Human, So Why Not Embrace It?

Ana Adamović, the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Kiosk, Belgrade

Non-Artist Artists: The Political Legacies of Socialist Amateurism

Ana Hofman, the Institute of Cultural and Memory Studies, ZRC SAZU

Chair: Tanja Petrović

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 13.00 • *The Afterlives of Amateurism*

Yugoslav Folk Dance Amateurism in “What Came After”

Dunja Njaradi, the Faculty of Music, Belgrade

The Continuities of Radical Amateurism in Belgrade:

The Kosmoplovci Collective

Aleksandra Sekulić, the Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade

Chair: Martin Pogačar

13.00 – 13.30 • *Concluding remarks*

13.30 – 15.00 Lunch and farewell of the participants

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ABSTRACTS

Failure is Very Human, So Why Not Embrace It?

In 1949, composer Ivo Tijardović wrote *The Chimneys on the Adriatic* (*Dimnjaci uz Jadran*). That was the first, and as it would turn out, the last Yugoslav opera dedicated to the People's Liberation Struggle and proletarian revolution. The opera was a failure. There are no photographic records of it—or if there were any, now they are buried somewhere in the archives. There are no audio recordings. The only thing left is the original score with the libretto, which is kept among Tijardović's other works at the Croatian Music Institute in Zagreb.

Admittedly, *The Chimneys* is not a hidden and wrongly forgotten jewel. Both the libretto and the music are somewhat banal. At the same time, too many lines are a little less than platitudes characteristic for that specific historical moment and, at the time, still prevailing aesthetics of socialist realism. However, this is all too understandable since the opera was written as a jubilation, celebrating the hardly won victory and a new society-in-the-making enabled by that very victory. However, no matter how banal the opera may seem today, there is a sense of bitterness when one reads Tijardović's words written in 1949. Because the victory won back in 1945 was by no means for good, as we can see now, some words, like the cries of working people who complain about working conditions, injustices, and deprivation in times of capitalist and fascist oppression, sound all too familiar today. These are the reasons for bringing Tijardović's *The Chimneys on the Adriatic* back into the present and employing it as a starting point for a new artwork.

This new work tries to incorporate the voices of those to whom Tijardović dedicated his piece and in whose name he was talking—the workers, while inviting them into the art-making process. Thus, it is situated in collaborative artistic practices that aim to democratize the art field and reclaim art's social function and role in the larger political field. The paper depicts and analyses

segments of this process while rethinking both the potentialities and limits and ambiguities of collaborative and participatory art practices. It embraces the possibility of failure as a potential device for disturbing hierarchies inherent to the institution of art and opening the work to negotiations and dissensus, unpredictability, and unforeseen scenarios. In a word, it embraces the idea of failure as an asset rather than an impediment, thus stepping back from the all too ubiquitous imperative of success, which frames the world we live in today.

ANA ADAMOVIĆ is a visual artist and researcher whose practice primarily focuses on the constructions of historical narratives and individual and collective memories. Her work was extensively exhibited in Serbia and abroad, most recently at the 59th October Salon in Belgrade, the 34th São Paulo Biennial, the Museum of African Art and the Museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, the Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, the Museum of Photography in Thessaloniki, and many others. She graduated from the Department for World Literature at Belgrade University, studied photography at the Art Institute of Boston, and holds a PhD in Practice from the Institute of Fine Arts and the Institute of Art Theory and Cultural Studies, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Along with her individual practice, she conducts various collaborative and arts-based research works within Belgrade-based Kiosk – Platform for Contemporary Art, which she co-founded in 2003 with Milica Pekić. Currently, Adamović is a PEEK Fellow of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and is working on the arts-based research project “Reenacting Revolution”. She lives and works in Belgrade and Vienna.

Non-Artist Artists: The Political Legacies of Socialist Amateurism

Departing from Lenin's thesis that "to awaken artists in the masses and develop them" is essential for building socialism (1950, 124–25), I focus on the discourses, debates, and tensions that surrounded the organizational model of artistic production in socialist Yugoslavia that sought to bring about the profound transformation in all spheres of life. The particular look into the amateur-professional nexus, I argue, reveals the long-standing dilemmas and challenges that still haunt our contemporary thinking about the role of art in transforming the capitalist modes of productive and social relations. My intention here is not so much to establish a direct relation between the historical experience of the socialist project and the current moment but to see how this experience can inform the contemporary debates about artistic engagement as an everyday political practice or political struggle on the ground, concerned with the questions of "aestheticization" and "depoliticization". Drawing on the historical debates, I explore the approaches and strategies of art's potential in intervening in sociopolitical reality and envisioning the new socialist project. The legacies of the transformation of amateur-professional relationship uncover the complex processes of dealing with class-based divisions and capitalist productive relations, which I use as a fruitful framework for re-evaluating the current dead ends in dealing with the political potential of artistic practices.

ANA HOFMAN is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Culture and Memory Studies, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana. Her research interests include music, sound, and politics in socialist and post-socialist societies, emphasizing memory, affect, and activism in the present-day conjuncture of neoliberalism and post-socialism in the area of former Yugoslavia. She has published numerous articles and book chapters, including two monographs, *Staging Socialist Femininity: Gender Politics and Folklore Performances in Serbia* (2011) and *Music, Affect, Politics: New Lives of Partisan Songs in Slovenia* (2015). In 2018, she was appointed a Postdoctoral Fulbright Fellow at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. Her latest book, *Socialism Now: Singing Activism after Yugoslavia*, is forthcoming from the Oxford University Press.

Literature Builds Children, Children Build Literature: Literary Education in Socialist Yugoslavia and Children's Literary Agency

Based on ethnographic work with producers for children in the literary sector in socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1991), this paper turns to the cross-sectoral (infra)structures of participatory literary education of the time. It reflects the discourses, modes, and (infra)structures that facilitated early and continuous literary and aesthetic education and promoted children's participation in cultural life.

By proposing the conceptual framework of literary agency as a part of cultural agency (Sommer 2006), the paper explores the role of participatory aesthetic education of children in the Yugoslav self-managed project, particularly underlining its role in the development of selected ex-Yugoslav literary systems for children. The paper argues that the participatory forms of literary education, even if they were ideologically framed beyond utilitarian and functionalist conceptualizations, nevertheless contributed to the remarkable development of especially smaller and underdeveloped literary systems in some Yugoslav spaces (here mainly in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina) started more or less from scratch. By reflecting on the past modes of literary education in reference to cultural agency, as a term denoting a “range of social contributions through creative practices” fostering agency in other fields (Sommer 2006), the paper proposes their conceptualization within the so-called “literary agency” and frames the later as a generative and reproductive tool of development and renewal of literary systems and by extension also of other cultural and social fields as well as of subjectivation. Tracing individual producers for children and their professional or amateur ways of working, as well as the different ways in which their work has been received within the systems of literature and art, the paper offers cues for a critical reflection

on the ways in which authorship is established on the line of artistic activity within and beyond the autonomous arts.

KATJA KOBOLT is a scholar of cultural and memory studies. Since her studies in comparative literature and literary history as well as journalism at the University of Ljubljana (1996–2002), her cross-disciplinary PhD in literary studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (2002–2010), and her many years of work as a curator and art educator, her research interests have focused on women's authorship and feminist interventions in the processes of memorialization, historicization, and institutionalization. As a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Institute of Culture and Memory Studies, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, she is currently researching artistic work for children in socialist Yugoslav children's literature. She has published on the gendered memory of the post-Yugoslav wars in literature (*Frauen schreiben Geschichte(n)*, 2009), feminist curating and canonization processes, and intersectional aspects of artistic work. Her recent publications include “Negotiating the Impact of Literature for Children in early socialist Yugoslavia” (*Social Impact in Arts and Culture: The Diverse Lives of a Concept*, I. Kosmos, M. Pogačar, ed. 2022), “Artistic Work for Children between Productive and Social Reproductive Work” (*Libri & Liberi* 12(2), 2023) and *Feminism, Art, Literature* (*Časopis za kritiko znanosti* 289, 2023), where she was a guest editor.

Yugoslav Folk Dance Amateurism in “What Came After”

This presentation will explore the affective dimensions of economic transformation, using the example of amateur folk dance societies in Serbia, following my long-term research interest in the topic. Once glorious, the field of amateur folk dance today faces a harsh crisis. This fiscal crisis profoundly challenged the meaning of (dance) work and amateurism in Serbia and the wider region. The general theoretical departure of this presentation will be what some scholars term post-Fordist affect, understood broadly as a set of senses and sensitivities that have emerged in the wake of the dissolution of the Fordist social contract through market fundamentalism (Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012, 318) or “economies of affect” an interrelated concept that points to the role of affect in facilitating economic transformations (Richard and Rudnyckyj 2009). The more focused questioning of contemporary amateur folk dance will be through the two concepts that both testify to emerging neoliberal subjectivities: the first one is a concept of “ethical citizenship” in the neoliberal era, following the work of anthropologist Andrea Muehlebach (2012) in Italy. Muehlebach tells how volunteerism, i.e., unpaid work, became the prototype of the new labor matrix in neoliberalism. I will show how the concept of volunteerism is strangely intertwined with the idea of amateurism inherited from socialism. The second concept is the notion of endurance developed by anthropologist Elisabeth Povinelli (2011). This strand will focus on dancers’ bodies and how they are spent and exhausted while still trying to carry on, creating what Povinelli calls the “ethic of endurance,” an important frame for understanding emerging neoliberal subjectivities.

DUNJA NJARADI's field of interest includes dance anthropology, traditional, artistic, and social dances, and dances in religious contexts. Dunja Njaradi has rich teaching experience in several disciplines, such as dance, drama, theater, and anthropology. During her career, Dunja Njaradi was the recipient of several scholarships and awards, such as the Lancaster Doctoral Scholarship 2007–2010 (ORS), the prestigious dance scholarship DanceWeb 2009 (ImpulzTanz, Vienna), and a residency at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Central European University in Budapest 2016/17 (IAS CEU). She is the author of two books, *Backstage Economies: Labor and Masculinities in Contemporary European Dance* (Chester University Press, 2014) and *a Book about Dance. Traditions, Theories, and Methods* (Ensemble of Folk Dance and Songs of Serbia “Kolo”, 2018). Njaradi is an associate professor at the Department of Ethnomusicology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, where she teaches courses in ethnology, anthropology, and ethnochoreology.

The Uncontrollable Laughter: Moving Images of Amateurism

Between 1978 and 1988, FIKOM – the Festival of Amateur Comedy was hosted in Zaječar, a small city in the eastern part of Serbia. This festival was initiated by several members of the Photo-Kino Club, who ran it on their own enthusiasm. I will address the following aspects of the festival: the means of production and topics of the presented movies and the content of the caricatures displayed in a parallel festival program. Upon analyzing the material, it is evident that open criticism of the prevailing socio-political and economic system was widespread. We can possibly interpret this as a free practice of self-criticism promoted as part of socialist development. Nevertheless, Zaječar used to be known as Serbian Siberia, an exile for those who raised sensitive issues in the centers of power. It is plausible that this position paved the way for a particular attitude and mindset that chose comedy and jokes as the key modes of expression. As we learn, the language of comedy was shared equally among participants from all former Yugoslav republics who laughed at the same jokes without any issue. The festival's fate was similar to the country in which it was born: as it seems, at one point, things turned too serious to be laughed at.

VESNA MADŽOSKI is an independent theorist, writer, and curator based in Amsterdam and Serbia. After graduating with a BA in Ethnology and Anthropology from the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, she did her MA studies in Cultural Analysis at the Graduate School of Humanities in Amsterdam. She obtained her PhD in Philosophy at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. She is the author of the study on the history and theory of curatorship, *DE CVRATORIBVS: The Dialectics of Care and Confinement* (2013), which has been translated into several languages. She lectured on critical theory at the MA Artistic Research program, Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, and is currently a fellow at the European Graduate School. She has initiated and organized numerous international art projects parallel to her academic career. Since 2006, she has been a member of the Amsterdam-based artists' initiative Public Space With A Roof, whose projects were realized in European museums. As a lecturer, she has given numerous talks and lectures on contemporary art in leading art and education institutes in Europe and the United States. Her texts and essays are published in numerous publications, and she was one of the editors of the Belgrade-based art and theory journal *Prelom*. In 2018, she initiated *SKVER* (www.skvermagazin.com) with a group of enthusiasts in Serbia to preserve the recent history of her hometown and Timok Region Valley.

Martina Malešič

Type Plans and Self-Build: The Parallel History of Yugoslav Post-War Architecture

The end of World War II was marked by the ruin and reconstruction of cities and life itself. In the new social circumstances, the task of the architects became clear. They explored and executed design solutions that were functional, economically sound, and representative of a new socialist state. They were assigned not only to reconstruct old cities and imagine new ones—including preparing urban design plans, regulations, and meliorations and designing projects for industrial facilities, public and administrative buildings, monuments, schools, kindergartens, cinemas, prefabricated houses, and residential areas—but also to prepare a range of type solutions, for cooperative centers, cooperative houses, one-family housing units, stables, etc. Having them at hand and with committed local communities would make it possible to build the planned number of buildings quickly and cheaply.

The idea of self-build also prevailed when the first post-war years passed by and the intense reconstruction was completed, especially in the 1970s and 1980s in the field of housing. Newly established Yugoslavia's concern to improve housing conditions was among its priorities. Heavily subsidized housing, usually in the form of high-rise apartment buildings, was foreseen to be the most desirable and egalitarian way. In practice, however, the housing shortage remained due to high building costs and the huge demand for flats. Insufficiency of state-built housing led to an interesting solution—individuals were encouraged to construct homes independently, with favorable loans and a range of type plans for one-family houses, usually designed by architects or engineers employed in municipal or republican planning organizations. Building on one's own proved to be the only option for many, especially in suburban and rural areas. The houses built by these types of

plans represent a unique project of the period in which the connections between the designer/architect, builder, and user were very close, and the boundaries between their roles were distinctly blurred.

MARTINA MALEŠIČ, PhD, is an art historian working as a researcher at the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Her research includes 20th-century Slovenian architecture, design, and urban planning with an emphasis on housing culture. She organizes and runs research projects aimed at popularizing modern architecture. She has curated several exhibitions, among others, *Streets and Neighbourhoods – Vladimir Braco Mušič and Large-Scale Architecture* (co-curated by Luka Skansi and Bogo Zupančič, Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana, 2016) and *New Spaces, New Images. The 1980s through the Prism of Events, Exhibitions, and Discourses – Part 1* (co-curated by Asta Vrečko, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, 2016). She was a member of the curatorial team for the Slovenian Pavilion at the 17th international architecture exhibition, Biennale Architettura 2021, titled *The Common in Community: Seventy Years of Cooperative Centers as a Social Infrastructure*.

The Continuities of Radical Amateurism in Belgrade: The Kosmoplovci Collective

The Kosmoplovci collective was established in Belgrade in 2001, inspired by the new network of cooperation within the Low-Fi Video movement in Serbia (1997–2003). Their experiment of connecting the practices of the computer demo scene, the Low-Fi Video movement, the alternative comics scene, and electronic music with the politics of emancipation of cultural production and access resulted in various interventions within contemporary art, alternative culture, and the computer demo scene. According to Aldo Milohnić, “radical amateurism” describes the amateur practice and cultural practices as part of neo-avant-garde art practices of the late 1960s and early 1970s, as well as the 1980s alternative culture in the former Yugoslavia, which could be interpreted precisely as an opposition to the presupposed professionalism of the cultural elite at the time (2012). The “radical” in the Kosmoplovci collective’s practice can be observed in their explorations of the concepts of authorship, public space, and infrastructure in the period of the digital turn of the 2000s so that we can consider their work in continuity with the practices of radical amateurism in Socialist Yugoslavia, which was proclaimed in 1998 by the Low-Fi Video movement.

ALEKSANDRA SEKULIĆ graduated in Comparative Literature and Literary Theory from the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade University. She completed her MA degree with the thesis “Archiving as a Cultural Form – Creating Video Archives and Databases” (mentor: Professor Milena Dragičević Šešić, advisor: Gaby Wijers, NVIM, Amsterdam) at the Management in Culture and Cultural Policy in the Balkans – UNESCO Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Arts in Belgrade. Since 2010, she has been the program curator and project manager at the Center for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD) in Belgrade. She has been the editor at *Beton* magazine since 2018. She was also a program curator and film producer at the Academic Film Center in Belgrade (2005–2010), a member of the Media Archaeology project in the 1990s and 2000s, a member of the Low-Fi Video movement and the Kosmoplovci collective in Belgrade.

The “Constant Crisis” of Yugoslav Amateur Film: Delineating the Scopes of Film Amateurism as a Useful Cinema

Amateur film activities were frequently covered in the Yugoslav press, not only in specific amateur journals and local newspapers but also in major film journals. A permanent feature of published festival reports, evaluations on the general state of the Yugoslav amateur film, and the activities of ciné clubs was a critical reflection, mostly pointing at the insufficiency of filmmakers and amateur film organizations. This criticism regularly cumulated in the declaration of the crisis of the Yugoslav amateur film from the early years of its institutionalization in the 1950s up to the transformation of club-centered amateur practices by the end of the 1970s.

In my paper, I explore the artistic, social, and political scope of this “constant crisis” and the pivotal points around which it was argued to evolve. Drawing on numerous journal articles from *Foto Kino Revija* (a journal for photo and film amateurs) and *Ekran* (the major Slovenian journal on film and television), I argue that the proclaimed crisis appeared along four major lines of amateur film’s delineation: professional/amateur, technical perfection/experiment, individual/collective, and private/political. The oscillation of discourse and practice within and across these four groups and the further declaration of crisis reflect the changing dispositive of (film) amateurism in Yugoslavia and the transformation of its political implications (i.e., defense, equality, self-management, non-alignment).

It is henceforth one step toward unraveling the many facets of amateurism as a crucial means of Yugoslav cultural policy and understanding film amateurism as one branch of useful cinema under state socialism.

HANNA STEIN is a PhD student and affiliated researcher at the Section for Southeast European History and Anthropology at the University of Graz. She was a DOC fellow of the Austrian Academy of Sciences from 2020 to 2024 and currently holds a scholarship from the Literar Mechana Society. In her research, Stein works on ideas and concepts of amateurism, its meanings, delineation, and interrelation with professional practices and, especially, its (possible) political scope. Her further research interests are gender and cultural history, visual culture, and festival research, focusing on the former Yugoslavia and Southeastern Europe region. In her PhD project, she examines organized amateur film practices and productions in the long 1960s in socialist Yugoslavia. Through the perspective of everyday life, she explores the institutional functions of film amateurism and the filmic strategies of non-professional filmmakers to make sense of, broach, cope with, and visualize the political, social, and cultural aspects in a period of rapid transformation. The analysis of form, subject matter, and discourses allows her to explore the ambivalences of organized amateur filmmaking at the intersection of self-management, a rationalized system of extracurricular education and leisure time, and the (pragmatic) practices of creative subjects.

Yugoslav Comic Book Production: Challenging the Amateur vs. Professional Dichotomy

My paper deals with the massive production of comics in Yugoslavia in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Although this production was not situated within the framework of amateurism and was clearly commercial, I argue that it can shed important light on two sets of dichotomies that have characterized the discussions on Yugoslav amateurism: the first concerns the relationship between professional and non-professional artistic work, and the other concerns the relationship between commercial and non-commercial artistic production. Comic authors had established a complex relationship with these two sets of dichotomies: their work was closely linked to public demand (and was disregarded by artists and art institutions as commercial and thus inartistic). At the same time, this market-oriented production, which was largely outside the interests of Yugoslav cultural politics, had important effects that brought comic authors and their work close to the ideals of that very cultural politics. It blurred the dichotomy between professional and non-professional artists, rendering it irrelevant, was often a collective endeavor, and was able to destabilize cultural and social hierarchies, as comics were created, consumed, and collected by people of very different sociocultural backgrounds, educational levels, age groups, and cultural tastes. A closer look at the modes of production and publication of Yugoslav comics also suggests that categories of “market orientation” and “demand” are not synonymous with the same categories within the capitalist production regime because they were based on a very different understanding of participation in the public sphere and enabled specific agency. It challenges normalized view of popular culture as either commercialized and subordinated to marked needs or a means of disseminating ideology, in both cases lacking agency and autonomy.

TANJA PETROVIĆ is a principal research associate at the Institute of Culture and Memory Studies ZRC SAZU and a professor at the ZRC SAZU Graduate School. She is interested in the uses and meanings of socialist and Yugoslav legacies in post-Yugoslav societies, as well as in cultural, linguistic, political, and social processes that shape the reality of these societies. She is the author and editor of several books and many articles and essays on the anthropology of post-socialism, memory studies, masculinity, gender history, heritage studies, linguistic anthropology, and labor history. The most recent is *Utopia of the Uniform: Affective Afterlives of the Yugoslav People's Army* (Duke University Press, 2024).

Spontaneity and Creativity in the Creation of Amateur Theater

Amateur theatre in rural environments inhabits a paradoxical space in the study of expressive culture. On the one hand, for its participants and audiences it is deeply enmeshed in village life's rhythms, follows the patterns of peoples' daily lives, and generational changes. On the other, such amateur engagement is frequently unrecognized as part of the cultural ecology of contemporary theatre and largely invisible in theatre studies, anthropology and folkloristics as it cannot be easily defined within the established disciplinary boundaries. However, dealing with amateur theatre can show us how people shape their expressive culture to suit their needs. The latter was also confirmed by my ethnographic study of local amateur theatre scene in Slovenia.

This paper is based on the ethnographic work within a local theatre group in central Slovenia. I explore the activities of the group from the 1960s onward, with the focus on how it serves to realize the members' desires and goals. For the members, theatre as a form of artistic expression has specific functions and roles, such as: education, encouragement of creativity and expression of talent; preservation of local culture; formation of one's own identity; entertainment; and, last but not least, a social function as the space of local socializing. In this paper, I argue that the meaning and cultural value of amateur theatre in rural context goes beyond what we see on stage. Refocusing our gaze on the process of making a local theatre practice in the last several decades shows us the wider social and creative practices that the members of an amateur theatre group acquire.

ANA VRTOVEC BENO, ethnologist and cultural anthropologist, is a researcher at the Institute of Ethnomusicology, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana and a curator at the Gorenjska Museum, working in the fields of Slovene ethnology, cultural anthropology and cultural heritage. She is especially interested in the functions and roles of the amateur theatre for different communities and participants and exploring a professional-amateur dichotomy. Her work delves into questions about identity, social communication, intergenerational cooperation and local knowledge production. Ana Vrtovec Beno is the author of a monograph titled "Od ljudskega gledališča do uprizorjanja dediščine" (*From Folk Theatre to Heritage Performance*), which explores the transition from traditional folk theatre to the staging of cultural heritage. As a curator of ethnology, she has authored and co-authored several temporary and permanent exhibitions and private collections.

Yugoslav People's Art

This paper is an attempt to, in this short presentation, define what I call people's art that developed in the territories of Yugoslavia during the 20th century. With a full understanding of the pitfalls in using the term "people," my goal is to define the term outside and in opposition to the ways that it has been usually applied both in art and more generally in sociological and political analysis—as connected to populist political projects which in turn designate a kind of a "deviant form of politics" (Morgan 2022). Instead, I use the term "people's art" to connect it to the People's Liberation Struggle, a mass anti-fascist movement organized and led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which united Yugoslav peoples of all ethnic and national groups, classes, sexes, and political views under the banner of struggle for freedom and emancipation. Paying special attention to the links between the history of socialist ideas in the Yugoslav political and cultural milieu in this period, I am interested in the interconnectedness between the political project of building a local form of socialism (self-management) and its links to the cultural project as it was found in popular forms of art—as self-organized art. I intend to point to various ways in which popular forms of artistic practices (peasant and worker painting, vernacular design, amateur creative practices, and professionally trained artists' work) interconnected and lived side by side through the project of socialism. The emancipatory political project and popular forms of art and culture were tightly interwoven and continued to co-exist until the very end of the century and the end of socialist Yugoslavia itself.

BOJANA VIDEKANIĆ is an associate professor of art history and visual culture at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Her book "Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945–1985" was published by McGill-Queens University Press in 2020. Videkanić's art historical research focuses on the 20th-century socialist art in Yugoslavia and its contributions to the rise of global modernisms, socialist art, and anti-imperialist cultural networks between the Second and Third Worlds. Currently, she is researching vernacular, amateur, Naïve, and other forms of artistic production in the socialist cultural and art history of the 20th century.

Uredila/Edited by:

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*the goal of the revolution and of art was the same:
not only the social liberation of a human,
but the liberation of her unsuspected creative possibilities.*

Venceslav Glišić, *Užička republika*, 1986