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A review of the doctoral dissertation entitled “Regaining the Past. Yugoslav Legacy in the Period of Transition: the case of Formal and Alternative Institutions of Art and Culture in Serbia at the End of the 20th and the Beginning of the 21st Century”, by Tijana Vuković, a PhD candidate at University of Warsaw, Faculty of Polish Studies, Institute of Western and Southern Slavic Studies.

The doctoral dissertation of Tijana Vuković “Regaining the Past. Yugoslav Legacy in the Period of Transition: the case of Formal and Alternative Institutions of Art and Culture in Serbia at the End of the 20th and the Beginning of the 21st Century” is divided into six parts: Introduction, Chapter I: State of Art, Chapter II: Historical Context , Chapter III: Yugoslavia in Official Institutions, Chapter IV: Yugoslavia in Alternative Institutions, and Conclusion. At the end there is Bibliography.

In her introductory chapter, Tijana Vuković defines the problem of Yugoslav legacy which the dissertation deals with. She clearly understands the historical contradiction – the demise of Yugoslavia as a country and its simultaneous survival within private memory and certain cultural institutions in Serbia. Tijana Vuković’s research encompasses the period between 2003 and 2020, its aim being presentation of proven historical findings about the reception and continuity of Yugoslav legacy, which are to help in overcoming cultural trauma, brought about by the breakup of Yugoslavia. In this chapter, T. Vuković also defines her own methodological approach as an interdisciplinary cultural study approach.

The chapter “State of Art” deals with previous research of (post) Yugoslav legacy in institutions of culture and art in Serbia. Tijana Vuković points up that the problem has never been examined in a synthesized manner or addressed by way of monographs, but that it

was instead discussed in political, sociological and psychological studies, conference papers, exhibition programs and catalogues. Here Vuković dedicates special attention to certain authors, who dealt with different aspects of the attitudes toward the Yugoslav past, such as Todor Kuljić, Jovo Bakić, Mitja Velikonja, Tanja Petrović, Boris Buden. Comprising a special unit within this chapter is an analysis of printed material dealing with cultural institutions and cultural policy after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Special focus is directed here towards an analysis of the case of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade in the written work of Dejan Sretenović, Jerko Denegri, and Branislav Dimitrijević. The phenomenon of Yugoslav cultural legacy and its conceptual construction has been analyzed in a paper by Milena Dragičević Šešić, Ivan Kovačević, and Višnja Kisić. The chapter State of Art shows that Tijana Vuković managed to master literature on different scientific disciplines – sociology, history, art history, anthropology, and thus gain deep insight into the problematics she addresses in her dissertation.

The chapter Historical Context presents a historical overview of the political and cultural integration and disintegration of Yugoslavia. Following the historical chronology of Yugoslavia and Yugoslav culture the following subchapters have been created: Integration Process and Space of Culture, Culture and Politics Intertwined, First Yugoslavia-One Nation, One Culture, Still First Yugoslavia-Possibility of New Culture, Second Yugoslavia, Never Return to the Old! Space for New Institutions, Disintegration Process and Space of Culture and Yugoslavia after Breakup. In this chapter a contextual foundation for understanding the subject of the dissertation is laid.

The next chapter, Yugoslavia in Official Institutions, provides a breakdown of the importance and role of Yugoslav legacy across three important cultural institutions. These are the Pavillion Yugoslavia in Venice, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, and the Museum of Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav Pavillion was erected in the Venice Giardini Park as the Yugoslav state pavilion intended to host the exhibition at the Venice biennale, one of the most important international exhibitions globally. In the period spanning its 1938 construction until the dissolution of the country it hosted works of contemporary Yugoslav art. Tijana Vuković follows the history of the Pavillion and describes its life up to 2003 and beyond. A distinctive

feature of the pavilion was its caption: “Yugoslavia”, although it operated as Serbia’s pavilion. And while as late as the breakup of Yugoslavia the Venice biennale exhibitions had had primarily to do with contemporary artistic trends, as of 2003 Yugoslavia as a topic – problem became an important part of exhibition programs. The subchapter Yugoslav legacy at Biennale-Serbian Pavillion (2003-2019) covers a series of exhibitions held at the pavilion and takes a close-up look at modalities of memory of Yugoslavia. Vuković draws attention to the Yugoslav content-problem in the exhibitions of Raša Teodosijević, Milica Tomić, Katarina Zdjelar, Mrđan Bajić, Miloš Tomić, Vladimir Perić, Ivan Grubanov, Đorđe Ozbolt. In the final subchapter, T. Vuković arrives at the correct conclusion that Yugoslavia did not abandon the Giardini Park pavilion, even though the country the pavilion was constructed for ceased to exist.

The chapter Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade – Presence in Absence deals with one of the most important Yugoslav artistic and cultural institutions. It was opened in 1965 precisely as the Yugoslav museum of contemporary art, which was a framework that guided the creation of its collection, permanent exhibition, and its program activities. Tijana Vuković dedicates the first subchapter Attempt of Creating Yugoslav Identity in Art and Culture to the evolution of the idea of Yugoslav art. She demonstrates the historical course of Yugoslavism and the creation of the Yugoslav artistic space from the First Yugoslav art exhibition in 1904 to the last Yugoslav exhibitions in the 1980s. The creation of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade in 1965 is clearly recognized as the pivotal point of this timeline. The following subchapter is entitled the Museum Dedicated to Yugoslav Art, after Yugoslavia. The dissolution of Yugoslavia led to a problematization of the role of the Museum of Contemporary Art. Even though the Yugoslav art network survived, ethno-nationalist narratives came to dominate the Serbian cultural policy. The appointment of a new museum director in 1993 led to a change in museum policy, in terms of its conforming with the dominant nationalist trends. This episode ended with the 2000 political changes in Serbia, when the policy of the Museum of Contemporary Art was restored to its original settings dating back to the time it was first founded. Between 2000 and 2007, in terms of its program, the museum takes a turn towards the idea of the common Yugoslav Artistic Space and Yugoslav narrative. Tijana Vuković clearly demonstrates this change in her analysis of the permanent exhibition Yugoslav Artistic Space since 1900 until 1991, the curators of

which were the most important authors who dealt with Yugoslav modern art – Jerko Denegri, Branislava Anđelković, Branislav Dimitrijević, and Dejan Sretenović.

The Museum of Contemporary Art was closed for renovations of its building in 2007 and was not opened again before 2017. It operated in extraordinary circumstances. Tijana Vuković covers the life of the museum in this period in two subchapters: What Happened to the Museum of Contemporary Art?- The Presence in Protest, and Guesting Museum-Alternative Space, Alternative Institutions (2007-2017). The final portions of this chapter deal with the 2017 re-opening of the Museum and its program. Tijana Vuković correctly recognizes that an attempt was made at a programmatic re-establishment of “Continuity in Discontinuity” and she dedicates special attention to an analysis of the exhibition “Sequences. The art of Yugoslavia and Serbia hailing from the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art”, curated by Dejan Sretenović, Mišela Blanuša, and Zoran Erić. In her in-depth analysis of the latest events at the Museum of Contemporary Art and the attitude of the state authorities, Tijana Vuković correctly concludes that over the last two years the Museum of Contemporary Art provides again the process of self-marginalization and is entirely absent from critical cultural life.

The third structure dealt with within the unit Yugoslavia in Official Institutions is the Museum of Yugoslavia. In her introductory subchapter The New Old Museum. Change of Perspective. From Yugonostalgia to Performativity and Popularization, Tijana Vuković lays out a brief historical account of this museum. It emerged as a product of a 1996 merger of two institutions: the Memorial Center 'Josip Broz Tito' and the Museum of Revolution of Yugoslav Nations and Ethnic Minorities. This is when the new museum got the name the Museum of the History of Yugoslavia only to be re-named the Museum of Yugoslavia in 2016. The peculiarity of this museum lies in its close historical ties with Josip Broz Tito, which largely defined its operation. In the subchapter Museum of Yugoslav History (1996-2016). Didactic and Nostalgic Approach to Yugoslav Legacy, Vuković follows the history of the museum and its connection with the contemporary social and political circumstances and the crisis of public and official reception of Yugoslavia in the Serbian society. She notes a 2007 change in course at the museum, triggered by the museum's new team. In a series of subchapters, Vuković describes the new perspective of Yugoslavia in the museum program. She analyzes in detail the project New Old Museum and the 2012 exhibition Yugoslavia from

the Beginning to the End, public discussions on the Yugoslav legacy, as well as the conference *Musealization of Yugoslavia-Freezing or Active Negotiation of the Common Legacy*. Vuković recognizes the importance of the activities of the Museum of Yugoslavia in popularizing the Yugoslav legacy, which is present in the public and attracts new audiences, going on to conclude that this museum is exceptional in comparison with other official institutions.

A whole chapter covers alternative institutions which have kept the cultural memory of Yugoslavia alive. In the introductory subchapter, Tijana Vuković points to the history and importance of alternative institutions in more recent Serbian cultural history and their opposition to the war politics and the breakup of Yugoslavia. She tracks their operation chronologically and recognizes three generations of alternative institutions.

The most important alternative cultural hub is the Center for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade (CZKD), which was opened in 1995. Tijana Vuković demonstrates how the foundation and operation of the center are connected with the informal anti-war and antinationalist intellectual group *Beogradski krug* [the Belgrade Circle] and underlines the importance and role of the CZKD's founder and director-for-life Borka Pavićević. Vuković analyzes the CZKD's program and points to the importance of Yugoslav legacy. She recognizes Yugoslav legacy in the center's opposition to nationalism and in the *Moderna* project – which was meant to affirm modernist culture, so the CZKD became an institution in which yugonostalgia is fostered and a peculiar “concrete” Yugoslav utopian space. Tijana Vuković recognized the activist importance of the CZKD and its role in shaping public opinion in Serbia.

The second and third generations of alternative institutions which also helped cherish a peculiar memory of Yugoslavia were primarily housed in deserted space, which was taken and subsequently repurposed for different cultural programs. Tijana Vuković analyzes such alternative venues such as the *Inex Squat* and *Kvaka 22* [Catch 22]. She sees in them an embodiment of Socialist ideals about communal cultural space, which was a polar opposite to the trends of cultural privatization. In collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art, a part of the project *From Dionysian Socialism to Predatory Capitalism* was thus held at the *Inex Squat*, whose program is analyzed in detail by Vuković. Vuković also dedicates

special attention to exhibitions that have been held at the Inex Squat, which at the same time evoked Yugoslavia in different ways, such as, for example, within the New Collection project.

The youngest alternative institution is the Kvaka 22, which exhibits a new approach in relation to the Yugoslav past. Tijana Vuković stresses that the Kvaka 22 is an institution which houses a permanent exhibition dedicated to Yugoslavia. She presents and analyzes the Museum Kvaka 22 which showcases objects which have been found on site (documents, records and photographs), and made into artefacts.

Tijana Vuković's concluding chapter is a synthesis of existing knowledge, which shows the complexity of attitudes towards Yugoslav legacy in Serbia from 2003 to 2020.

Tijana Vuković's doctoral dissertation is characterized by a complex interdisciplinary methodological approach, in-depth research of source materials and systematic use of existing literature. All this helped shape her unique dissertation which comprehensively presented the Yugoslav legacy in Serbian culture between 2003 and 2020. With her exceptional analysis of the importance of Yugoslavia in the activities of selected official and alternative cultural institutions of Serbia, Tijana Vuković lent unique and rounded insight into the complex issue of the attitude towards the Yugoslav past.

I hereby confirm that the dissertation fulfils the requirements of a doctoral dissertation and motion that the doctoral student Tijana Vuković be qualified for the next stages of the doctoral degree procedure. I propose magna cum laude.

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