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NARRATIVES IN THE VISUAL FIELD: LEGACY OF 1968 IN BELGRADE AND THE ART OF PERFORMANCE

Abstract

In the spring of 1968 a wave of revolt spread across the world. Although problems were different from society to society, people from Europe to America to Africa and beyond seemed to have some shared concerns – the repudiation of the dominant regimes and mainstream ideologies at all levels of society and culture. The paper deals with the impact of the ideas of '68 and generally the spirit of the '60s which produced some profound changes in society and art. The special focus is on the impact of the global spirit of change on the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia from the perspective of the artistic endeavors of young artists in Belgrade who were committed to initiating a new artistic language through the art of performance.

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There has never been a year like 1968, and it is unlikely
that there will ever be one again.
(Mark Kurlansky).

In the year 1968 the spirit of social discontent fueled riots against the dominant political and social ideologies worldwide. Mainly young people felt the necessity to act against social injustice and conservative patterns of behavior at many levels of social life, political, educational, artistic, to name but a few. Although the problems of the world communities were various and different, the spirit of rage and the sense of commitment were globally present. In his comprehensive study about that period, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* Mark Kurlansky explains that “at a time when nations and cultures were still separate and very different... there occurred a spontaneous combustion of rebellious spirits around the world” (2004: 9).

Certainly, the wave of revolt had been accumulating all through the decade of the sixties. Speaking about the situation in America the historian Randall Bennett Woods claims that, “[t]he fundamental cleavages in American society and basic flaws in the nation’s approach to international affairs came to the surface” (Woods 2000: 16). There were many issues which plagued the social life at the time: the cold war agenda, the war in Vietnam, the brutality of the Soviet regime after the Prague Spring events, among others. The societies responded through the rise of the civil rights movements, liberal activism in Western societies and various movements against racism, totalitarianism and ignorance on the global scene. Kurlansky writes, “[w]here there was communism they rebelled against communism, where there was capitalism they turned against that” (2004: 9).

Apart from political and economic agendas, the voices calling for change affected other spheres, too. In the artistic sphere the demands were for a radically different approach to creation and interpretation. In the literary world, John Barth published an essay in 1967 entitled “The Literature of Exhaustion”. Barth wrote about conservatism in the literary approach, both at the level of representation and that of interpretation. In England at about the same time David Lodge published “The Novelist at the Crossroads” (1969) in which he also posed questions on the limits of representation. Lodge saw the traditional way of writing as incapable of accommodating new ways and perspectives. “[Worldwide] people were rebelling over disparate issues and had in common only that desire to

rebel, ideas about how to do it, a sense of alienation from the established order, and a profound distaste for authoritarianism in any form” (Ibid.).

Protests were famously concentrated round university buildings and campuses. The unofficial symbol of 1968 were the events at the Parisian universities. The well-known events of May 1968 actually began in March the same year at the suburban university of Nanterre. The protesting group at first included some 150 students, along with some poets and musicians. However, later they were transferred to various locations, most significantly to the central university of the Sorbonne. All through April that year students protested with sit-ins at many spots in Paris. Ultimately in June they were supported by the 6000 workers all round France and the protest became general.

One of the famous slogans of the Parisian protests, “under the cobblestones, the beach”, indicated the degree of the rage of the protesters, while the saying “kill the cop in your head” reveals its true nature. They fought for new critical practice, and the critical interrogation of the notion of freedom which they considered a part of the bourgeois ideology, that is a product of liberal capitalism. Contemplating the revolutionary 1968, art professor Sami Siegelbaum cites the claim of Louis Althusser, one of the favorite philosophers of the 1968 protests. Siegelbaum explains that through the notion “all men are free, so the laborers are free this ideology exploits, blackmailing them with freedom so as to keep them in harness, as much as the bourgeoisie’s need to live its own class rule as the freedom of those it is exploiting” (Althusser in Siegelbaum 2012: 69). The sense of alienation from society stemmed from the abstract nature of social relations. For instance, society offered some abstract “freedom”, without being really free to think, contemplate, interrogate and create. Demonstrators felt that the procreator of that social lethargy was the regime. This general idea backed the thoughts and actions in various spheres of social life, like education and art. French artists desperately explored new ways of dealing with the reality. Siegelbaum further explains that, “artists in May ’68 had largely been defined by escalating attempts, beginning around 1965, to formulate a collective critical practice, in their capacity as painters, capable of overturning the modernist emphases on heroic individual creation and formal innovation” (2012: 65).

All through the sixties artists took dramatic and radical actions as they explored new ways of artistic expression. They were generally against formalist artistic movements, abstract art and the thoughts locked in symbols

as they were not enough to express new ideas and relations. That April in Paris, on the eve of the student revolt and the general strike, a French artist Daniel Buren produced a photograph of his own street installation that he had placed some days earlier on a corner next to the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The photograph showed a billboard plastered with overlapping posters with his own poster of vertical stripes on top. Buren placed around 200 such posters at various Parisian locations so as to show his disgust with the institutional gallery and museum spaces with the intention to show the incongruity between socially acceptable art and its true autonomy.

There were many examples of how new artistic language interrogated old cultural concepts and strived to engage the audience in a cultural dialogue about the values of society. Here is an example of an artistic way to deal with gender policy. At the peak of the riots, on May 4th the 24e Salon de Mai opened at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In a dominantly conservative gallery the artist Lea Lublin displayed her baby son Nicolas who was born the year before. The work was called simply *Mon fils* (My Son). The explanation was simple, “[This is] a moment of my everyday life in an artistic site ... I exhibited myself with my son” (Lublin in Spencer 2017: 68). In the gallery space he was shown along with his crib, nappies, clothes, and toys. The tension between the domestic and public, womanhood and patriarchy, acceptable and shameful summon the narrations of motherhood and femininity in general in an array of readings – feminist, Marxist, psychological, among others. This simple installation which has seemingly nothing to do with anger and rage was a powerful statement of feminism and the right to a voice.

The rise and formulation of the new artistic practice entertained thoughts, ideas and stories inside the artistic space. The emerging genre of performance akin to the art of installation proved from the start to be able to accommodate narratives in various lingual, acoustic or visual forms, “acknowledges that writing is somehow related to inscription” (Freeman 2007: 4). In the center of the performance was the performing artist as the originator of meaning which is created in front of the audience. In such a way from the start the genre of performance has developed into “a moving laboratory in which to develop and test radical ideas, images and actions, a conceptual territory that grants us special freedoms (aesthetic, political and sexual)” (Gómez-Peña: 2000).

In Belgrade, the capital of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia at the time, 1968 was the year when rebellious sentiments from the global

community touched and to a certain degree shattered the stable social routine. In the realm of politics and ideology the main event were students' demonstrations which were carried out in certain university buildings and followed the events at Parisian universities. The uprising in the artistic sphere came as an aftermath of the political upheaval. Several performance artists advocated new art and a fresh way of dealing with the reality of socialism. They were known as the "group of six". The group included Marina Abramović, Raša Todosijević, Era Milivojević, Neša Paripović, Gera Urkom and Zoran Popović. Some of them later won international acclaim. Back then though, they strived to establish a new cultural dialogue through art and to start a new artistic practice. To achieve this, their performances gave voice to various manifestations of anger.

Young artists from the group-of-six were also students at the time and participated in the students' protests. Marina Abramović was one of their leaders. Apart from the students, the revolutionary energy took up intellectuals of many sorts – university professors, film directors, writers, and such. The students' demands included a multi-party system and freedom of the press. They defined their requests as "Thirteen Freedoms". Out of thirteen they gained three. One of the gains was the STUDENTS' CULTURAL CENTER (SKC).

The setting up of the Students' Cultural Center proved to be crucial for establishing an atmosphere which would welcome new art. And through the new art revolutionary ideas were expressed. SKC afforded both a venue and a forum for the exchange of ideas. It most generously welcomed all sorts of experiments, exhibitions, panels and workshops. The first artistic director was Dunja Blažević, who had just graduated from the Art History School. She remained responsible for the artistic development of SKC all through the '70s, the time generally considered the center's heyday. As she was attentive to the new ideas, she invited the "New Artistic Practice" into the art gallery. About the character of SKC the American professor of theatre and performance Branislav Jakovljević writes that, "Dunja Blažević, ... insists that this institution captured and carried into the 1970s, the emancipatory political and artistic ideals of 1968 ..." (2016: 145).

As a tribute to the general spirit of change the first show that SKC hosted was full of promising change to the accustomed artistic style. It was called *Drangularium*, literally trifle objects. Around thirty artists, among whom was the "group-of-six", were asked to bring to the gallery everyday objects that were for some reason significant for their art.

Someone exhibited an old blanket with holes, another, the door to his studio. Raša Todosijević exhibited his beautiful girlfriend as an artifice. Marina Abramović exhibited a peanut in its shell. That peanut as an art object marked her artistic transformation, as she confessed later. As it protruded from the wall it left a tiny shadow. She called the piece *Cloud With Its Shadow*. About the piece she wrote: “As soon as I saw that little shadow I realized two-dimensional art truly was a thing of the past ... that piece opened a whole different dimension,” [implying that the shadow was a part of its being], “being there and not there, changing with the sun, making it alive” (Abramović 2016: 39). In the years to come the space of the SKC along with the surrounding streets and parks would become the artistic arena for the young art.

If one compares the artistic-social dialogue in Belgrade with the Parisian one it is clear that, regardless of the approach, the concerns were pretty much the same. Buren’s billboard that was made illegible by many layers of posters exposed the illegibility of old art. Art historian Hal Foster “viewed it as a riddle, asking, ‘How are we to mediate these image-events?’” (Foster in Sigelbaum 2012: 53). By accentuating the incommunicability, that is the alienation of old art, Buren as many others at that time called for a new creative language and along with it a new concept of space to both house and produce such art.

Belgrade artists fervently discussed, “the art that was changing dramatically” (Abramović 2016: 37). They debated conceptual art, art povera, body art, or just “complain[ed] about the art [they] were being taught” (Abramović 2016: 36). In her memoir Marina Abramović writes:

My little group of six talked about the Conceptualists in the United States (where people like Lawrence Weiner and Joseph Kosuth were making pieces in which words were as important as objects); the Arte Povera movement in Italy, which was turning everyday objects into art; and the anti-commercial, anti-art Fluxus movement in Germany, whose stars were the provocative performance and Happening artists Joseph Beuys, Charlotte Moorman, and Nam June Paik. There was a Slovenian group called OHO that rejected art as an activity separate from life: any part of life at all, they believed, could be art. They were doing performance art as early as 1969: In Ljubljana, an artist named David Nez did a piece called *Cosmology*, where he lay inside a circle on the floor, with a lightbulb suspended just over

his stomach, and tried to breathe in tune with the universe. Some members of OHO came to Belgrade to speak about their beliefs; (Abramović 2016: 37)

The art of the six artists was loosely connected by their repudiation of conservatism in art. In that again reminiscent of the French revolutionary activities of 1968. Rejecting formalist aesthetics as static and unproductive, ill-adapted to express social tension. It was these artists that presented art “swaying between idealisation and alienation, criticism, irony and aggression” (Becker in IRWIN 2006: 394). Most influential from the group-of-six were Marina Abramović and Raša Todosijević. Together they formed the nucleus of the avant-garde activity in Belgrade. They also worked within the broader context of performance artists who were active at that time and whose works SKC also welcomed in their famous Happy Gallery.

So, the new artistic scene in Yugoslavia started to gain shape. The young artists created performances in which they expressed the frustration and confinement which they felt living and working with the socialist restrictions. One of Raša Todosijević’s performances was entitled *Decision as Art*. The very notion of decision as refers to art recalls socialist paradoxes – the idea that everything is calculated, decided in advance and imposed on the citizens. The performance includes the static female model, several plants and a fish in its pool. It also contains inscriptions on a banner: “decision as art”, “salt” and “fish”, written in several languages. First, the artist paints the plants, while his partner in the performance is just passively sitting. Then he pulls the fish out of its pool, as the fish is slowly dying from the lack of water, the artist drinks water until he is sick, then he vomits and drinks again. The fish expires while he stands upright holding a torch until he cannot hold up his arm any longer. The performance is about suffering and endurance. He shares the agony of the dying fish. His absurd martyrdom stands for the absurdity of understanding art as a calculated act, a decision, a closure. This could serve as a powerful metaphor for the misery of living under the regime where everything is a matter of decision, where there is no humour, no freedom to create. Defining his endeavor Raša Todosijević said in an interview:

My performance is not based on the wish to demystify anything, it rather seeks to irritate an individual by addressing its negative side in order that he becomes aware of it – your anger after the performance is that negative side of yours. (Todosijević 1990: 160)

As the performance exposes the negative, or “other” side of the people in the audience it at the same time repudiates the traditional role of art in socialism – to support established values and a positive perspective of reality.

However, in comparison with other socialist countries, in Yugoslavia art had relative freedom from state control. As a consequence, Yugoslav artists were allowed to follow certain global artistic trends. For example, throughout the '60s certain groups experimented with installations. Galleries welcomed artists experimenting with contemporary artistic techniques and started bringing the general environment along with its various narrations into the artistic space. Conceptual art, art povera, abstract art, surreal art and such were all present on artistic scenes in Yugoslavia. Although they had nothing to do with the then dominant aesthetic of social realism, those movements remained strictly in the aesthetic zone and did not aim to interrogate the social and political system. Therefore, they were considered harmless to the state. Contrary to this, the group-of-six artists challenged various social and cultural practices, from the system of values to cultural discourse, to education and gender policy. Marina Abramović wrote later in her autobiography that, “all my work in Yugoslavia was very much about rebellion” (Abramović 1998: 16). As Mary Richards points out, her anger was addressed both “against the family structure as well as the state and systems of art” (2010: 20).

As opposed to the alienated and abstract art, young artists promoted unavoidable presence, interaction with the audience, sometimes even obsessive action. The focus of the new art was on everyday reality, not on its symbolical sublimation in traditional art. Artists like Abramović and Todosijević mostly dealt with the nature and production of art, and also with its limits and relations to reality. For Todosijević “art [is] a productive and socially responsible discipline whose aim is not to create the work of art as an isolated aesthetic object, but to open an immediate dialogue between art and living reality” (Sretenović 2002: 11). The reality of bodies and the focus on the artist as the generator of meaning were central to the new art production.

The reasons why performance art, as opposed to painting and installation, was considered threatening for the socialist society were numerous. First, they provoked the audience and questioned their beliefs. There were other reasons, too. As opposed to the collectivism which was emblematic for the cultural practice in Socialism, performance artists insisted on individualism.

In the article entitled “Performance” (“Performans,” 1981) Raša Todosijević writes that in performance art an artist “establishes an address explicated in the first person... [while in theater the artist’s (actor’s)] subject, his true self, his beliefs about the world’s meaning, in the moment of performance and recedes into the background” (Todosijević 1983: 60). According to Todosijević, “it is this focus on subjectivity that distinguishes performance art from traditional performance genres” (Jakovljević 2016: 142). In other words, in performance, spectators are challenged as individual people, both as citizens and as persons – their views, their perspective of reality and “their negative, hidden side”. It is this focus on the individual act as opposed to the collective enterprise which was a dominant worldview within the socialist paradigm that the young artists were trying to establish in the cultural dialogue. Further still, performances with their incessant voices which gave rise to many alternative interpretations promoted the lack of closure. With this they questioned the narrations of authoritarianism – the backbone of socialism. The performance introduced the feeling that there is not one meaning of reality, that reality depends on our perception and that art is about “a galaxy of signifiers, not a network of signifieds”, (Barthes 1974: 5) as Roland Barthes put it. Ultimately, “the term performance suggests the body, even at times clichés of the body: naked, self-referential, blooded or abused” (Freeman 2007: 10). Body, martyred body, tortured or torturing, self-injured, provocative, violated, as symbol, concept, or tradition, marginalized, or objectified initiated the narrations and with it constructed the space of the performance.

During the performances artists explore numerous ways of involving the audience in the play. Raša Todosijević exemplified the aggressive and obvious, ideologically charged performances. One of these, *Was ist Kunst?*, was performed several years after the revolutionary 1968 in Edinburgh in 1973. It refers to suppressed individuality under the Socialist regime. The performing artist incessantly repeats the question to a female model. She is indifferent to his tyrannical behavior. The performance resembles police interrogation. The sadistic insistence of the torturer and the meekness of the woman conjure up narratives of domination, surrender and resignation. They problematize fixed concepts of gender in patriarchy as well as the female contribution to the patterns of behavior. While the female model is locked in her role, so is the male artist with his incessant bullying. The performance stages the general enslavement of subjects under a totalitarian regime. It remains Todosijević’s emblematic work and certainly one of

the most important works in the twentieth-century Serbian art. Today Todosijević's work is exhibited in the Tate Modern Gallery in London.

The socialist manner of control and imposition inspired the performances of the artists, irrespective of their styles and personal languages. In a dramatically different manner, Marina Abramović strived to involve her audience in a dialogue with her and their own selves, respectively. Her reaction to socialism is grounded in her personal story. It starts from her family background. Marina Abramović was born into a communist family. Her parents were very brave partisans, war heroes. They fought against the Nazis and were true believers in the communist cause. In her autobiography significantly entitled *Walking Through Walls* she writes that her own physical endurance has been inherited from her partisan parents – their stamina and their tolerance of pain. Their bravery brought them high military ranks and a significant amount of social privilege after the war. Despite her luxurious living conditions, Marina Abramović's childhood was burdened with the outcomes of a family drama, that is the divorce of her parents, and the social bleakness which she as an artist-in-the-making found difficult to bear, "Communism and socialism ... is a kind of aesthetic based on pure ugliness", she admits in her autobiography (Abramović 2016: 8). On the other hand, the social system which was supposed to be classless and just towards all social groups was actually grounded in injustice. While her family was privileged on account of their war heritage, there were people who for various reasons lived in poverty. Furthermore, there were people who were prosecuted for their political and religious beliefs. As the suppression of all religions was a part of the communist agenda, religion was duly marginalized in Yugoslavia. However, Marina's grandmother from her mother's side, who brought her up, was a true believer so Marina surreptitiously gained some spiritual knowledge. Later on these narratives of belief would merge with her ideologies of general revolt against the communist society.

Her attitude towards Communism was ambiguous. On the one hand she lived those socialist practices, trying to decide on the "for and against" of Communism, on the other she wanted to leave her upbringing and childhood behind. That is why the narratives of the socialist cause, equality, morality and generally the style of living are in Marina Abramović's aesthetic interwoven with the narratives of growing up and the troubles of adolescence. The walking-through-walls metaphor describes many aspects of her lifelong artistic practice. She explains in her autobiography:

“That killed me. The endurance artist in me, the walk-through-walls child of partisans, had so wanted to go to the very last second, until the end” (Abramović 2016: 256). Finally, the metaphor implies how she survived and surpassed the widespread spirit of misunderstanding of her work at home – without being discouraged in what she was doing.

Arguably, in the scope of Marina Abramović’s world the metaphor could be read with reference to the walls of words and cultural symbols. In her oeuvre, Marina Abramović has never stopped before the walls which would limit expression and ban signification. In this respect, the walking-through-walls metaphor sums up various aspects of her artistic agenda – to go deeper into the realm of meaning, to explore the silence which lurks behind the labels and symbols of the dominant (socialist) culture and society, that is to puncture its walls. She actually tried to push the walls which guard the all-too-familiar meaning of the words we know, actions we perform and rituals we undertake. The anger led the way through the wall as the despair of the limited meaning led Beckett’s Molloy, the agony which he feels before the walls which limit the signification of the words of the language. In that, many of Abramović’s strivings were reminiscent of Beckett’s words, “All I know is what the words know”. Thus, the aim to efface the cultural symbols was sometimes achieved by repetition, at other times by re-contextualization, or reflection, but the effect is always the displacement of the original signification so that it produced new readings.

In the mid-seventies, Marina Abramović performed *Lips of Thomas* (1975) on a public square in Belgrade. She stood with her navel exposed and a carved five-pointed star around it. Apart from being a symbol in its own right, a five-pointed star was central to the Yugoslav flag. As it is both a communist and religious (pagan) symbol it evokes narrations of both communism and faith. Her ritualistic, silent martyrdom contains several allusions. First of all, the star, then the act of martyrdom and the name of Thomas. St. Thomas, also called “Doubting Thomas”, does not believe in the actuality of Christ’s suffering. The performing artist showed her genuine wounds and she truly suffered and endured her suffering in a ritual reminiscent of a religious act. Besides, her suffering was silent, in an act which dissociated body and voice, in the way that socialist society used to deprive its people of their own voice, speaking in their person. The fragmentation of soul created passive personalities. The artist’s martyrdom stood for her “religious” readiness to redeem their humanity for them. She

performed this piece, with some variations, a couple more times during her long career.

The symbol of the five-pointed star appeared to inspire and intrigue Abramović in this period with its many-faceted reality and heavy emotional charge. A year earlier, 1974, Abramović performed one of her Rhythm series, Rhythm 5, in the courtyard of SKC with the famous contemporary artist Joseph Beuys in the audience. That time Abramović used fire. Beuys actually warned her that fire is highly risky in a performance. However, she placed two wooden frames in the shape of a five-pointed star. Filled them with wood shreds which she soaked with gasoline and set them aflame. First she walked around the outer frame as in a ritual. Then as if to cleanse her body before some mystic initiation she cut off her hair and nails and threw them into the fire. Next, she just lay in the inner frame. Her body just fitted in the frame so she looked as if she was crucified. Her symbolic sacrifice on that occasion proved to be almost deadly as she fainted from the lack of oxygen. She was symbolically sacrificed, as the young people were sacrificed under the socialist regime. Like her own, their martyrdom was meaningless.

In 1975 Marina Abramović performed *Lips of Thomas*, or *Thomas Lips* again, in Innsbruck. That second performance was more complex. It had several stages. The audience was offered the instructions,

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

THOMAS LIPS

Performance.

I slowly eat 1 kilo of honey with a silver spoon.

I slowly drink 1 liter of red wine out of a crystal glass.

I break the glass with my right hand.

I cut a five-pointed star on my stomach with a razor blade.

I violently whip myself until I no longer feel any pain.

I lay down on a cross made of ice blocks.

The heat of a suspended heater pointed at my stomach causes the cut star to bleed.

The rest of my body behind to freeze.

I remain on the ice cross for 30 minutes until the public interrupts the piece by removing the ice blocks from underneath me.

Duration: 2 hours

As everything is clear and ordered in performing a ritual, the written list of the steps of the performance underlines the ritualistic nature of the act. The performance goes as follows, first she eats a kilo of honey and drinks a bottle of wine. Then, she cuts the glass bottle, takes the razor blade and cuts a five-pointed star in her stomach. Then she flogs herself. It is after the over-indulgence in eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ that she flogs her body and submits to the cross of ice. When she lies there after a while her skin gets stuck to the surface of the ice. Above her there is a heater and the heat causes the blood from her wounds to flow intensively.

This ritual suffering in the performance referred again to the oppressive practices of communist societies symbolized in the shape of a five-pointed star. However, here the suffering was more concrete: she had to be punished, as religion rituals were banned in a socialist society her over-indulgence in honey and wine – Christ's body and blood – were to be duly punished.

At that time she performed her Rhythm series. The first of Abramović's Rhythm performances which she delivered at the Edinburgh festival in 1973 was Rhythm 10. It re-enacted a Russian roulette game as a sound installation/performance. The performance included 10 sharp knives that the artist would thrust and control their force at the same time. She placed her left hand on a white cloth on the surface and stabbed between her outspread fingers. The audio-tape recorded the sounds of throbbing and the noise she made when she cut herself in the process. Her groan would signal a change of knives. After completing the series of 10 knives, she would play the game again trying to hit the knives in tune to the first recording.

The video from the performance shows that she was able to re-enact her original actions so as to perform the second round with the minimum risk of cutting as she could predict where and when the knives would hit the ground. The precision and concentration would give her the power and control over her own acts in the performance. To gain control over something, anything in a socialist society was a difficult task. The performance exposed ways of gaining control through the power of will and endurance.

Those performances were challenging for the viewer as well as for the performing artists. The performances demanded the personal involvement of viewers and in due process reflected something of their hidden narratives,

fear, anxiety, dissatisfaction, revolt against the reality, helplessness and so on.

The significant verbal agents, slogans like *Was ist Kunst? Decision as Art; Lips of Thomas*, or *Thomas Lips* indicated in a most obvious way the narratives of the performances. Those simple, clear, unambiguous questions or statements serve to encourage the audience to accept a dialogue with the performing artist under the umbrella of the work. Are these labels offered as contribution to the meaning of the performance, or simply as a provocation, do they illuminate the meaning, offer the main narrative of the performance, or channel our thinking? Do they offer a reading of the work? Or do they just bring to mind the cultural markers in order to destroy their symbolical value? All these questions and many others can direct the reading of the work and question the perception of the viewer and interpreter. Is it not its main purpose to challenge?

With reference to the socialist Yugoslavia, revolutionary ideas and the passion for change were sublimated in the artistic endeavor of the young artists of the revolutionary 1960s and 1970s. Exploring the limits of freedom in society and art in Belgrade among other Yugoslav cities they effectively caused turmoil on the artistic scene – at least for a while.

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НАРАЦИЈЕ У ВИЗУЕЛНОМ ПОЉУ: ЛЕГАТ ИДЕЈА РЕВОЛУЦИОНАРНЕ 1968.
У БЕОГРАДУ И УМЕТНОСТ ПЕРФОРМАНСА

Сажетак

У пролеће 1968. читав свет био је захваћен таласом протеста. Иако су проблеми били различити од земље до земље, изгледало је да народи од Европе до Америке и Африке и даље деле неке заједничке фрустрације које су их ујединиле у фронт непријатељства према владајућим режимима и доминантним идеологијама на свим нивоима друштва и културе. У раду се расправља утицај идеја протеста 1968. и уопште духа шездесетих из којих су потекле неке корените промене у друштву и уметности. Посебна пажња посвећена је утицају који је глобални дух промене имао на Социјалистичку Републику Југославију из перспективе уметничких истраживања тада младих уметника који су стварали у Београду у намери да пронађу нови уметнички језик кроз жанр перформанса.

Кључне речи: 1968, политика, идеологија, уметност, перформанс, језик