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FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 2022

# Art, Artivism, and Other Transformative Practices

Programme & Abstracts

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15th Postgraduate Course  
Dubrovnik, IUC, May 23-27, 2022

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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Facing the third year of pandemic, economic and ecological crises which have left such an indelible stamp on our lives, and have so deeply affected all the other “climates” – social, cultural, political – that we feel responsible for keeping from being polluted, this year’s seminar will (hopefully) return to its original premises as well as its offline and online resources in order to address various modalities, past and present, of feminist creativity, critical reflection and political engagement through art. We are keen on pointing to local genealogies of feminist activist and transformative practices, which have often been neglected, as some of the most vital and internationally renowned contributions to the Balkan region’s art histories.

The reasons for turning to the healing and often politically challenging properties of art are numerous, since the current crises have unfortunately exacerbated the already noticeable rise of domestic violence and the radicalization of right-wing, misogynist and homophobic movements, which have found new venues and pretexts to reassert their policies and camouflage their interest in contesting and instrumentalizing women’s reproductive rights, in denying women’s personal and professional affirmation, let alone in allowing LGBT people to be visible, if not even livable forms of humanity. The discussion that we want to (re)open this year concerns the validity and the resilience artistic practices demonstrate when thematizing, confronting, or even transforming such pernicious processes, as well as the regional and global resonances these practices engender, not to mention the eventual concrete outcomes and metamorphoses they manage to provoke.

Of course, this brings us back to a more general (self-)reflection upon the outline, the efficacy, and the status of feminist aesthetics within the broader critical context of feminist theory, epistemology, and politics: how does it reframe the historical and current roles of art – literature, cinema, theatre, film, plastic and body art, and especially transmedial experiments – in invigorating personal and collective resistance to oppression, whether it happens in familial or institutional settings?

What are the historical and contemporary examples of collaboration in producing art that could eventually also point to so far unknown forms of feminist solidarity? Is there a specific feminist activist response to the growing neoliberal disintegration of society and its fortification by the recent necessity of digital interaction and social distancing? How can art respond to the inevitability of digitalization not only in professional contexts but also in newly adopted rituals of care, sociability and affection? How does art engage the everyday, mundane, micro-leveled strategies of survival, how does it reveal its own therapeutic capacities, how does it support anti-nationalist, anti-racist and green politics, how does it intervene with respect to unwelcome urban reconfigurations? What are the overlaps and collaborations between political protests and activist performances?

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# COURSE PROGRAMME

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## Monday, May 23

- 09.15–09.30      Gathering of the participants at the IUC, Don Frana Bulića 4
- 9.30–09.45      Short self-presentation by all participants
- 9.45–9.55      **Lada ČALE FELDMAN** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **Introductory remarks**
- 10.00–10.45    **P. A. SKANTZE** (Uni Roehampton, London, UK): **Polysonic Workshop: Black Feminism and the Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound**
- 10.45–11.15    *Discussion*
- 11.15–11.45    *Coffee break*

Moderator:..... **Lada ČALE FELDMAN** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia)

- 11.45–12.30    **Silvana CAROTENUTO** (“L’Orientale”, Naples, Italy): **In the Face of Conflicts, Female ‘Spectacular Difference’**
- 12.30–13.00    *Discussion*
- 13.00–16.30    *Lunch break*

### Afternoon sessionn

- 16.30–17.00    **Nabila TAVOLIERI** (“L’Orientale”, Naples, Italy): **Hospitality/ teraanga and Healing/ faju: Trans-formative Practices for New Cosmo-ethical Visions**
- 17.00–17.30    **Mirela DAKIĆ** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **(E)strange(d) Sorcery: Dubravka Ugrešić and the Literary Canon**
- 17.30–18.00    **Slaven CRNIĆ** (CEU, Vienna, Austria): **Social Transformation and Male Literary Imagination: The Utopian Horizons and Downfalls of Male Camaraderie in Meša Selimović’s *The Fortress***
- 18.00–18.30    *Discussion*
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18.30–19.00 **Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN** (IEF, Zagreb, Croatia) and **Sandra PRENDA** (CWS, Zagreb, Croatia): **15 years of the seminar Feminisms in a Transnational Perspective**

19.00 Celebration

## Tuesday, May 24

Moderator:..... **Leila TOPIĆ** (Museum of Contemporary Art, CWS, Zagreb, Croatia)

9.30–10.15 **Jasmina LUKIĆ** (CEU, Vienna, Austria): **The World Novel as a Global Literary Genre and New Ethics: A Feminist Perspective** (online presentation)

10.15–11.00 **Susanne CLISBY** (Coventry University, UK): **Investigating Global Gender and Cultures of Equality Through Arts-based Praxis and Creative Activism** (online presentation)

11.00–11:30 *Discussion*

11.30–12.00 *Coffee break*

12.00–12.30 **Eric BERGMAN** (Uni Helsinki, Finland): **Multiple Histories: Race and In-betweenness as Experienced by Two Narrators Across Geographies**

12.30–13.00 *Discussion*

13.00–16.30 *Lunch break*

### Afternoon sessionn

16.30–17.15 **Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN** (IEF, Zagreb, Croatia) and **Anca VERONA MIHULEȚ** (Seoul, Bucharest): **Exhibiting Difficult Women's History: The Latest Project by Andreja Kulunčić** (hybrid presentation)

17.15–18.00 **Jasmina TUMBAS** (Uni Buffalo, USA): **Jugoslovenka and her Legacy of Resistance: A Visual History of Feminist Empowerment** (online presentation)

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18.00–18.30 *Discussion*

18.30–19.00 **Ludmila BÖHMOVÁ** (Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic): **From Church to the Streets**

19.00–19.30 *Discussion*

## Wednesday, May 25

Moderator:..... **Biljana KAŠIĆ** (CWS, Zagreb, Croatia)

10.00–10.30 **Francesca Maria GABRIELLI** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **Re-envisioning Relationality: Artemisia Gentileschi's 1610 *Susanna***

10.30–11.15 **Lada ČALE FELDMAN** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **Living to Curse: The Strange Case of *Kate Succurizza***

11.15–11.45 *Discussion*

11.45–12.15 *Coffee break*

12.15–13.00 **Dubravka DULIBIĆ-PALJAR** (Uni Pula, Croatia) and **Brigita MILOŠ** (Uni Rijeka, Croatia): **Ecriture Feminine 2.0**

13.00–13.30 *Discussion*

*Free afternoon*

## Thursday, May 26

Moderator:..... **Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN** (IEF, Zagreb, Croatia)

09.30–10.15 **Selma BANICH and Leila TOPIĆ** (Museum of Contemporary Art, CWS, Zagreb, Croatia): **On No-border Activism, Radical Fragility, and Healing**

10.15–11.00 **Biljana KAŠIĆ** (Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia): **Is There Time for Radical Empathy? Responsiveness Through Feminist Anti-war Acting**

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11.00–11.30 *Discussion*

11.30–12.00 *Coffee break*

12.00–12.30 **Elena SKOKO** (Uni Zadar, Croatia): **From Maiden Artist to Mother Activist: Ghost Artivism for Obstetric Violence**

12.30–13.00 **Ana PAVLIĆ** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **Endangered Gender: Her between Learning and Teaching**

13.00–13.30 *Discussion*

13.30–17.00 *Lunch break*

### **Afternoon sessionn**

17.00–17.30 **Eglė AMBRASAITĖ** (CEU, Vienna, Austria): **Disruptive Love(s): Exploring Togetherness in Aikas Žado Laboratory and Eglės Ambrasaitė’s Theoretical, Practical, and Artistic Thoughts**

17.30–18.00 **Maša HUZJAK** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **Resisting Profit: The “Aimless” Productivity of Fan Fiction Authors and Readers**

18.00–18.30 **Petar ODAK** (CEU, Vienna, Austria / Utrecht University, Netherlands): **Feeling the Ultimate Other: Biomediated Bodies, Re-situated Knowledges, and the Potentiality of VR-Art**

18.30–19.00 **Ana ABRIL** (CEU, Vienna, Austria): **Send Me a Nude: An Autoethnography of Micropolitical Resistance to Sexual Normalization during the Physical Distancing in the Covid-19 Pandemic**

19.00–19.30 *Discussion*

## **Friday, May 27**

Moderator:..... **Silvana CAROTENUTO** (“L’Orientale”, Naples, Italy)

09.00–09.30 **Sara FEDERICO** (Uni Sassari, Italy): **From the Screen to the Street of Marseille: Techno-discourse as a Transformative Performance of Female Rappers** (online presentation)



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- 09.30–10.00 **Višnja VUKAŠINOVIĆ** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **Onscreen Persona as a Tool of Social Transformation** (online presentation)
- 10.00–10.30 **Karmen KOVAČEVIĆ** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia): **Breaking the Ice: The Subversive Character/ Power of Spanish Cinematography during Francoism** (online presentation)
- 10.30–11.00 *Discussion*
- 11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.30–12.30 **Course evaluation**
- Departure*
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## **ABSTRACTS**

(Participants as listed in the Programme)

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**P. A. SKANTZE**

University of Roehampton, London, UK

**Polysonic Workshop: Black Feminism and the Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound**

Writing about James Baldwin's musical prose, Ed Pavlic concentrates our attention on the 'how' of lyric: "as a generally disruptive propensity of language, a metaphorically or literally musical interruption of the report- function usually assigned to what is called prose. The lyrical mode bridges the distinction between discourse and experience by becoming an experience itself. A song is discourse as experience, interrupting the boomerang from word to referent, holding our attention to physical and emotional textures woven in the rhythms of the utterance itself. Poets and translators have long pursued strategies for liberating language from its utilitarian job as pack mule in human communication and commerce (including the cognitive commerce between signifier and signified)". This workshop will invite all of us to leave behind the soul killing, convenience obsessed 'report function' to indeed liberate our own language, which is to say also to invent modes of thinking in the sound of speak/singing, in the key of lyric. If we have had enough of anything in these past years it is the flattening out of nuance and exploration into handy categories – categories, Baldwin reminds us, are always commercial—so fixed they deaden our thinking before we get started. Jennifer Nash in *Black Feminism Reimagined* citing Shireen Roshanravan calls for a 'plurilogue' encouraging us to think about 'intersectionality' and 'transnationalism' together, thus 'disrupting women of color feminism as a monologue, and attending to the "polyphonic" ways women of color feminism has theorized, and debated, our survival, needs, and political desires.' Lyric disrupts, polyphony disrupts, this workshop will sink into the experience of sound and thinking aloud as disruption, but disruption in the service of learning how we change slowly, in our difference and in our lack of knowing what to do, but knowing whatever it is we are trying to do it together.

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**SILVANA CAROTENUTO**

University of Naples “L’Orientale”, Italy

**In the Face of Conflicts, Female ‘Spectacular Difference’**

My lecture intervenes in the work of the Dubrovnik Summer School by providing some examples of contemporary female African activism that prove to be concerned with the transmission of the cultural and artistic value of ‘difference’. I choose ‘difference’ as the value that both African and European cultures, in their singular ways, and acknowledging the asymmetries created by colonialism and its legacy, should favour to deconstruct centuries of conflicts between sacred and secular authorities, competitions between faith and knowledge, and violence among states and antagonistic classes. ‘Difference’ as the acknowledgement of the Other in her Otherness should be communicated, and, hopefully, contribute to stabilizing tensions, pacifying conflicts, and provoking self-limiting state sovereignties. This is the field of interest of the oeuvres of some African female activists who are determined to interrogate the ‘rationale’ of logocentrism (conflicts capitalize on the dialectics of western metaphysics, binaries, hierarchies, and reifications of divisions), enter the ‘colonial library’ and, by questioning cultural representation, perform artistic hospitality to the other, ethical commitments of responsibility towards difference, and political calls for future justice. I will present the works of Peju Alatise, Portia Zvavakena, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, and Virginia Chihata as *petits récits* (vs. ‘grand narratives’) on the relevance of difference in projects of knowledge that destabilize conflictuality to favour, through the public and international and global recognition, the urge for co-existence or co-vivance. By “blurring the distinction between routine and creativity” and working according to the feminist desire for a new world-to-come, these works represent female interventions of urban technology that question the epistemological assumptions of cultural representation, suspend patriarchy and sovereignty, reclaim history, and announce future forms of kinship.

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**NABILA TAVOLIERI**

University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy

**Hospitality/teraanga and Healing/faju: Trans-formative Practices for New Cosmo-ethical Visions**

My intervention brings African cosmologies and female artistic 'cosmo-poet(h)ical' practices into dialogue by finding its inspiration in theoretical and artistic critiques of 'cosmopolitanism' and intending to explore new female 'cosmo-poet(h)ical-visions'. Here the notion of 'cosmo-poet(h)ics' is given as the 'theoretical-practical' interventions functioning as a poetic and critical lens for the thinking/enactment of new human and non-human relationalities. In particular, ethics is here meant as "hospitality", as Derrida would say, and the re-imagina(c)tion of ancestral ecological sa/voir is directed to the healing of both human and non-human beings. My presentation will study two specific imaginaries of African Cosmologies: the wolof Teraanga (hospitality) and Faju (healing), which are always practices of taking care of the Others to deconstruct the colonial, racial, and capitalist logics that support the dualism of nature/culture and the anthropocentric vision of the cosmos. To illustrate these two cosmologies, I'll refer to the oeuvre of French-born Guyanese/Danish artist Tabita Rezaire, who uses her artistic agency at the intersection of digital arts, corporeal performances, and ancestral memory as the medium to heal, at the same time, the soul/body and the earth.

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**MIRELA DAKIĆ**

University of Zagreb, Croatia

**(E)strange(d) Sorcery: Dubravka Ugrešić and the Literary Canon**

The starting point of our discussion will be *Brnjica za vještice* (*Witch's Bridle*, 2021), a recent book by the (self-proclaimed) *postnational/transnational* writer Dubravka Ugrešić, which has received considerable attention from literary and even mainstream media since its publication. In this generically undetermined two-part book, the author's discussion about the four-decade destiny of her early novel *Štefica Cvek u raljama života* (*Štefica Cvek in the Jaws of Life*, 1981) in the national, (post)Yugoslav and international literary field is followed by an interview conducted by literary scholar Merima Omeragić. While the book's title alludes not only to the public persecution the author experienced along with other women writers in Croatia during the 1990s but also to the wider historical and cultural silencing of women still taking place today, both chapters of the book deal with the status of literature in patriarchal and nationalistic post-Yugoslav societies and its literary and cultural institutions, as well as the growing market-based logic of cultural production and reception. Regarding this particular context, which mostly draws the attention of the reading audience and literary critics, in our paper we will primarily focus on the author's remarks about the influence of Russian formalism on her poetics and conception of literature. Looking back at Ugrešić's early short story collections *Poza za prozu* (*A Pose for Prose*, 1978) and *Život je bajka* (*Life is a Fairy Tale*, 1983), we will consider the narrative techniques and genre treatment in her formative works as the outset of the author's poetics and a continuous site of resistance to various historical and critical appropriations of her oeuvre.

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**SLAVEN CRNIĆ**

CEU, Vienna, Austria

**Social Transformation and Male Literary Imagination: The Utopian Horizons and Downfalls of Male Camaraderie in Meša Selimović's *The Fortress***

This presentation will focus on Meša Selimović's *The Fortress* (1970), one of the most celebrated and controversial Yugoslav novels of all times, read both as a thinly veiled allegory of the Yugoslav state apparatus *and* a universal philosophical exploration of social justice. Set in Ottoman Bosnia and narrated by its main character, a young war veteran and aspiring poet Ahmet Shabo, the novel chronicles the uneasy coexistence of a corrupt authoritarian social elite and an impoverished, disenchant-ed populace. Selimović focuses on several key male figures: a heretic student directly opposing the elite's teachings and political power by fomenting revolt among the peasants; a bereaved father who seeks to avenge his son's death by using his wealth to loosen the powerholders' grip on the locals; and a plethora of war veterans, Shabo included, who are trying to navigate the harsh social climate and face their own disappointment with post-war life. Theoretically grounded in the fields of masculinities studies and gender and queer theory, this presentation will analyse the ways in which the novel reinvigorates the notion of male camaraderie and idealizes it as capable of overthrowing an unjust, corrupted and autocratic society. I will argue that the novel splits the male homosocial continuum by equating intellectualism with the scheming, conniving and treacherous world of those men who are corrupted by hierarchical power and reimagines the utopian potentialities of brotherhood and camaraderie as proportional to some men's capacity for embracing intellectual simplicity and value-driven action as an ethical credo. Finally, the presentation will trace the ways in which, while paving the way to a corruptionless world, the linkages established between Shabo and his comrades rely on practices of domination over women and queer men, thus imposing their utopian male camaraderie as a new normativity for everybody else.

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**JASMINA LUKIĆ**

CEU, Vienna, Austria

**The World Novel as a Global Literary Genre and New Ethics: A Feminist Perspective**

The presentation takes as its starting point Debjani Ganguly's claim that the contemporary novel as a global form presents itself as a new genre with distinct characteristics that are strongly engaged with social reality. In my paper, I intend to analyse this claim within a larger framework of a new ethics in literary studies, with an emphasis on feminist solidarity as a particular form of social engagement.

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**SUZANNE CLISBY**

Coventry University, UK

**Investigating Global Gender and Cultures of Equality Through Arts-based Praxis and Creative Activism**

In this session I will talk to you about how we worked with arts-based praxis and creative activism through the GLOBAL GENDER AND CULTURES OF EQUALITIES (GLOBALGRACE) Project. GlobalGRACE [1] (2017-22) was a four-year project funded by the UK Government's Global Challenges Research Fund bringing together academics and NGO practitioners based in Bangladesh, Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, South Africa and the United Kingdom. In responding to two key UN Sustainable Development Goals, Gender Equality (SDG5) and Health and Wellbeing (SDG3), we drew on interdisciplinary and multi-sensory methodologies, arts-based research and creative activism to investigate people's everyday experience of inequalities and together explore the variety of ways that people's creative practices challenge systems of privilege and engender new possibilities for more equitable ways of living together.

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**ERIC BERGMAN**

University of Helsinki, Finland

**Multiple Histories: Race and In-betweenness as Experienced by Two Narrators across Geographies**

As my contribution to the course on transnational perspectives on feminisms, I'd like to shortly introduce the concept of nepantla to participants and lecturers. Nepantla, which roughly translates as "torn between ways" from Nahuatl, the Aztec language, has been theorized by Gloria Anzaldúa (2015) to account for a subjective, non-hierarchical, neutral, and ever-changing 'space' in-between normative categories. The concept of nepantla allows us to meet characters in the middle, where they are, instead of projecting a priori categories onto them. I will compare two literary works—Sandra Cisneros's (2009) Mexican American novel *The House on Mango Street* and Kiba Lumberg's (2011) Finnish Roma Memesa trilogy—to illustrate a very simple, yet important, claim: though themes, symbols, literary devices, and the personal trajectories of characters may be similar in literary texts across geographies, the historical and sociocultural context can mean very different outcomes. In both literary examples, it is the narrators' role as women that instigates their journey of transformation into the in-between. And, while Frederic Jameson (2002) famously urged us to "always historicize!" this presentation will illustrate that history itself is multiple in any given context—and sometimes nearly invisible. While race plays an important role in US scholarship, I will argue that, in Europe, race is sometimes overlooked as a meaningful analytical concept. In the spirit of nepantla, race is not taken deterministically but rather as one influence with a multitude of possibilities.

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**RENATA JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN**

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia

**ANCA VERONA MIHULEŢ**

art historian and curator, Seoul/Bucharest

**Exhibiting Difficult Women’s History: The Latest Project by Andreja Kulunčić**

In her work, the Croatian visual artist Andreja Kulunčić interrogates various aspects of social relations and practice. Her interests lie in socially engaged topics, confronting various audiences, and initiating collective projects. In her latest research project, *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It* (2019–2022), she focuses on the silence surrounding the erased episode of totalitarian violence against politically active women who did not fit into the binary optics of the Cold War bloc politics between 1948–1956. Kulunčić is researching the internal mechanisms and the apparatus of constraint behind the oppression of women in the Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur political camps located on two islands in the Adriatic Sea. Her rhizomatic approach aims at pondering upon the transformation of the female prisoner’s body as being subjected to self-colonization in order to survive in a traumatic environment. Setting up her own interdisciplinary network of women scholars and artists, viewing artistic practice as research, a process of cooperation and co-creation, but also as a form of intervention in the politics of memory and memorial gesture, Andreja Kulunčić created two exhibitions (first under the curation of Irena Bekić and then together with Anca Mihuleţ), several workshops, and a successful media campaign that, in many ways, have demanded active collaboration on the part of the audience, asking it to “complete” the project.

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**JASMINA TUMBAS**

University of Buffalo, USA

**Jugoslovenka and her Legacy of Resistance: A Visual History of Feminist Empowerment**

My presentation will focus on understanding how the Yugoslav wars impacted Yugoslav feminism and anti-nationalism in the early 1990s and thereafter, including the emergence of one of the most important women activist groups of the region, Women in Black. The Yugoslav wars were not only waged between different religious and ethnic factions, but against all minorities that defied the newly sanctified identity categories imposed on them. These ideological impositions included ethnic purity, the role of women as mothers serving the nation, a willingness to sacrifice for the national good, a belief in the exceptional status, victimhood, and righteousness of re-established or newly formed nations, and the condoning of violence to protect and advance said nations and their leaders. Women's bodies were instrumentalized to serve as physical and symbolic battlegrounds upon which military and paramilitary men sadistically sought revenge and humiliated their enemies. Centering on women's distressed positions as survivors of civil war and on the loss of a homeland, this chapter expands the field of inquiry to include popular images of Yugoslav women during the wars, including beauty contestants and soldiers/snipers, as well as Vesna Pavlović's photographs of Women in Black's activism. It ends with case studies of women performance artists, such as Šejla Kamerić, Lala Raščić, Tanja Ostojić, and Selma Selman, whose works touch on the wide-ranging challenges Jugoslovenkas face in the post-Yugoslav, postwar, neoliberal space: increased homophobia; immigration nightmares; diasporic loneliness; heightened racism, especially for Roma women; and a return to Yugoslav legacies of emancipatory strength and antifascist resistance.

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**LUDMILA BÖHMOVÁ**

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

**From Church to the Streets**

I am from the feminist group RFK (Radical Feminist Christian), which criticizes the patriarchal structure in society and in the churches. We've made a few happenings and performances in the public space. I would like to present two of them. The first was the imitation of the Last Supper, which we recontextualized for current times. The whole action was under the art platform "Terén", which helped us with production and with the design of the place. The second one was the ordination of the supermarket that was bought by the archbishopric in Brno. We created the fake events, but we tried to see as though we were the real representatives of the church, and we made a whole ordination and symbolic ceremony. In my presentation, I would like to point out the symbolic value of this happenings and zoom in on the process of creation and the results of our debates and dilemmas inside the activist group. I would like to show the moral/ethical dilemmas that come with activism in the churches.

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**FRANCESCA MARIA GABRIELLI**  
University of Zagreb, Croatia

**Re-envisioning Relationality: Artemisia Gentileschi's 1610 *Susanna***

Through a reading of Artemisia Gentileschi's 1610 painting *Susanna and the Elders*, in my presentation I will investigate the ways in which the pictorial narrative reveals and undermines the logic on which violence hinges. Gentileschi's depiction of Susanna's resistance to the assault of two men in positions of power is characterized by the presence of references to other texts, both visual and verbal, by which, as I will argue, the canvas evokes, in radical counterpoint to the depicted scenario of attempted rape, the possibility of a different human interaction, benevolent and non-dualistic. Indeed, the mode of relationality to which the painting intertextually alludes can be read as unmasking the dynamics of domination as dependent upon the illusion of separation, while inviting an empowering reflection on human interconnectedness.



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**LADA ČALE FELDMAN**

University of Zagreb, Croatia

**Living to Curse: The Strange Case of *Kate Sucurizza***

By paying homage to the locality in which our seminar is taking place, my intervention will endeavour to interpret one of the strangest plays Croatian literature has ever produced: I say 'literature', because Vlaho Stulli's *Kate Sucurizza*, written in Dubrovnik around 1800, was not put on stage until after its much later archival discovery, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Upon its first performance in 1966, it was promptly labelled as "undoubtedly one of the most interesting early modern Croatian plays". Indeed, the "cactus flower" of Dubrovnik playwrighting, appeared as unprecedented in its unusual twists of comedy's setting, atmosphere, genre, characters, structure and (foul) language. Knowing that its author was a confirmed Jacobin, interested in thematizing the life of the lowest class of the Dubrovnik state in the European post-revolutionary era, critics remained puzzled by the play's bold amorphousness, but did not hesitate to shower it with the most anachronistic poetic and stylistic attributions one could imagine, from realism to naturalism to anti-drama and the theatre of the absurd. While emphasizing Stulli's focus not only on the female protagonist's cursing rage, but also on issues of marriage, embodiment, motherhood, and the family violence that poverty generates, my aim is to demonstrate the transformative power of a feminist reading for the historical re-evaluation of this curious piece. Its (post-)revolutionary impact will here be re-framed not only against the background of the gender ideology propounded by contemporary French and Italian family dramas and comédies larmoyantes, but also in terms of its virtual meta-theatricality, brought to light by the play's uncanny resemblances to Georg Büchner's play *Woyzeck* (1837), the dramatic masterpiece known worldwide that provoked strikingly similar critical confusions.

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**BRIGITA MILOŠ**

University of Rijeka, Croatia

**DUBRAVKA DULIBIĆ-PALJAR**

Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia

## **Ecriture Feminine 2.0**

Suppose the concept of “the female experience” as the main writing/creative (female) device is (still) accurate. In that case, at least one aspect of Elena Ferrante’s writing falls into this category. In this presentation, we aim at elaborating on Elena Ferrante as the *écriture féminine* for the new millennia. The concept of *écriture féminine* has been elaborated in various ways (at least by Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva), emphasising different features as pivotal in and of the *écriture féminine*, such as women’s physiology and bodily instincts as they affect the sexual experience and the unconscious (Jones 1981). Contested as it is, hard to define and even harder to pinpoint, strangely at odds with contemporary (feminist-/literary-) theoretical practices, the idea of feminine writing nevertheless seems to be a proper instrument for approaching Ferrante’s world. The principal feature of such a claim lies in the notion of *jouissance*, in the productive high of pleasure, (k)not-knowing and enjoying. The Ferrante fever goes beyond the reach of “a-symbolic authorship”. Her writing tackles the dead-end of contemporary feminist art as well as re-instantiates the female in a language of her own.

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**SELMA BANICH**

artist and activist, Zagreb, Croatia

**LEILA TOPIĆ**

Museum of Contemporary Art & Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia

**On No-border Activism, Radical Fragility, and Healing**

I envision our presentation as a discursive workshop and discussion on women in activism, the no-border movement as a feminist struggle for a freer and more just world, and fragility as an experience of radical resistance. I will present my latest research and collaborative video work entitled *The Howls (Urlici)*, which explores feminist choreography in the no-border movement in the Balkans. By presenting this work in a workshop format, my aim is to initiate a more general discussion on fragility, transnational solidarity, and healing as tools for social change and liberation of the planet by critically reflecting on the concepts of resilience and sustainability that are used to normalize human and nonhuman suffering under capitalism.

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**BILJANA KAŠIĆ**

Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia

**Is there Time for Radical Empathy? Responsiveness through Feminist Anti-war Acting**

How to take a stand in a time when we are witnessing, over and over again, the aspirations and consequences of war, neo-colonial gestures accompanied by imperial fantasies (Tlostanova 2015) and new geopolitical scenarios, the strengthening of white supremacy, and the racialization of migrants ('race-migration nexus', Urel, Murji & Nahaboo 2015) in Europe and beyond? How can we arrive at an answer from a sense of overwhelming social despair, traumatic memories and/or an impossible future, or do we need to introduce another departure? One potential answer can be found within the space of creating the connection between responses and responsiveness, where unexpected surprises may occur through public resistance (Butler & Athanasiou 2013, Israel 2013, El Shakry 2021) as performative/artistic motion. The idea of this presentation is an attempt to articulate the potential of radical empathy (Givens 2020) that arouses this acting by using some contemporary examples of feminist anti-war actions as the subject of analysis (voices of resistance of Syrian women, the actions of Israeli and Palestinian feminists, Women in Black, Belgrade/Croatian feminists). In other words, the main intention here is to re-read radical empathy through the optics of feminist resistance to a culture of violence, especially the growth of the military machine and its destructive consequences on humankind.

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**ELENA SKOKO**

University of Zadar, Croatia

### **From Maiden Artist to Mother Activist: Ghost Activism for Obstetric Violence**

This paper presents a personal account of the author's experience as interdisciplinary artist who became a mother activist. "Ghost activism" is the name the author gives to her digital artistic production oriented towards a social cause of obstetric violence, in which the artist merged with the social movement and her art became collective action. Artistic works so produced might not be recognized as art, yet they are done by an artist and possess artistic qualities such as boldness, originality, esthetical appeal, communicability, engagement with a wink. They are contextualized and oriented towards a specific public that reacts to them in a time and space decided by the author. Ghost activism may require different evaluation criteria compared to art for Art or even art for a cause. One of them is disguise, not only of the artist but of the artwork itself. Some products of activism need to be perceived as real (not Art) and act as real in a society in order to accomplish their purpose, which is eliciting broad participation and making social change. The success of ghost artwork is measured by the amount of audience reached, the degree of civic participation, and the impact on institutions and on public discourse. The author brings examples from her production that include logotypes, infographics, and a geo-map. A ghost activist gives up glory and remuneration, but a lack of acknowledgement might become painful and critical. Her condition thus reflects the invisibility of mothers, childbirth, and motherhood in contemporary society as well as in Art.

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**ANA PAVLIĆ**

University of Zagreb, Croatia

### **Endangered Gender: *Her* between Learning and Teaching**

The contemporary world is faced with the rapidly advancing role that technology plays and how it is used as social interaction through digital platforms and/or applications on a daily basis. Emerging from the same historic era, the (undisciplined) identities of artificial intelligence assistants such as Samantha from the movie *Her*, Apple's Siri, and Amazons' Alexa are showing us how artificial intelligence is positioned between learning and teaching (us how to live), just on the borderline of meta world(s) and fiction. In line with the effects on how artificial intelligence influences gender equality in the process of learning and teaching, it remains to be discussed how to face obstacles in the use of artificial intelligence but also how to use opportunities for ensuring gender equality. As Harding points out (2001), it is a challenge to figure out how to think about knowledge claims that are permeated by cultural values and interests and yet are empirically reliable. Also, it remains to be discussed how *Her's* identity is made to seduce and heal (us) but also how it can become a symbol of collective resistance to oppression through the simple statement "Operating System Not Found". Director Spike Jonze set up a cinematic world that makes us consider the future of humanity and discuss (un)equal partners in a digitalised world. The line between art, education, and science is becoming more fluid and flexible, leaving us only to rethink gender roles in the digital world and to question how gender roles are perceived and how discrimination in cyberspace can be avoided.

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**EGLĖ AMBRASAITĖ**

CEU, Vienna, Austria

**Disruptive Love(s): Exploring Togetherness in Aikas Žado Laboratory and Eglė's Ambrasaitė's Theoretical, Practical, and Artistic Thoughts**

In our brutally commodified reality, living under the global, politically ultra-right hurricanes and pandemic super-storms, imagining collectivity, practising collectivity, doing collective work, researching, creating together, building a micro-cosmos of a shared more-than-home, more-than-human space of interconnectedness as part of a community of co-lovers is (almost) unimaginable. However, such a place, such a being, exists for me, for us: the creatures of Aikas Žado Laboratory, located in the Žeimiai Manor House in the town of Žeimiai. Considering the scope, this paper will not contain a detailed analysis of Aikas Žado Laboratory's inhabitants or their overall theoretical, practical, and artistic practises. However, it will embody a kind of confession and a kind of complaint by Aikas Žado Laboratory's collective/community/social derivative, while reflecting on our theoretical, practical, and artistic activities and exploring togetherness and practices of healing and our plans for our project, entitled "Ontologies of Healing", which will seek to look into the separation between the body and the mind. This dichotomy, according to the feminist writer G. Anzaldúa, was and is the foundation of all existing forms of violence and inequality, shaping the fantasies of class, race, sexism, and breed. By refusing to cultivate such a binary, such 'rational' consciousness based on duality, we aim to look at our inner senses, our inner worlds: to encourage the (re)creation of the bonds of body, soul, and mind, their mutual balance, thus fostering healing practices and possibilities for the coexistence of both the human and more-than-human. During the exhibition and seminars/workshops, and via the virtual publication that we are planning to have, the aim is to rethink the binary difference between body and mind, questioning the oppositions of masculinity and femininity, human and animal, etc. and, thus, to create artistic practices that allow for the springing up of mutating, hybrid, healing alliances not just between humans, but with the worlds of other earthly creatures and ecology in a general sense. Hence, this is what I would like to present in the workshop: both our past experiences and future plans for enmeshing feminist creativity, critical reflection, and political engagement through art.

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**MAŠA HUZYAK**

University of Zagreb, Croatia

### **Resisting Profit: The “Aimless” Productivity of Fan Fiction Authors and Readers**

During the second year of the ongoing pandemic, two major shifts in online discourse became apparent and were quickly absorbed into the mainstream. Firstly, across various social media platforms, people became more vocal about their disillusionment with late-stage capitalism. Secondly, perhaps as a direct response to the growing anti-capitalist sentiment, there was an increase in sharing about those hobbies and interests that were not profit-driven, which ultimately led a slow-burn fan fiction text to become one of the most talked-about texts of 2021. While fan fiction, “a (sometimes purposefully critical) rewriting of shared media” (Hellekson and Busse, 2017: 6), still isn’t considered “proper literature”, its impact on the publishing industry, literary trends, and the very shape of language used both online and offline has become undeniable. Written and read primarily by girls, women, and genderqueer people (according to a census taken on the popular fan fiction website called Archive of Our Own, the overwhelming majority of authors and readers are women and genderqueer people), fan fiction often serves as a place of resistance to the patriarchal, heteronormative patterns that a vast majority of mass media still follows by default. However, the appeal of fan fiction lies not only in its insistence on the integration of marginalised voices into the mainstream, but in the seemingly aimless productivity it breeds. Fan fiction remains one of the rare creative outlets where authors write almost exclusively for their own pleasure, or the pleasure of the community they are a part of, and where reader engagement does not require money or even social/cultural capital. I would like to further analyse the unprofitable productivity of fan fiction, its ability to build and sustain (diverse, safe, loving) communities, its reassurance that creativity can thrive without the promise of financial gain. I will do so by drawing on texts from Archive of Our Own (authors’ notes from various fandoms, as well as completed fan fiction from specific fandoms that seek to correct the harmful tropes the “original” authors perpetuate) and using the theoretical framework of fandom studies, as well as girlhood and gender studies.

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**PETAR ODAK**

CEU, Vienna, Austria / Utrecht University, Netherlands

**Feeling the Ultimate Other: Biomediated Bodies, Re-situated Knowledges, and the Potentiality of VR-Art**

What are the ethical/political implications of contemporary virtual reality technologies, particularly those that aim to mediate experiences of others? The analytical focus of my paper will be on Elaine Hooley's immersive VR installation "The Weight of Water" (2016), an art piece which attempts to offer the experience of illegal immigrants trying to cross the sea border in a boat. By approaching virtual reality as a new, still developing technology that, through its employment of our bodies as multi-sensory affective complexes, might help us better see/feel/understand the pain of others, my aim is to account for both its mimetic and its world-building potential. Indeed, it is exactly this world-building potential that generates a point from which it is possible to recognize and avoid the limitations of a simplistic ethical reading that aspires for straightforward processes of identification, empathy, and solidarity, which are, I believe, better to be understood as narcissistic illusions of "authentically" embodying and experiencing the Other. Nonetheless, I will approach this installation as an art piece that destabilizes the very distinction between the real and the artificial and that can still, in its own particular ways, get us somewhat closer to an insight on the pain of others. To address these questions, I will invoke the work of Donna Haraway and Patricia Clough and understand these practices as alternative types of knowledge production and knowledge mediation that rely on our 'biomediated bodies'. I will relate this to some of the points raised by feminist standpoint theory, while also accounting for the critiques and limitations of this line of feminist thinking. Taken as an example of not just the current state of possibilities in virtual reality technology, but as a starting point from which we can consider the potentiality of the upcoming, more advanced technology of this kind, Hooley's piece, I claim, indeed opens for us new, albeit complicated, ways of feeling others.

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**ANA ABRIL**

CEU, Vienna, Austria

**Send Me a Nude: An Autoethnography of Micropolitical Resistance to Sexual Normalization during the Physical Distancing in the Covid-19 Pandemic**

In this paper, I reflect and theorize on an articulation of micropolitical resistance to normative sexual discourses during the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, I refer to my experience in a virtual group of exchange of nudes that was already dissident in terms of sex and gender. I argue that the group of nudes is a case of how the creation of erotic videos and images in a safe and sexual-dissident space fosters subjective experimentations that are micropolitics of resistance to sex and gender normativity. Starting from the idea of performativity and considering a “theory in the flesh”, I read the erotic images and video as central discursive elements that not only address the Other(s) participants of the group but allow an embodied experimentation of subjectivities. Through autoethnography and image analysis that conversates with a feminist and queer/quare/cuir/cuy(r) theoretical framework, I offer some conclusions about the meaning of aesthetically experimenting with the body and bringing out sexual yearnings into visibility. While at first sight the group of nudes is a way of obeying the need for physical distancing, which can also be read as a practice of protection and responsibility towards the subjects of sexual and gender dissidence, it is also a form of resistance to masculine/feminine binarism and compulsive heterosexuality. These features of sexual normalization not only take place in a time of pandemic, but they are reinforced in situations such as that of Covid-19, which favours the daily life of those people who have relationships within heterocisnormative parameters.

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**SARA FEDERICO**

University of Sassari, Italy

### **From the Screen to the Street of Marseille: Techno-discourse as a Transformative Performance of Female Rappers**

The main aim of this contribution is to describe the performances of some female rappers in Marseille and the practices they use to make their voices heard outside the imposed margins of the music industry. Although women were part of the hip hop movement since the beginning and, like men, they used rap music to convey their messages of criticism from their margins of society, the number of female rappers known and appreciated by the public remained, until several years ago, very small in comparison to their homologues. Today, technologies and social networks have changed the way music is produced and also its accessibility. Female artists can now take advantage of exposure from social network in order to build a community of fans and bypass the traditional industry intermediaries (Djavadzadeh, 2020: 162). This is based on the observation of Bastard et al. who claim that the internet has profoundly transformed traditional promotion and word-of-mouth networks, even though the paradigm shift from the value of content to the attention it generates makes the visibility of an artist all the more critical to her survival (Bastard et al., 2012: 24). Therefore, the case study we will take into consideration is a collective of 8 female rappers who expressed their objection to the production of an album, *13 organisé*, which should have reassembled all the rappers from Marseille – well known and emerging – but included only men, except the famous altermondialist rapper Keny Arkana. Through the lens of critical tools from sociolinguistics and gender studies, we will analyse the lyrics of the *female* cover version of ‘Bande Organisée’ in comparison with the original version, as they revised the sexist words and broadcasted the remix on YouTube. On the platform, they received a lot of support but also misogynous comments, to which they responded with another brand-new song, ‘On fout de la merde’ [we don’t give a shit]. It is indeed very interesting to analyse the hate speech and, in particular, the sexist and homophobic discourse in the comments triggered by those two rap songs on YouTube. Doing so, we will address the transformative practice the female rappers used by underling the duality of the power of techno-discourse: people feel freer to express their hate, but artists can more easily respond to other artists and to their public in a real dialogue. This will ultimately demonstrate how they gained visibility and became an empowering symbol for young women, especially considering their performances observed during the events organized on 8 March 2022. Three rappers of the collective took part in the street concert that followed the feminist demonstrations for the International Women’s Day, where they sang the two songs and met other female rappers of the underground hip hop scene of Marseille and thereby engendering new forms of collaborative female activism.

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**VIŠNJA VUKAŠINOVIĆ**  
University of Zagreb, Croatia

### **Onscreen Persona as a Tool of Social Transformation**

Some of the most daring female filmmakers in the history of Croatian cinema have used their onscreen persona as a transformational tool. In one of the first experimental films in former Yugoslavia, *Žemsko* (1968), the female filmmaker Tatjana Dunja Ivanišević puts herself in front of the camera to dissolve expectations of what being a woman artist entails. A couple of years later, during the seventies and early eighties, the pioneer of Yugoslav video art Sanja Iveković produced videos in which she is the sole performer with the same goal of posing the question: is this my true face? Recently, filmmaker Sunčica Ana Veldić has made herself a key persona in her deeply dialectic film *Drama is Overrated* (2017) while looking for answers to what it means to be a female student and artist in the male-dominated institution of the Academy of Dramatic Arts. What connects the three filmmakers is the use of their own bodies to create an onscreen persona that can take and consume more freedom and power than their everyday selves. Their onscreen personas thus become means of finding new ways of being in the world as well as becoming tools for constructing parallel worlds in which they can dream wild, transgressive dreams. Unlike the most famous *Persona* (1966) in film history, their onscreen selves are sole figments of their own bold imaginations.

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**KARMEN KOVAČEVIĆ**  
University of Zagreb, Croatia

**Breaking the Ice: The Subversive Character/Power of Spanish Cinematography during Francoism**

During the Francoist dictatorship, the Spanish government exerted its authority to violate women's rights by employing gender violence. The aforementioned violence was seen as a repercussion of the historic context, in other words, of the living conditions and the social, political, and economic context of that historical period, although the origins of the conflict go way back in history. The main goal of the government was the creation of the New State, which was supported by three pillars: the Catholic Church, the army, and the political party. This trio abused its power in order to mould a woman's life and her role in society in the way it perceived as righteous and deserved. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the films from this period to determine the circumstances in which women lived in Francoist Spain with a special emphasis on their upbringing, education, and the ethical values they were taught throughout their lives. One of the films that will be analysed in this paper is *La Raza* (1942) – a film whose script was written by none other than the dictator himself, Francisco Franco. The other two films in focus were directed by famous Spanish filmmaker Luis Buñuel – *Tristana* (1970) y *Viridiana* (1961). By analysing and comparing the narratives of these films, the goal is to draw attention to the way a film can be used as a tool for propaganda and the indoctrination of women but, reversely, also as a powerful form of art that can help raise awareness of the traps of the patriarchy in order to fight back against it.

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