

Yugoslav Pop, Female Artists and the Emergence of Feminist Agency

Lina Džuverović

On 29 September 1964, arts journalists at Belgrade's newspapers received an unusual telegram. It read, in Serbo-Croat: "I plan to arrive POP please meet me at the Graphic Collective Gallery POP On 1 October 1964, at 7pm STOP Olja Ivanjicki—flowers are not compulsory."¹ The enigmatic telegram turned out to be an invitation to the opening of an exhibition by Olja Ivanjicki—the first Yugoslav artist to claim to be making Pop Art. It was sent by the artist herself as a playful gesture, taking Pop's entanglement with media beyond the gallery.

Olja Ivanjicki's keen desire to declare herself a Pop artist came after her exposure to Pop during the time she spent in the USA in 1962, supported by a Ford Foundation grant. Among the first of Yugoslav artists to benefit from such an opportunity, Ivanjicki found herself experiencing various aspects of American life, visiting New York, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.² Travel and study grants became available to Yugoslav cultural workers from the 1950s onwards as a result of the political shift that followed the country's split with the Soviet Union in 1948. While other Soviet "satellite states" continued along Stalin's course, having scarce, if any, cultural links with the West, Yugoslavia rapidly shifted its political direction, embracing internationalism, introducing "self-management"—its own form of socialism, while also becoming a founding member of the Non-Aligned movement. The new political course led to the strengthening of links with Western, as well as African and Asian, countries creating a vibrant climate of internationalism, characterized by artists' opportunities such as Ivanjicki's grant, while also populating the country's major cities with international students. The country also rapidly became the only regular "node" in Eastern Europe to host major international touring exhibitions, including *Pop Art* in 1966, sponsored by the cigarette manufacturer Philip Morris International and featuring screen prints and lithographs by major American and British Pop artists.³

Olja Ivanjicki may have been the first self-proclaimed Pop artist in the country, enthused by her firsthand exposure to American industrial, fast-paced culture, consumerism, and artists' playful engagement with everyday life, but her interest in Pop was by no means unique amongst her contemporaries. Young Yugoslav artists found themselves in a "hybrid" situation in a single party state, yet one with an open flow of cultural information, visa-free travel to most countries, and a modest level of consumerist pleasures—a form of "utopian consumerism."⁴ For many of them, Pop became a critical site of articulation of the role of the artist in such a rapidly changing sociopolitical climate. But did Pop offer new freedoms to female artists who were negotiating a deeply unequal, patriarchal art system?

This essay examines several female artists' experimentation with Pop Art, in the context of women's shifting position in Yugoslav society and the contradictions that underpinned its "hybrid" cultural situation. It covers a period of over ten years, from Ivanjicki's 1964 Pop announcement to the countercultural, as I argue, post-1968 conceptualist Pop of Sanja Iveković and the early work of Katalin Ladik. I question Pop's potential to not only liberate artists from established structures through cheap, accessible, often domestic materials, but also its capacity to give agency to the previously excluded female artists, enabling them to "act otherwise"⁵ within the complexities of Yugoslav patriarchy.

Yugoslav Approaches to Pop Art: Pop Reactions and Countercultural Pop

Yugoslav artists' engagement with Pop can be viewed as two temporally overlapping, but not entirely concurrent, distinct approaches which I have named "Pop Reactions" and "Countercultural Pop."⁶ The two differed from one another not in terms of an affirmation or critique of consumerism and pop culture, but more profoundly, in the way the plurality of Pop idioms were used to articulate artists' positions vis-à-vis the Yugoslav art system, and the very role of art in Yugoslav society.⁷

In the case of artists whose work I have characterized as belonging to "Yugoslav Pop Reactions"—the most prominent being Dušan Otašević, Dragoš Kalajić, Lojze Logar, Boris Jesih and Boris Bućan—the Pop idiom was used to contest the conventions taught in art schools in the 1950s and early 1960s. Artists challenged the focus on lyrical abstraction and the rigid rules imposed by the academies (for instance, the rule against the use of pure colors side by side, as

this was reminiscent of painting the flag and was associated with craft, not art) in painting and sculpture by introducing figuration, flat surfaces, glossy paint, and non-art materials. The art system itself was not being put into question by these artists, only *the way* things were being done within it.

Conversely, work made in the “Countercultural Pop” sensibility focused more on the political foundations of Yugoslav socialism, and its meaning for artists—in many cases, fueled by the 1968 spirit of disrupting the status quo, and putting existing structures under scrutiny. Many of these artists gathered around the newly opened Student Cultural Centers in Yugoslavia’s major cities of Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, and were heavily influenced by conceptualism.⁸ Known as the “New Art Practice” generation, their conceptual art in many cases also embraced Pop strategies and materials. This was the case with early photomontages of Sanja Iveković and Katalin Ladik’s performance scores and collages, to name only two bodies of such work central to this essay. Pop sensibilities and materials were also at the core of the work of artists as diverse as the film-maker and artist Tomislav Gotovac, the conceptual ecologically-aware work of the OHO group, the Zagreb-based Mladen Stilinović, the Subotica-based Slavko Matković and the group Bosch + Bosch, to name but a few. Artists belonging to this category combined the idioms of Pop and conceptualism to interrogate the role of art in Yugoslav socialism and to take art beyond the gallery. This work was much more politicized, with student magazines becoming a popular site for critical reflection.

The difference between the Pop Reactions and Countercultural Pop approaches, in summary, lay in the *raison d’être* of the artwork, not necessarily in the work’s aesthetic and formal qualities.

From Partisan to Pin-up: The Shifting Image of the Yugoslav Woman

The position of women, and certainly women artists who came of age in the 1960s and early 1970s, in Yugoslavia was colored by a conflicting value system. They found themselves uncomfortably negotiating the postwar legacy of the Antifascist Women’s Front (*Antifašistički front žena* [AFŽ]) and the female emancipation that it had stirred on the one hand, and the gradual return of the prewar bourgeois patriarchal traditions placing women in charge of the domestic sphere (whilst still retaining the outward image of social equality) on the other.⁹

The gulf between the rhetoric of socialist emancipation and the reality of women’s lives was rapidly widening. The situation was further complicated by the

proliferation of the schematic portrayal of women in magazines, Yugoslav film and advertising from the mid-1960s onwards. The public realm of media and advertising filled with women as sex symbols; temptresses; women as out of control (a particularly familiar trope in film in this period) or, indeed, women as consumers and housewives embracing the rapidly permeating consumer bliss of the new, Western-facing, liberalized Yugoslavia.¹⁰ Unsurprisingly, the female body became a dominant trope in Yugoslav Pop work of the period, with a slew of paintings and screen prints by male artists featuring fetishistic depictions of pin-ups and isolated parts of women's bodies. Using Pop approaches of stripping away and paring down to the simplest elements of images, flat monochrome surfaces were dominant, reducing the image to schematic representations of their subject.

The notion of women as a "virus" through which consumerism spread across the country seemed to underpin female representation across all spheres of public life in patriarchal Yugoslavia of the 1950s and 1960s. Not unlike their Western counterparts women became the prime target group (and protagonists) for advertisers, in particular for products related to fashion, make up, the domestic realm, food or family, leading to their association with spending and indulgence, and perception of them as a self-indulgent and greedy virus of consumerism. The public image of women rapidly shifted from the "petrified femininity"¹¹ of monuments commemorating anti-fascist heroines of AFŽ, to the sexualized femininity of pin-ups, models and filmic temptresses who are eventually punished for their behavior and the freedom they have acquired.¹²

If anything, in socialist Yugoslavia, women's roles became more complex, in a negotiation of what has since been theorized by feminist scholars as the division between "public patriarchy" (the state) and "private patriarchy" (the family).¹³ Socialist regimes, more broadly, were often characterized by contradictory goals in their policies toward women: "They wanted workers as well as mothers, token leaders as well as quiescent typists."¹⁴ Despite the public declaration of her equality with male counterparts, the Yugoslav *drugarica* (comradess) lived with the expectation of always being well dressed and groomed as well as being a fast and efficient homemaker. This was summed up in the speech by the Slovenian socialist leader Vida Tomšič in 1948 in which she explained how the "comradess" would ideally aspire to fulfilling all of these roles: "all that we want—beauty, joy and diversity. We should teach our women how to dress well and how to clean their homes so they can do it quickly."¹⁵

Within the rhetoric of equality and "brotherhood and unity," which brought together people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds across Yugoslavia's six republics and two provinces, lay the sweeping generalization that "the

women's question" had simply been "resolved."¹⁶ Feminism was broadly deemed unnecessary in such a climate, seen as a superfluous Western influence, with the general rhetoric that the legislated Yugoslav equality in the workplace placed the country "ahead" of other parts of Europe. The status of Yugoslav women was invaluable to the image of Yugoslavia, and their contribution genuinely central to post-war recovery in terms of necessary labor. Their contributions were, however, limited to "support roles" and instrumentalized for other purposes, and women lacked possibilities to define their own course of action.

The Gendered Disease of Consumerism and Pop

The very notion of pleasures derived from the consumption of material goods or entertainment for its own sake was complicated in Yugoslavia by, as the historian Branislav Dimitrijević has argued, "two parallel but conflicting forms of cultural logics"¹⁷—the logic of Partisan asceticism and, on the other hand, "utopian consumerism." While Yugoslav citizens by no means lived a life of scarcity, their leisure time was frequently linked to their working lives and organized (and thus also monitored) by their employers. A key element of Yugoslav everyday life incorporated enterprise-sponsored annual leave, rehabilitation on the coast from any injuries, and day trips—state sponsored, and controlled, forms of wellness, leisure and celebration.¹⁸ With so much government-organized, and generously subsidized activity, the Yugoslav government could argue that any other forms of leisure and entertainment were superfluous, as self-indulgent and unproductive.

While the state-orchestrated forms of popular culture and leisure provided many benefits, they did not offer what could increasingly be seen in advertising, TV and film—a different vision of life fueled by insatiable consumerism. The notion of lifestyle choices was beginning to emerge. Although the consumption of both fashion and domestic products were aspects of consumer behavior that were broadly tolerated and could "pass" as fulfilling relatively practical needs, the unresolved tensions between socialist asceticism and the newly developing consumer culture meant that in Yugoslav patriarchy, women now appeared as "spoiled" for having developed desires that reached beyond a basic, practical existence.

It is significant, then, in such a climate that the first Yugoslav practitioner to actively declare herself a Pop Artist was female, perhaps seeing Pop as a language in which she could articulate a response to the conflicting expectations placed upon her. Ivanjicki's exhibition, held at the "Small Gallery" of Belgrade's "Graphic

Collective” art space, did not at first glance seem to share much with the cool, brash, bold distancing associated with Pop (figure 3.1). The exhibition consisted of a series of customized and hand-painted drawers and suitcases filled with found objects assembled by the artist. The exhibits, entitled *Twin Drawers*, *Drawer Packed before the War*, *Taxi Suitcase* (all 1964), etc., included a used tube of toothpaste, dry bread, war medals and old water pipes, packed into drawers and suitcases belonging to the artist. These pieces were more in line with Robert Rauschenberg’s assemblages—an artist well known to Yugoslav audiences after being awarded the first prize at the influential Ljubljana Graphics Biennial



Figure 3.1 Olja Ivanjicki, image of the artist next to her work at the **Graphics** Collective Gallery, during her solo exhibition “Pop Art,” Belgrade, October 1964. Courtesy of Olga Olja Ivanjicki Foundation, Belgrade.

in 1963—than Pop’s preoccupation with mass production and consumerism. Ivanjicki’s was a local variant of Pop, seeking to bring the everyday into the gallery through ordinary and personal objects, but the artist was not yet ready to shed the emotional, memory-driven references to the war and the narrative of heroism prevalent in Yugoslav socialist modernism, the country’s official artistic expression. Above all, this exhibition served as a catalyst for Ivanjicki to publicly proclaim, with great enthusiasm, that she was now a Pop Artist—a phrase that she would go on to frequently repeat in newspaper and TV interviews.

Despite its innovative spirit, Ivanjicki’s big Pop Art announcement did not leave lasting effects on the local art scene, nor did it enthuse Yugoslav audiences about Pop Art. Her exhibition was ridiculed, with newspaper articles proclaiming her work vulgar and aligning her ideas with Western decadence.¹⁹ In 1964, unlike the young generation of artists who were enthusiastic about new influences from abroad, the Yugoslav arts establishment still regarded Pop Art as a conformist artistic expression of American “bourgeois boys,” complicit and passive in their world made of “neon, colorful industrial goods, Coca Cola, adverts and chemically stimulated underage sex.”²⁰ Ivanjicki was now seen as the voice of such decadence—a female agent of consumerism.

From Women’s Pop Reactions to Feminist Pop Conceptualism

It is difficult to tell whether the reception of Ivanjicki’s early Pop enthusiasm would have been more favorable had it been directed towards a male artist. Perhaps the work was simply not developed enough, and Ivanjicki’s announcement simply an ill-timed publicity-seeking gesture. But the trouble Ivanjicki faced in finding a gallery to show her Pop project in the first place, coupled with the subsequent mocking and dismissive publicity and Ivanjicki’s eventual development into an archetype of a flamboyant and eccentric artiste persona, with frequent media appearances, but limited critical acclaim within the art world, points to a limited range of positions available to women artists at the time.

Despite structural inequalities and conflicting demands of domesticity and work, a small number of female artists managed to successfully devote themselves to artistic practice, negotiating the heavily male-dominated networks governing academies, the state commissioning system, studio allocation as well as exhibition opportunities.²¹ Several experimented with Pop techniques, which in some cases

continued to inform their practice, while for others it remained just a phase. Slovenian Metka Krašovec (1941–2018), for instance, produced a series of Pop-inspired paintings, becoming best known for *Kokošja Juha–Sporočilo* (Chicken Soup: The Message), 1968 (plate 1), which was a response to Andy Warhol's Campbell's soup series, with a domestic reference. Like Warhol, she turned to repetition, depicting a popular local brand of soup called *Podravka*. Unlike Warhol's screen prints, though, in which repetition was suggestive of seriality and automation in line with the artist's well-known statement, "Everyone should be a machine," Krašovec's soup logos were reproduced ten times, but painted manually, with the image varying substantially in size and level of detail—echoing a more modest and less mechanized form of consumerism.

With tabloids and magazines now a feature of daily life, print media became both a material to physically cut-up and deploy in artworks bringing forth new meanings, and a source of content, be it political events, pop culture and celebrity stories, or advertising. For the Zagreb-based sculptor Vera Fischer (1925–2009) the turn to Pop marked a departure from her eclectic sculptural and installation works. It was precisely the appeal of tabloid imagery that drew Fischer to collage in the late 1960s. Works such as *A Dog's Life*, 1968–72 (plate 2), illustrated the liberal spirit in Yugoslavia, creating overwhelming scenes by collaging fashion adverts featuring domestic appliances, food and animals. Fischer's collages humorously embraced and reimagined the promise of consumer bliss, lightheartedly mocking its seduction. Unlike, for instance, the political magazine and newspaper collages of Martha Rosler, who in the same period in the United States produced sharply critical works, such as *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, 1967–72, juxtaposing consumer-driven culture and its deliberate blindness to violence and war, Fischer's collages were neutral in tone, offering no such juxtapositions. Instead, Fischer's densely-populated collages gave a sense of saturation, a humorous play with scale and motif, inciting a sense of being overwhelmed by consumer offerings.

In the diverse modes and styles of their Pop Reactions Ivanjicki's, Krašovec's and Fischer's works spoke of life in Yugoslav society to a certain extent, but none of the artists directly tackled gender inequalities. A head-on engagement with the realities of being a female artist, and citizen, in the contradictory Yugoslav system was first introduced in the photomontage work of the pioneering conceptualist and feminist artist Sanja Iveković (b. 1949), an artist of a younger generation. Iveković's first forays into popular culture marking her engagement with Pop Art began while she was still a student at the Department of Graphics

at Zagreb's Academy of Applied Arts. Between 1967 and 1968, the artist made a number of works directly responding to Warhol's 1964 work *Jackie*, a series of screen prints of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis that Iveković encountered at the aforementioned exhibition *Pop Art* at Zagreb's Gallery of Contemporary Art in March 1966. Her day job in a local newspaper during her studies gave Iveković the tools to incorporate current events into her art (plate 3). The artist used one of the printing plates found in its office as a basis for a series of screen-printing experiments.

For Iveković, the traditional disciplines taught at the academy were of little interest and she found "the notion of autonomous art and the modernist paradigm rather alien."²² Pop Art and minimalism, conversely, as she explains in an interview, were deemed subversive in an environment whose idea of art was lyrical expressionism, abstract expressionism and academic figuration: "Pop Art or minimal art was something seen as simply non-artistic."²³ Moreover "being of a politicized generation," she sought to address issues that she deemed important at the time, which explains the focus of her screen prints on news items and current political issues.

While only one sheet of prints survives from Iveković's experimentation with the found printing plate of Jaqueline Kennedy Onassis's image, this student work's focus on a female Pop icon is also an early indication of Iveković's desire to explore the relationship between women and media. Iveković followed this project with one that references the events of the "Croatian Spring,"²⁴ a political movement demanding more autonomy for Croatia, which would be suppressed by force in 1972. Here she underscores female agency by shifting from a politician's wife to the figure of a female politician—Savka Dabčević-Kučar—one of the first female politicians in the country whose image accompanied a magazine article. Iveković used the printing plate to create a number of screen prints in different colors and textures (none of the prints survive, only the printing plate).

Iveković's early Pop experiments are a potent prelude to the artist's 1970s photomontages—the signature modus operandi of her feminist conceptual multimedia work for which she is now celebrated. They foreshadow her turn to media-found imagery—including filmed TV footage—for her considered investigation of female subjectivity in Yugoslav society, media culture and consumerism. Whilst Iveković never considered herself a Pop artist per se, her use of materials and her direct engagement with current events and media meant that an underlying Pop element remains central to her practice to this day, seeing

her become the only Yugoslav female artist to be included in the Tate's *The World Goes Pop*, 2015, exhibition, which sought to revisit not only Pop's geographies, but also its gender bias.²⁵

From the outset Iveković focused on destabilizing the notion of gender as fixed, pointing to its socially constructed nature by exposing the artifice of image-making and the politics of the gaze. Developing her student "pop experiments" further in her subsequent work, in the photomontage series for instance *Tragedy of a Venus, Double Life, Sweet Life, and Bitter Life*, all produced between 1975 and 1976, she used images of women culled from newspapers and magazines, juxtaposing anonymous models and international celebrities, such as Marilyn Monroe, with photographs from her own family albums. These works, initially produced and exhibited as books, embraced Pop's possibility of distribution and multiplication, mimicking the format they were critiquing. Repetition and seriality were central tropes in these series, used by Iveković to problematize and destabilize the associations with femininity, in each instance reaffirming the construction of a gendered body through repeated gestures, movements, and situations.

Iveković's use of her own family photographs in the photomontages showed just how much such representation is already embedded in women's visions of themselves.²⁶ Iveković's own personal photographs used in her photomontages often predated the magazine imagery by several years, or in some cases over a decade. For instance, in *Double Life* (plate 4) Iveković's own portrait on the left was taken in 1962 while the magazine image on the right dates from 1975. Iveković's photomontages were not only critical of the mediated female body, they complicated the sociocultural construction of that body as Iveković positioned herself as the subject at the receiving end, immersed in the succession of acts that produce the performance of femininity. For Iveković, advertising images are always already present, involuntarily embedded in her own private negotiation of gender.

Feminist Pop can be seen also in Katalin Ladik's collages (plate 5). The Yugoslav artist of Hungarian origin began her career in the early 1960s by taking part in a children's radio program involving experimental sounds and voices. It was not long before Ladik applied her interest in experimental sound and acting by taking part in numerous avant-garde theater productions, later joining the conceptual art group Bosch + Bosch. Comprising a body of work created between 1971 and 1979, inseparable from her pioneering work in performance, sound poetry, film, and theater, her collages served primarily as visual scores for her performances. Ladik's approach was that of a bricoleur, collating and

repurposing material from the domestic sphere—dressmaking patterns, magazine adverts, Letraset, her child’s school materials—both in her collages and performances.²⁷

The material in Ladik’s collages was of genuine, practical use to her—be it dressmaking patterns from magazines that the artist used to make clothes for her young son, or the collage paper he used for his school assignments.²⁸ For instance, the work *Laž Papir* (1973) that featured the Yugoslav flag with an overlay of the word *laž* meaning “a lie” was cut out from a fragment of the cover of Ladik’s son’s collage paper book for school. The word *kolaž* (collage) was found on its cover, but Ladik split it in two to spell out the word *laž*. Although elements of humor and cynicism were present in the work, Ladik’s was not a detached position, instead she created work from the debris of life itself as a bricoleur. Ladik spoke of her deliberate decision to bring everyday life into her work:

By then I was already a rebellious woman, and I had been humiliated precisely on the grounds of being a woman, so I thought . . . I deliberately started to make work from my own world. I started sewing . . . all of these things I used, I had all these things—the shears, I’d completed a pattern-cutting course, so that I could sew for myself, because it was necessary [to make clothes], both for myself and for my child.²⁹

In another collage, *Eil-Nitt* (1976), for instance, a section of a dressmaking pattern from a magazine is placed on music paper and combined with cut out letters. The collage serves as a visual score for performance, doubling up as an object in a gallery and a score for performance at events. By juxtaposing the “tools” of her domestic life with the realm of her public self as a performance artist, Ladik not only points to the tension in the experience of Yugoslav women, but also highlights the question of class and social standing by collapsing the distinction between high art and vernacular traditions. This tension created through the juxtaposition of dressmaking patterns—suggesting the need to make one’s own clothes—with the association of trained musicianship reads as a clash of two worlds.

Social class was not to be spoken of in Yugoslavia’s supposedly classless society (according to its political rhetoric, if not reality) but, as Ladik’s work reminds us, women’s roles still continued to be shaped by much of the previous regime’s traditions, even if this was not to be publicly articulated. Ladik’s visual scores, in their activation through performance, question those paradoxes, articulating the artist’s own will to subvert the assumed female roles, while problematizing class

and gender difference. Despite Yugoslavia's egalitarian rhetoric, the space of public performance remained highly gendered, populated by male authors and female entertainers. While women could frequently be seen performing (pop culture brought about a host of female pop singers, dancers and entertainers), the best way a "good comradess" could be respected for being in the public eye was through her participation in group public ceremonies such as Tito's birthday, The Day of Youth, performing traditional folk songs that celebrated the Yugoslav state and the beauty of the country, celebrating the leader or remembering the anti-fascist battle. Female performative roles were associated with the realm of folk culture, with the performer embodying the collective voice by carrying forward traditional folk material. Even by the 1970s, by which point numerous female pop singers could be seen in the media, performance and authorship remained separate.

Ladik's collages and visual scores, by contrast, actively incorporated the incongruities and difficulties of her own daily life in the work itself, collapsing the distance between the private life of a woman, wife, mother, homemaker (*fille honnête*) and the public life of the (often nude) performer (*fille publique*). Ladik's work embodied the dual burden of being active in the workforce in an allegedly equal society, and the weight of responsibility for domestic and family life.

The agency in Ladik's work is thus located in the act of repurposing and activating the very elements that constrained her (domestic work, sewing) into active, outspoken, performative acts, using all the means at hand to articulate her experience. The use of disposable everyday objects (in her later performances of 1980s Ladik often used household objects, underwear or food as props—emulating shaving, cooking, dressing and undressing, wearing underwear over street clothes, etc), the voice, and the often naked or semi-naked body, were all means of speaking back, subversive acts of empowerment. Ladik effects a strategy of "détournement," the repurposing of the visual language and tools aimed at reinforcing women's traditional roles (sewing patterns, food, sewing machines, undergarments, make-up) with the aim of reconfiguring them to formulate her own critique of the constraints of patriarchy.

Ladik was also particularly interested in incorporating folk traditions into her work, having previously studied oral folk song traditions (research she undertook in the 1960s with her first husband who was an ethnomusicologist). She has explained her interest in folk as a search of authenticity but, with an openness to consumerism:

The reason I used folk elements . . . was that I wanted to become authentic. I did not want to imitate the Beatniks or to fight against consumerism, when in fact we couldn't wait to have the opportunity to consume. Aluminium, plastic foil, wrapping up nylon, we would wash the nylon three or five times to be able to reuse it [in performance]. I was certainly not going to fight against it [consumer culture].³⁰

Even though her approach was close to experimental practices that were emerging across Europe and the US, Ladik was decidedly interested in the local:

I decided to work from the world that I lived in, from my world. What did I need the Beatniks for? What did I need rock for? This was pop for me—this was my world. And I added some cynicism and perhaps some humor. This was my New York. By then I understood, that they [American artists] had their problems, I had mine. But if I were to do it with the same temperament, if I rebel just like they [Americans] rebelled against their circumstances, I rebelled against mine. I was not going to rebel against consumer society when I was poor.³¹

To conclude, we can view both artists' work as feminist yet underpinned with different agendas, Ladik's collage works dealt implicitly with her own position and experiences, while Iveković's focused on structural inequality, reaching beyond her personal experience. The first artist in Yugoslavia to explore the gendered nature of her social context, Iveković's early work pointed to the media's assault on women and the absence of women's voices in the public sphere. The explicitness of the manifestations of Iveković's feminist agency could be attributed to the fact that she came of age in a moment when questions around gender difference begun to rise, even if they were not yet articulated as feminist. Immersed in the critical environment of the "New Art Practice" networks around the Student Cultural Centers, she was also closely connected with the members of the emerging feminist movement, including protagonists of the first feminist conference held in the country in 1978 at Belgrade's SKC and the lectures series "Woman and Society" in Zagreb from 1986.³²

From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, artists as diverse as Olja Ivanjicki, Metka Krašovec, Sanja Iveković and Katalin Ladik turned to Pop precisely for its enabling and liberating possibilities, as it catalyzed new ways of working and engaging with the present moment, freeing them from existing conventions and structures. Pop's accessibility was indeed, as I have tried to show, a catalyst for new, previously unavailable *modi operandi*, breaking down the exclusivity of a professionalized studio practice and associated networks, often previously inaccessible to female

artists. But without structural change, choices were limited. Every aspect of these young women's lives was colored by the deep sexism underpinning the Yugoslav system. Pop's liberating potential was severely hindered by gender stereotyping and the lack of engagement with structural inequality along gender lines. If social reproduction was still seen as the women's domain, as was indeed the case in socialist Yugoslavia, then any departure from the responsibilities of reproducing life was likely to be seen as damaging to the socialist project.³³ The simultaneous encouragement and vilification of women, bodies that stood as both, a virus of consumerism and a harbinger of more prosperous Westernized lifestyle, while still carrying the load of social reproduction, placed them in a near impossible predicament. Overall, Pop in its various guises stood at the intersection of new and often conflicting logics in the country, reflecting, and sometimes making visible the contradictions in this young country's system. Even though, as in the West, Pop also brought about multiple setbacks, namely the objectification of the female body in the public realm, it did act as an enabler on the path of new, often feminist-oriented, articulations of the multitude of complex experiences of being female in Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s.

Notes

- 1 The telegram sent by Olja Ivanjicki was quoted in an interview of the artist published by D. Krajčinović in *Večernje Novosti* (Evening News) on September 29, 1964, with the title, "Sudbina izložbe—rešena u autobusu" (The Destiny of the Exhibition—Solved on the Bus).
- 2 Grants were centrally administered by the government and cultural workers had many opportunities to apply. Notable examples include the painter Mića Popović (1950, three months in Paris); Zoran Musić's study in Paris, curator Želimir Košćević's four months at Stockholm's Moderna Museet with Director Pontus Hultén, and artist and museum Director Miodrag B. Protić's research visit to New York's MoMA in 1963, prior to opening the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade.
- 3 *Pop Art* took place at Zagreb's Gallery of Contemporary Art in association with Belgrade's Museum of Contemporary Art. It included works by Allan D'Arcangelo, Jim Dine, Allen Jones, Gerald Laing, Roy Lichtenstein, Peter Phillips, Mel Ramos, James Rosenquist, Andy Warhol, John Wesley, and Tom Wesselmann; the catalogue is available at: <http://www.msu.hr/#/hr/14965/>.
- 4 The term "utopian consumerism" was coined by art historian and curator Branislav Dimitrijević, in "Utopijski Konzumerizam: Nastanak I Protivrečnosti Potrošačke Kulture U Socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji (1950–1970)" (Utopian Consumerism: The

- Eergence and the Contradictions of the Consumer Culture in Socialist Yugoslavia [1950–1970])” (PhD diss., University of Arts in Belgrade, 2011).
- 5 Raymond Caldwell, writing about Foucault’s conceptions of agency, claims that agency breaks the link between voluntary choice or a desire to “act otherwise,” and the “moral, political and practical possibilities of making a difference.” Raymond Caldwell, “Agency and Change: Re-evaluating Foucault’s Legacy,” *Organization*, 14, no. 6 (2007): 769–91.
 - 6 Lina Džuverović, “Pop Art Tendencies in Self-Managed Socialism: Pop Reactions and Counter-Cultural Pop in Yugoslavia in 1960s and 1970s” (PhD diss., Royal College of Art, 2017).
 - 7 Exhibitions such as *The World Goes Pop*, Tate Modern, London, 2015, *International Pop*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, 2015, *Ludwig Goes Pop + East Side Story*, Museum Ludwig, Budapest, 2015–16, to name but a few, have been instrumental in bringing work from Central-Eastern Europe into the Pop context, as does the recent anthology, Annika Öhrner (ed.), *Art in Transfer in the Era of Pop* (Flemingsberg: Södertörn University, 2017). Intersecting with these curatorial initiatives are a number of feminist re-evaluations of women associated with Pop, from the pioneering *Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists, 1958–1968* (Philadelphia, PA: University of the Arts, and New York: Abbeville Press, 2010), to comparative explorations such as, *Disobedient: Eulàlia Grau, Katalin Ladik and Women in Black*, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana Slovenia, curated by Bojana Piškur. Yugoslav Pop has been theorized from diverse perspectives, by Branislav Dimitrijević, sociologist Radina Vučetić, Petja Grafenauer’s as well as Tanja Mastnak. But amongst these diverse perspectives, the work of female artists in the context of Pop has remained sorely overlooked. My research seeks to reposition and reinsert the multiplicity of female Pop expressions in the country from a decidedly feminist perspective.
 - 8 Student Cultural Centers were multidisciplinary cultural organizations, created by the Yugoslav state in the larger cities (Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana), following the student protests of 1968. They came with secure infrastructural funding and were administered under the auspices of the cities’ respective universities.
 - 9 The AFŽ was a women’s social and political organization founded on December 6, 1942, in Bosanski Petrovac in Bosnia, as part of the National Liberation Struggle (Narodno-oslobodilacka Borba, NOB) during the Second World War. AFŽ’s goal was to unite all women in the struggle against the fascist enemy, through women’s participation in armed operations and diversionary activities, organization of child care, and women’s cultural and educational development.
 - 10 Examples of films portraying women as passionate, out-of-control temptresses include *Lisice* (Handcuffs, Dir. Krsto Papić, 1969) and *Rani Radovi* (Early Works, Dir. Želimir Žilnik, 1968).
 - 11 Term used by Bojana Pejić in Bojana Pejić and ERSTE Foundation, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Vienna (eds.), *Gender Check: A Reader, Art and Theory in Eastern Europe* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2010).

- 12 Such examples have been elaborated in the work of art historians Ivana Bago and Antonia Majaca. The question of female guilt, in particular with reference to female roles in Yugoslav films, is discussed at length by Ivana Bago, “The Question of Female Guilt in Sanja Iveković’s Art: From Yugoslav Beauty Pageants to Wartime Witch-Hunts,” in Helena Reckitt (ed.), *Sanja Iveković: Unknown Heroine—A Reader* (London: Calvert 22 Foundation, 2013), 62–88.
- 13 For a detailed discussion of changing gender roles, see Pejić, “The Morning After,” in Pejić et al. (eds.), *Gender Check*, 97–110.
- 14 Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (eds.), “Introduction,” *Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life After Socialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 6.
- 15 Vida Tomšič, “Speech to the Anti-Fascist Women’s Front Plenum,” October 10, 1948, as quoted by Pejić, “The Morning After,” 97.
- 16 In a speech entitled, “From Amazon to Partisan” (January 1944), the well-known Croatian poet, Vladimir Nazor, proclaimed: “women’s question is resolved” as part of the new Yugoslavia’s political position regarding gender difference. Quoted by Pejić, “The Morning After,” 99.
- 17 Dimitrijević, *Utopijski Konzumerizam*, 132, author’s translation.
- 18 Leisure time, public holidays, and entertainment in Yugoslavia are discussed in Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik (eds.), *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2010).
- 19 For instance, *Borba* (The Struggle)—the official newspaper of the League of Communists—reported on Ivanjicki’s exhibition with a text entitled, “Pop Art or the Vulgarization of Art,” alluding to the gradual Americanization of Yugoslav cultural life, subsequently following with a mocking review titled, “U Kratko: Hm!” (In Short: Hmm!), sampling the mostly sarcastic and condescending responses to Ivanjicki’s exhibition from the gallery’s comments book.
- 20 Article published in the newspaper *Borba*, Belgrade, October 18, 1964.
- 21 Women were heavily underrepresented in most collectives across the history of Yugoslav avant-garde (a dominant modus operandi for artists in Yugoslavia across the twentieth century). They were also, frequently, not fully credited. The group Bosch & Bosch did include Ladik but she is rarely mentioned in the historical accounts of the collective, and, by her own account, she was frequently asked to work specifically on the sound elements of their projects, which she viewed as an input of lesser importance.
- 22 Sanja Iveković, interview with the author, April 2013.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 The Croatian Spring (Hrvatsko proljeće) also called *masovni pokret* or *MASPOK*, for “mass movement,” was a political movement from the early 1970s that called for

democratic and economic reforms in SFR Yugoslavia and therefore more rights for Croatia within Yugoslavia. In 1971, the Yugoslav authorities suppressed the movement by force.

- 25 Sanja Iveković's video *Sweet Violence* (1974) was included in the exhibition *The World Goes Pop* in 2015. In the interviews section of the exhibition catalogue, in response to the question, "Did you ever consider yourself (now or in the past) to be a Pop artist?" Iveković asserted she did not consider herself a Pop artist, but a conceptualist, wishing to break away from the modernist tradition, seeing Pop as just another product of a capitalist mainstream culture. Jessica Morgan and Flavia Frigeri (eds.), *The World Goes Pop* (London: Tate Publishing, 2015), 123.
- 26 For further analysis of Iveković's early photomontages, see Ivana Bago, "Sanja Iveković: Becoming-Woman-Artist," in Lina Džuverović and Lily Hall (eds.), *Sanja Iveković: Unknown Heroine* (London: Calvert 22, 2012). Iveković's Pop strategies are also discussed in Zora Rusinova's text, "Discourse of the Self: Self-Portrait in the Milieu of Gender Visuals," in *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe* (Vienna: Mumok, 2009), 125–31.
- 27 Ladik's feminist practices have belatedly begun to be acknowledged, and included in feminist revisiting of art from the region. Her work was included in exhibitions such as *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*, Mumok Museum, Vienna, 2009–10; *Re.Act.Feminism: A Performing Archive*, various venues 2011–14; *WOMAN: Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s*, Photographers' Gallery, London, 2016, and Mumok, Vienna, 2017.
- 28 In an interview conducted by the author in November 2013, Ladik explained how, at the time, children's clothes were not available at affordable prices in Yugoslavia and that most people made clothes for their children.
- 29 Katalin Ladik, interview with the author, November 30, 2013, Budapest, Hungary.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Held in Belgrade's Student Cultural Center in October 1978, *Drug-ca žena* (Comrade Woman) was a constitutive event for the entire feminist movement in the country. For further information, see Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Comrade Woman. The Women's Question: A New Approach Thirty Years After" (MA thesis, Utrecht University, 2008).
- 33 Social reproduction theory (SRT) posits that human labor is at the heart of creating and reproducing society as a whole, and within this, reproducing different forms of inequality in society. Social reproduction theory, originating in historical materialism, continues to be an important concept, central to both feminist theory and activism. For a range of contemporary perspectives on SRT, see Tithi Bhattacharya (ed.), *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (London: Pluto Press, 2017).

