

Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945–1985. By Bojana Videkanić. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019. 304 pages. Notes. Illustrations. Figures. £99.00, hard bound; £33.00, paper; \$31.35, ebook.

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In a world where thinking and practicing contrary to the legitimized hegemony of knowledge is an exception, and where there are still far too few books on art dedicated to addressing how various hegemonic positions around economics, colonialism, and cultural imperialism were historically circumvented from an aesthetic perspective, Bojana Videkanić's *Nonaligned Modernism* is a welcome counter to the identified gap. This monograph, which was informed and driven by Videkanić's doctoral thesis, uses a focused and case study approach spanning six chapters to bring together the original positions and translations of Yugoslav art from 1945–85. Videkanić focuses on socialist realism through to socialist modernism and discusses the ways in which they converge and extend into what she calls nonaligned modernism. The impetus is to articulate both the unique positioning of Yugoslav nonaligned modernism in national and international art discourse and to realign the narrative discourse around art since the 1990s dissolution of Yugoslavia. From this perspective, the text is a valuable and necessary read for anyone interested in the context.

The analyzed case studies are thematic, chronological, and often complemented with images. The list of these case studies is too large to cover; however, it is worthwhile to note that the introduction is foregrounded by Antun Augustinčić's monument "Peace," which was Yugoslavia's input to the UN Headquarters in New York in 1952. It was a symbolic indicator in pursuit of a future where women lead; such trailblazing fostering a greater chance of delivering peace. The case study that follows is by the same sculptor, although the 1955 "Yekakit 12: Monument to the Victims of Fascism" is in Ethiopia and symbolized children, women, and men who died in the throes of war against Italian imperialism. Videkanić uses these monuments to signpost the active and conscious political engagement and ideology of Yugoslavia, a country whose future was marked by a clear desire for peace, transculturalism, anticolonialism, antifascism, and anticolonialism. The progressive political aesthetic was embedded in the formalization of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), with the first conference taking place in Belgrade in 1961. Indeed, the case studies demonstrate that socialist Yugoslavia operated liberally and that its art was taken beyond Yugoslav borders: various Biennales of panoramic exhibitions travelled to west, east, and to non-aligned countries. That the political aesthetic was forward-looking becomes further evident in the overview of how nonalignment was curated over a 30-year period at the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts, established in 1955. The representation of art was geographically diverse, spanning contexts from Africa, Asia, and the Americas; the presence of western and non-western art was largely even. While Videkanić does briefly note the lack of female representation, the monograph fails to delve with critical depth into the explicit absence of women in the alternative aesthetic signification; the proclaimed progressiveness was evidently limited.

Nonaligned Modernism provides a passionate, insightful, and interdisciplinary analysis of the ways in which art in Yugoslavia did not conform to standard aesthetic categories found in western modernism or socialist realism given the unique position of socialist Yugoslavia that embraced the alternative "third way" Cold War politics of the NAM. Videkanić sequences nonaligned modernism through the frames of the alternative signifying process of Yugoslavia, which was established as a series

of multi-ethnic republics with populations endeavoring to create balance between Soviet communism and western capitalism. The text fails, however, to find clear and nuanced connections between the lenses of the NAM and the semi-colonial/oriental concept of Balkanism. The nexus between Balkanism and art remains unclear, especially when it comes to the stereotypes of “nesting orientalisms” found in former Yugoslavia. This is significant given the argument that art was entangled in the larger politics of emancipation associated with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

Where the monograph particularly falters is in the lack of analysis of certain case studies. For example, it is not clear why Videkanić quickly brushes past the role of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade and its alternative signifying role in Yugoslavia’s and the global cultural aesthetic. After all, the museum and the art exhibited were envisaged to dislocate the hegemonic permeation of acknowledged western cities such as Rome and Paris as beacons of culture, and against which all culture is to be measured and become subservient to. Moreover, that the museum is located in a park with works of the most significant Yugoslav sculptors is significant, although this remains unexplored. There was also scope to further interrogate, or at least come back to in the sixth and concluding chapter, the role of “impossible histories”—which is framed in the first chapter—in terms of the lessons the history of socialist Yugoslavia and the NAM offer to the homogenous and hegemonic conception of nation-states, including the associated art and aesthetics of post-1990s Yugoslavia. Doing this would have clarified the promising concluding words of this monograph by revisiting the aesthetic of socialist Yugoslavia, including its anti-imperialist and anti-fascist agenda: “the aim of this study [is] to further these goals and place them front and center in the emerging nonhierarchical Yugoslav and global art worlds” (Videkanić, 220).

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Confronting Totalitarian Minds: Jan Patočka on Politics and Dissidence. By Aspen Brinton. Prague: Karolinum Press, 2021. 299 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$20.00, paper; \$17.00, ebook.
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Speculation on the relationship between politics and philosophy has existed as long as philosophy itself: in Plato’s Republic, Socrates imagined a philosopher-king so wise that he is able to maximize the happiness of those over which he rules. In *Confronting Totalitarian Minds*, Aspen Brinton often invokes a different Platonic metaphor, highlighting a more oppositional relationship: the allegory of the cave, in which an enslaved people watch the projection of shadows upon a cave wall and take it for reality. Brinton employs this allegory to reexamine the role that philosophers, and in particular Jan Patočka, have played in political dissidence. Dissident philosophers, Brinton argues, are those figures who shatter the illusion of Plato’s shadows, daring to “return to the cave to help others liberate themselves from false ideas” (25).

Jan Patočka is a compelling figure for examining the link between dissidence and philosophy. One of the most prominent Czech philosophers of the twentieth century, Patočka is widely read for his work in phenomenology. A student of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, he is thought to have synthesized aspects of both in his writings on the self, its experience of being-in-the-world, and the responsibilities