

Jasmina Tumbas, “I am Jugoslovenka!” Feminist Performance Politics During and After Yugoslav Socialism

Manchester University Press, 2022, pp. 344

Jasmina Tumbas is an Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art History and Performance Studies in the Department of Global Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University at Buffalo. She earned her doctorate in art history from Duke University. Her areas of study in both her teaching and research include feminist art, critical theory, performance history and theory, body and conceptual art, art and activism, and modern and contemporary art history.

A noteworthy monograph published on Southeast European or Habsburg studies since 1600, or nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ottoman or Russian diplomatic history, wins the Barbara Jelavich Book Prize, founded in 1995. The honor is given to Barbara Jelavich, a renowned academic whose works include *Modern Austria*, *Russia's Entanglements*, and *History of the Balkans*. Jasmina Tumbas, author of the monograph “*I am Jugoslovenka!*”: *Feminist Performance Politics During and After Yugoslav Socialism* is the recipient of this distinguished prize for the 2023 year.

Including introduction and conclusion the book is divided into seven carefully constructed chapters: *Introduction: Jugoslovenka: the unique position of Yugoslav women during and after socialism*; *Jugoslovenka's body under patriarchal socialism: art and feminist performance politics in Yugoslavia*; *Marina Abramovic, Lepa Brena and Esma Redzepova: socialist nation, Orientalism, and Yugoslav legacy*; *Queer Jugoslovenka*; *Jugoslovenka in a sea of avant-garde machismo: a feminist reading of NSK*; *The last generation of Jugoslovenkas: diverse forms of emancipatory resistance and performance strategies*; *Conclusion: Jugoslovenka: a wide-ranging model for feminist performance politics in art and culture*. Each chapter deals with significant phenomena that lie on the intersection of feminism, performance, and politics during and after Yugoslav socialism. The book focuses on the ways in which women used performance to challenge patriarchal conventions and promote women's rights as it examines the experiences of women in Yugoslavia, notably during the 1960s and 1990s. It offers a complete understanding of the nexus of feminism, performance, and politics in Yugoslavia and is based on considerable study, interviews, and diverse sources. Tumbas explores how

Yugoslav women used performance to express their experiences and resist patriarchal narratives. She highlights the connection between socialism and feminism, suggesting socialism can understand class, gender, and oppression, while feminism can counter patriarchy within socialist movements. The author investigates how art and culture can oppose patriarchal traditions and promote social change. She examines the artistic production of feminists in the former Yugoslavia, demonstrating its profound impact on feminist and political movements. The author also talks about the Yugoslav wars, which weakened women's rights and worsened patriarchal power systems. She covers almost everything from performance art to how women are portrayed in popular culture and the media. Jasmina Tumbas used the term *Jugoslovenka* to represent the contradictory state of female emancipation in socialist Yugoslavia and thereafter. Jugoslovenkas, according to her, were female artists, activists, or pop culture icons like Lepa Brena who used comparable strategies to undermine patriarchal hierarchies. Other female figures who have been discussed include Tanja Ostojić, Selma Selman, Esma Redžepova, Marina Abramović, Lala Raščić and others. Jasmina's personal experiences, including a working-class Yugoslav mother and grandmother, provide a unique blend of personal and archive perspectives.

The book *"I am Jugoslovenka!" Feminist Performance Politics During and After Yugoslav Socialism* makes a significant contribution to the study of female performance art and its political ramifications in the Yugoslavian context. It provides a thorough examination of feminist artists' experiences and tactics both during and after socialism, highlighting their inputs to opposing patriarchal expectations and promoting gender equality. And more than that, this book sheds light for the first time on a part of the Yugoslav cultural heritage that has not been treated, at least not in this way.

Tea Koneska Vasilevska