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Is there a non-aligned art? Politics of exhibitions and artistic relations in socialist Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1974

My proposal is based on my doctoral thesis and focuses on the relations between art and politics in socialist Yugoslavia during the Cold War period. More precisely, I analyze cultural policy from the perspective of the history of exhibitions and artistic practises that those ones underline. The 1948 break with the Soviet Union marked the new orientation in the cultural policy and the beginning of the search for new cultural and political identity. This research proposes to address the change in orientation operated after 1948 in all its complexity by a thorough appreciation of the intellectual climate of the late 1940s and early 1950s on one side and the political context on the other side that make the Yugoslav experience specific among others communist countries. It was nothing less than the creation of a new foreign policy program of Yugoslavia, which positioned the country as a socialist state independent from Moscow in a bi-polar Europe, and made it an active promoter of a global grouping of recently decolonised countries under the banner of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The aim of my project is to retrace and understand the strategies and mechanisms of cultural transfers and its reception between Yugoslavia and both western and eastern countries as well as those connected to the new-formed non-aligned movement during the Cold War. My research aims to clarify the transmission canals, the Intermediaries and social relations that made cultural circulation trough art exhibitions possible?

International exhibitions were highly important to showcase the artistic tendencies the organising countries wanted to promote, especially in Yugoslavia where cultural exchange was exclusively regulated by the state. This part will attempt to create a selection of major international exhibitions and present them with great detail, from their organisation through the content to the critical reception. The main challenge is to establish relevant criteria of selection that bring together representative material having the potential to reveal how the government used cultural events to promote its own political and ideological values, as well as how it used its own cultural policy in response to specific global changes and crises.

My primary sources of research are located in archives of former Yugoslav, next to Slovenia and Croatia mainly in Serbia and Belgrade which as the capital city of Yugoslavia and had the strongest concentration of power: the archives of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, the archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, the holdings of the national libraries of Belgrade. Archival material comprises theoretical and critical texts,

exhibition catalogues, press review, political speeches, archival and internal documents and images (art works, photographs, designs and layouts).

At the 2020 conference, I would like to specifically present my latest research on exhibitions of American Abstract expressionism and Pop-art through a series of exhibitions include *Modern Art in the United States* (1956) with works from New York's MoMA collection presenting the first generation of Abstract Expressionism, *Contemporary American art* (1961), *American pop-art* (1966) and *The New direction – Figure 1963-1968* in Yugoslavia. I have high hopes the discussions following my presentation will help me widen my approach, both methodologically and by comparison to other cases in occurring in Eastern Europe at the same time.