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## Women and Socialist Cultural Heritage: New Perspectives of Reinterpretation: Introduction

The issue entitled *Women and socialist cultural heritage: new perspectives of reinterpretation* brings five papers and one book review. The issue arose as a result of the work of the conference held on October 15, 2021, organized by the Society for Creative Initiatives RE.KreAKTa and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia.

*Key words:* socialism, women, cultural heritage

## Жене и социјалистичко културно наслеђе – увод у темат

Темат насловљен *Жене и социјалистичко културно наслеђе: нове перспективе реинтерпретације* доноси пет радова и један приказ. Темат је резултат рада конференције под истим називом одржане 15. октобра 2021. године у организацији Друштва за креативне иницијативе РЕ.КреАКТа, уз подршку Министарства културе и информисања Републике Србије.

*Кључне речи:* социјализам, жене, културно наслеђе

The issue at hand originated from the work of the conference *Women and socialist cultural heritage: new perspectives of reinterpretation* held on October 15, 2021, organized by the Society for Creative Initiatives RE.KreAKTa and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia. Broadly, cultural heritage can be seen as both a product and a process. In truth, cultural heritage always includes characteristics of the past, present, and future, regardless of where it originates or fades. Cultural heritage offers a wealth of resources for various groups and for the next generation's benefit. Cultural heritage is not passive transmission but active acquisition, preservation, and interpretation (Simeunović Bajić 2022). New generations actively take over the legacy, focusing on its interpretation and representation. Preservation aims to return to the past, requiring the need and will to revive and interpret marked parts. Some elements are cultural heritage that will be lost forever, while others are eliminated if they contradict an established identity (Simeunović Bajić 2022). During one period, the socialist cultural heritage was likewise suppressed, and there was an ambivalent attitude toward it.

Women-related topics are constantly in style, but examining their roles historically in different cultures that we may classify as socialist always offers new insights. Finding novel themes that have not yet been addressed in a similar manner is crucial. Since the fall of socialism, enough time has passed to create a critical view of that period and the culture that emerged from it. The socialist cultural heritage has been the subject of extensive writing. It encompasses moveable and immovable, material and intangible heritage. Authors have written on film, music, architecture, socialist customs, artistic legacy, fashion, and more (Konrad & Perek-Białas 2015; Fitzpatrick 1999; Bren 2009; Stitzel 2005; Taylor 2006; Kenney 2002). The role of women in socialism, ranging from housewives and workers to singers and athletes, has also been written about (Černá 2006; Hofman 2009; Funk 2014; Ghodsee 2018; Simić 2018; Salazkina 2023).

As many relationships in the globalized world become more complicated, existing political systems are constantly re-examined and evaluated, and discourses become more powerful, this field of research demonstrates its vital elements through the connection of interdisciplinary concepts: gender, heritage, socialism, and culture. We are still far from answering all of the questions posed by post-socialism. We have yet to get to the essence of the feminist struggle. We still don't know what else should be considered cultural heritage. We fail to recognize that by only going into the past and arousing suppressed voices can we envisage the majority

of the most appropriate future reactions. That is why, by organizing this topic, we have tried to contribute to at least some of the answers and doubts in these areas.

This issue is dedicated to women in the various formerly socialist societies. Although both women and the types of socialism in Eastern European countries are different, there are recurring themes, as you will read in the collected articles.

Socialist women were both visible and invisible. They were publicly equal in rights with men, but they also carried the unappreciated burden of being mothers, wives, and homemakers. They were burdened with the unspoken expectations of both society and their natural selves.

This visibility-invisibility is paradoxically valid in highly visual arts such as architecture, television series, and theater. Dragana Konstantinović and Aleksandra Terzić introduce us to the work of architects in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, their (in)dependence on male architects, recognition of their work, and solidarity practices. Judit Acsády's text dwells on the myths and demythologizing of emancipation in socialist society. She also develops her analysis through a study of dissident women's voices in order to summarize the marginalized role of women both in the socialist movement and in the first years of post-socialism in Hungary. Similarly, women in the production of Yugoslav television series in the text of Ilija Milosavljević, Ivana Ercegovic, and Anna Carroll are analyzed through their important but not dominant roles (less often in leading positions as directors and screenwriters and more often in stalled "female" professions). Here, too, relations between women and between the sexes are interpreted as the key to understanding the life of the socialist working woman. Bojana Bogdanović's text shows us another aspect of the woman's image, reconstructing the path of Dobrila Smiljanić and fashion brand, Sirogojno Style. The text parallels the life of Smiljanić and her media image in the women's magazine "Bazar" and reconstructs one of the few "super women" of socialism. The role of women in (post)socialist theater excites Pavlina Doublekova, who reflects on changes in art, the labor market, and women's rights through the prism of theater art in Bulgaria. The issue concludes with Tea Koneska Vasilevska's review of Jasmina Tumbas' book "I am Jugoslovenka!" about feminist performance politics during and after Yugoslav Socialism.

We hope that the articles in this issue will inspire more research and answers to the questions raised here.

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