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## Of pairs and triangles: an uneasy relationship made tangible in photo-performances from Yugoslavia

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### ABSTRACT

Photo-performances belong to a complex art form situated at the interface of transient, event-based performance and trace-like, materialized photography. They are event-based artworks that are conceived for the photographic medium, carried out in front of it and fixated by it. Along this rough definition, conceptual artists in Socialist Yugoslavia experimented with photo-performance in the 1970s and 80s and got interested in the serial aspect this art form allows. In this paper, I take a closer look at photo-performances by Neša Paripović (*Examples of Analytical Sculpture*, 1978), Sanja Iveković (*Triangle*, 1979), Tomislav Gotovac (*Integral/Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine*, 1978) and Maja Savić and Paja Stanković (*Synchronized Movements/Paths*, 1979). Though very different, these works – that were all completed almost the same year – display similar formal features and patterns. They are intriguing series of photographs showing performing bodies and staging configurations of the Two. I will try in several steps to disentangle complex issues within the discussed photo-performances around the range of possible modes of authorship, their manifesting fields of power, the staging of the Gaze in them, and, at the level of interpretation, its transgressive potential of queering.

### KEYWORDS

Assemblage; performance art; photo-performance; seriality; Yugoslavia

### One artist, two protagonists, many frames

Looking at a reproduction of an artwork, I immerse myself in its contemplation (Figure 1). The reproduction consists of a series of black-and-white photographs arranged in several horizontal rows. Fragments of a naked woman's body are to be seen in close-up and contrasted light: her left shoulder, her back, her right shoulder, her breasts, her arms, her hips, her thighs, her vulva, her buttocks, her knee, her calf, her foot. No facial expression: her chin and lower lip in profile are the first but also the only portion of her face we get to see. Each and every of these body fragments is framed by the rectangular shape of the photograph, and each one of them shows a man's head, in profile or three-quarter view, touching the woman's body with his mouth half-opened and his eyes half-closed in a dramatic chiaroscuro. The mass of his hair disappears into the background's darkness, as though absorbing the light; his forehead, nose and high cheekbones retain the light in the same way the woman's body does: skin, so it seems, fulfills the purpose of a screen. In



**Figure 1.** Neša Paripović, *Primeri analitičke skulpture* (Examples of Analytical Sculpture), 1978, forty-two b/w photographs, collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade.

some fragments it is his head that casts a shadow on her body (his nose on her foot); in some other, it is the opposite way around (her nipple on his mouth). Two seemingly random details form lines in some of the shots: the imprint of a – now discarded – garment on her waistline, the bulging veins on his temples. The skins have a grainy texture, so do the photographs.

It is an artwork from 1978 entitled *Primeri analitičke skulpture* (Examples of Analytical Sculpture)<sup>1</sup> by Serbian artist and key protagonist of the Belgrade conceptual art scene Neša Paripović. A short statement by the artist accompanies it.<sup>2</sup> According to Paripović (1980), the work consists of a series of photographs presented in a horizontal frieze that has a total length of 23 m. Be it as one long strip or as several rows, *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* has a chronology (that of the photographic film)<sup>3</sup>; it retraces a movement around the female body from top to bottom, in what Paripović (Šuvaković 1980, n.p.) calls “an imagined spiral around the female figure.”<sup>4</sup> The

recognizable features of the man's head reveal: it is the artist's head. The accompanying text confirms: it is the author of the artwork's idea himself,<sup>5</sup> who performs the gesture, the touch of the woman's body with his parted lips (Paripović in Šuvaković 1980). The woman's body on the other hand remains faceless and nameless. The analytical sculpture described by the title is performed through the touch of the male artist on the anonymous female body material (Unterkofler 2012, 261); it is charted through an exploratory gesture (the contiguous and thus metonymical movement of the artist's mouth against the female body) that is recorded by means of the photochemical process. It is the very process of recording the gesture that brings forth the analytical sculpture. It is not the female body that is objectified, made into a sculpture; it is the complex interplay of the event – i.e. of the performed gesture – and its documentation through the photographic series that creates the “analytical sculpture” of the title. Thus, the viewer is “perceiving the document *as a performance* that directly reflects an artist's aesthetic project or sensibility” and becomes the present audience, as Auslander (2006) puts it, commenting on the performativity of performance documentation. *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* is a great example not simply of “analytical sculpture” but of photo-performance at the interface of transient, event-based performance and trace-like, materialized photography. (I will come back to this work later on and put it in perspective with others.)

### Three photo-performances. Outlining an approach

The concrete intention of this paper is to retrace intricate connections between three pieces from Yugoslav art behind the Iron Curtain. The choice fell on three artworks that were produced around the very same time based on my reading of them as

- (1) pair performances;
  - (2) photo-performances;
- and on
- (3) the artworks' shared interest in the body as site of the Erotic.

Next to Paripović's aforementioned *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* (1978), I would like to shed some new light on the already prominently discussed works *Trokut* (Triangle, 1979) by Sanja Iveković (Figure 2) and *Integral* (1978) by Tomislav Gotovac (Figure 3) also known as *Tom, Prijedlog za seksi časopis* (Tom, Proposal For a Sexy Magazine).<sup>6</sup> In doing so, the article has the following objectives: to map out photography as a modality of performance art; to give a short working definition of photo-performance as I use it; and to show how engaging with the Pair and the Couple within performance art enables reflexivity.

### Body as site of the erotic

But first I would like to start by briefly providing some arguments in order to illustrate the artworks' interest in the body as a place where the Erotic is crystallized and negotiated. Pejić (1998) reads Neša Paripović's *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* as being the only artwork of the Serbian New Art Practice “which deals explicitly with the body as an erotic site.” Paripović's



**Figure 2.** Sanja Iveković, *Trokut* (Triangle), 1979, four b/w photographs, courtesy of the artist.

staging of gendered bodies and of a gendered perception of the body through haptic exploration seems positively connected, regardless of the dry, matter-of-fact appearance of this artistic experiment, to the arousal of sexual desire. Turning to the Croatian New Art Practice of the exact same period (late 1970s) and especially to Gotovac's nude photographic works, Ofak (2014, 9–11) discusses the connections of *Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine* with pornography production and erotic media. The series of photographs shows the artist taking poses in the nude, or with at most one piece of garment, a denim button-up shirt, reminiscent, according to the author, of American pop culture and porn production at once (Ofak 2014, 9). On almost each of the nine photographs of the series, Gotovac's erection is to be seen. A blatantly provocative, in-your-face gesture? Despite the boisterous nakedness, I see it rather as an erotic gesture than a pornographic one: in Barthes' wording (Barthes [1980] 1981, 59) it would function as a "subtle *beyond*," as a blind field that "takes the spectator outside its frame, and it is there that I animate this photograph and that it animates me." Sanja Iveković's well-



**Figure 3.** Tomislav Gotovac, *Integral* or *Tom*, *Prijedlog za seksi časopis* (Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine), 1978, detail from the series of nine colour photographs, photo: Zora Cazi-Gotovac, courtesy Sarah Gotovac/Tomislav Gotovac Institute, Zagreb.

known piece *Triangle* (1979) has an even subtler approach to the body as site of the Erotic. It consists of a short text and four black-and-white photographs displayed in a specific order, showing on top of each other, as some kind of urban-geographical and historical scenery (a) a policeman posted up on the roof of a high building, (b) the presidential motorcade on the day Josip Broz Tito visits Zagreb, (c) the elated crowd on the streets of Zagreb circled by policemen and, facing those three photographs, the last one displays (d) the artist on her balcony reading Marxist literature while resting her hand on her exposed leg, thus installing a public/private dichotomy and outlining the relationship between self and state. The accompanying text states that the action starts when the artist is (make-believe) masturbating while reading on her balcony, which prompts an official to ring at her apartment's door, asking for all activities and objects "to be removed" from the balcony (Iveković 1980). Noack (2013, 71) compares Iveković's reclining pose to those of "pornographic images of women" in John Baldessari's work *Imagine This Woman Ugly Not Beautiful* (1973), wondering if the artist might have known them and how she incorporated such imagery into her own critical, feminist discourse. Now, simply reading the text and the photograph where the artist is to be seen, we perceive an equation between a described (mediated) fake autoerotic activity and a visually only slightly hinted-at but never shown gesture. I would conclude that both of these signs taken together create an erotic tension that materializes – within the triangulation of the gendered Gaze staged through the photographs and the text – along the female artist's body.

### ***Performing pairs and configurations of the two***

Scrutinizing these photo-performances, I look for configurations of performing pairs and couples<sup>7</sup> in historical performance art from Yugoslavia. This inquiry was prompted by the sheer number of collaborative performance works carried out by two individuals



I encountered in my archival research.<sup>8</sup> Collaborative performance practices in pairs allow for a thorough exploration of (a) the range of possible modes of authorship, (b) their manifesting fields of power, with it (c) the staging of the Gaze, and at the level of interpretation (d) its potential topicality of gender and queerness. All the more so when looking for underlying, concealed or latent configurations of the Two, i.e. in performances that are not explicitly labelled as collaborations, as “pair work”. I would like to show that this is exactly what the material under scrutiny in this paper – the above-mentioned performances by Paripović, Iveković and Gotovac – is about and that I propose to untangle and make intelligible. In each case study, the question of authorship seems clear and unambiguous from the start: one artist has authored the work and is identified and credited as its sole creator and intellectual owner. And still, I am claiming that you can read configurations of the Two in each of them. In Paripović’s *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* we get to see two individuals that act in front of a camera and reproduce iconic imagery reminiscent of the heteronormative couple, and also, according to Pejić (1998), of the gendered artist/model pattern so well known to art history. What’s more, reading the visual syntagma of the images literally, what one sees is one headless female body and one bodiless male head, each in a synecdochical relationship to the whole and the two of them together building a whole new body, transcending it at once. This artwork is certainly not called a collaboration, the pictured woman taking on the role of the model as well as the lover stays completely unnamed, and still, it wouldn’t exist but for the pair performing in it. In Iveković’s *Triangle* and Gotovac’s *Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine*, it is the artist alone that is pictured: only once and only seemingly masturbating in the case of Iveković’s four-photograph installation, whereas Gotovac’s *Proposal* is made of a series of nine pictures showing him posing in a startlingly understating and yet full frontal nudity. The similarity of the artworks, what makes them the two sides of a comparison, stems from something that cannot be seen on the surface of the photographs but that is part of the initial performative setting of the artwork: it is, respectively, the artist’s partners/lovers who served as photographers for both these works. Ruth Noack (2013, 90) attributes in her momentous monograph dedicated to *Triangle* the photographs in a footnote, as if *en passant*, to Dalibor Martinis, Iveković’s partner at that time and an artist in his own right. Similar gesture is in Ana Ofak’s (2014, 9) comment of Gotovac’s work: she calls it the “product of an accidental collaboration with Cazi-Gotovac”, the artist’s wife. Further in my discussion of these works, I will inquire into this seeming contingency. For now, let us just linger on the connections being laid out, the bonds formed in the space between *champ* and *contre-champ*. The two works have emerged and materialized, regardless of the question of authorship, out of the intimate connection cultivated by a couple.

### ***A working definition of photo-performance***

The pieces by Paripović, Iveković and Gotovac all rely on a performative premise and a framing documentation. Paripović’s *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* is a series of photographs that captures gestures performed in front of the camera in a sort of formalist exercise.<sup>9</sup> In the case of Iveković’s *Triangle*, the artwork as we know it is staged through four black-and-white photographs disposed in a certain way and an accompanying text that, taken together, narrate a story. The four photographs re-create a space and a tension between public and private spheres and show the artist engrossed in an occupation that is suggested by both photograph and text. The text calls the work an

“action,” states its duration, “18 minutes,” and the location and date on which it was carried out, “Zagreb, 10 May 1979,” i.e. the specific date of Tito’s official visit to Zagreb (Iveković 1980). Noack (2013, 3) points to two possible readings of the work: as a performance or as a photographic installation, concluding that “this distinction ... is somewhat rhetorical.”

Gotovac’s *Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine* is a series of nine colour photographs showing the nude artist taking poses in a homely environment, standing in front of a curtained window, lying sideways on a bed, standing in the shower under the stream of water, holding his erect penis in his hand. Here again we are facing a public/private opposition, only this time it is not in the diegesis, not within the narrated reality of the work, but in its settings of production and reception: we learn from Ofak (2014, 9) that “[t]he photos were taken in [Cazi-Gotovac’s] parents’ flat,” a private space from within the couple’s intimate life context, but also that “[o]ne of the photos was supposed to be published in *Start* magazine as the first ever male pinup in Yugoslavia,” i.e. this gesture was meant for a public trajectory, one resisting prevailing gender representation models and putting to test societal conventions of gender and sexuality, but also one that was operating within an existing market of erotic literature and falling back upon a pornographic imagery that was readily available in socialist Yugoslavia (Lopušina 1991).

Recapitulating the formal features the three works have in common it boils down to the following: a series of photographs capturing and rendering a processual event. In her endeavour of defining Yugoslav performance art, Vujanović (2010) proposes a classification based on the “medium,” or more precisely “on the starting discipline and the specific artistic dispositive implemented in it.” Two categories seem of interest for the discussion:

- Private and invisible performances (in which the audience is excluded, and of which documentation usually functions as a trace of the performance, but not as the artwork itself; these are often a gesture of exodus from the actual art world or the social order ...);
- Photo-, film or video performances (that involve processes and actions performed live but for the reproducing medium, and that thus become the artwork ...) (Vujanović 2010, 468, translation N.L.)

The three performances examined here use the photographic medium and, to a larger extent, the photochemical process, as a structuring and generative device, as an oeuvre-shaping principle. But whereas Paripović’s *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* unequivocally classifies as the latter, Gotovac’s *Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine* and Iveković’s *Triangle* seem to dwell somewhere in-between: between a “private and invisible” performance and its photographic becoming-an-artwork. I will favor the photo-performance definition (and with it, its extension to film and video), as it is the works’ public photographic trajectory and the performative interaction of photographs that seem the most productive for my analysis, while still keeping the invisible performance definition in mind, as it enables a thinking about said private/public dichotomies.



### **Photography as a modality of performance art**

In this endeavour of surveying closely a body of historical performances chosen for the “Two configurations” I recognize in them, I am solely and fully indebted to the documentation of these performances (in the shape of photographs, video footage, texts) and cannot rely on a first-hand, live experience of them. I make my own Amelia Jones (1997, 12) approach as to how to engage with historical performances and her premise that “there is no possibility of an unmediated relationship to any kind of cultural product.” Performance art and its documentation, and here perhaps especially photography as the stark stereotype of evidence and document, nurture an intimate relationship, one that has triggered endless controversies and debates about the ontological status of the respective art forms. Philip Auslander’s (2006) contribution to the ever ongoing debate on documentation-of-performance versus documentation-as-performance distinguishes two modes of performance documentation, the theatrical and the documentary one. Beyond this distinction, Auslander (2006) develops the notion of the performativity of performance documentation giving a particular emphasis not on the presence of an audience but on the “framing as performance through the performative act of documenting as such.” This classification makes any other almost superfluous: it is the act of documenting, a performative in the Austinian sense of the word, that produces the performance, that gives it shape.

I now wish to turn to the three photo-performances to put in perspective the pair/couple configurations in them and ask how they relate to said questions of authorship, fields of power, of the Gaze and its staging; and what these observations bring at the level of interpretation.

### **One protagonist, two lovers, three looks**

Consulting theory that was produced around the same time as the photo-performances under scrutiny, what can one learn? In *Camera Lucida* (Barthes [1980] 1981, 9), Barthes writes: “So I make myself the measure of photographic ‘knowledge.’ What does my body know of Photography?”<sup>10</sup> His well-known terminology around the three instances intermingling in the Photograph can be made productive within the performance-documentation setting: the photographer-*Operator*, the I-*Spectator* and the target-*Spectrum* bracket the space of the photograph (Barthes [1980] 1981, 9) and form a triangular pattern. I, indeed, am the spectator of photo-performance. Now, having a look at the *spectrum* and the *operator* and their distribution in the three photo-performances, I distinguish two ensembles: in both Gotovac’s and Iveković’s works, the *spectrum* of photo-performance, that is to say, its “target,” “referent” or “little simulacrum” (Barthes [1980] 1981, 9) is the artist-author, while in the case of Paripović’s it is the artist plus one. In turn, in the two former the *operator* is the artist-author’s lover – as the invisible Other – whereas in the latter it is the artist-author himself who operates the camera, letting it record his – monstrous, bodiless – head and its movement around the visible body of the Other. I will examine these two ensembles separately:

- (1) Consulting further theoretical approaches from that time: Laura Mulvey’s reading of the Male Gaze and Deleuze’s notion of Desire and its “assemblage” in order to map the triangulations of desire at work in both Gotovac’s and Iveković’s photo-performances, and

- (2) While concluding the paper by discussing Paripović I would like to refer briefly to a further photo-performance, *Sinhronizovani pokreti/Putanje* (Synchronized movements/Paths, 1979) by Maja Savić and Paja Stanković, that seems to be articulating and pinpointing some questions more accurately than theory does. Savić and Stanković were two members of Grupa 143, a group of conceptual artists from Northern Serbia that was founded in 1975 and to which Paripović belonged and contributed to from its beginnings (Vinterhalter 1983, 20). Comparing their photo-performance with Paripović's will help me map the similarities between the displayed pair configurations and their formal implications and clarify as well as demonstrate some shortcomings of theory.

### **Triangles of desire**

Paralleled with Mulvey's notion of the Male Gaze and its staging in narrative cinema, we are served with another triangle of what she calls the three looks of cinema: "that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion" (Mulvey [1975] 1988, 68). I am here equating Mulvey's narrative Hollywood "cinema" and Barthes' fragmentary and yet universal "Photography" in order to describe a third object, the above-defined photo-performance. I find the superimposition of the two triangle patterns relevant and the associations triggered by this equation fruitful; I would like to keep them in mind. The link that these works have with photography has already been made explicit; their link to cinema could be convincingly described as follows: if it is not for Gotovac's cinephilia,<sup>11</sup> that has been discussed elsewhere (Janevski 2011; Ofak 2014, 5), then it could be for the formal construction of Iveković's *Triangle*, that, as duly noted by Noack (2013, 69), uses the "principle of radical contiguity" in the fashion of Godard's film *1 + 1* (1968), based on seriality and de-hierarchization (Louveau 2017, 38). Even Paripović's use of the photographic film to record and retrace a *movement*, a "spiral" along the shape of the female body, and the work's display as a frieze made of numerous frames is reminiscent of the filmstrip: it has cinematic qualities. It would be interesting to find out if Paripović was familiar with a work Gotovac made in the early 1970s in collaboration with film director Slobodan Šijan, *Obiteljski film II* (Family Film II, 1973, Figure 4).<sup>12</sup> In it, Šijan shot Tomislav Gotovac and his then-girlfriend on 16 mm film in their Belgrade interior, with many close-ups of their naked bodies and explicit shots of them taking a shower, caressing each other and having sexual intercourse. In his book on Gotovac's work, Šijan (2012, 67–68) describes how he followed Gotovac's instructions, panning the camera to the lovers' bodies, zooming in and focusing on the very intimate act happening in front of him.<sup>13</sup> The frames from the "home movie" (which could be another way of translating "Obiteljski film") organized as a rectangle of 5 × 8 film stills do show a movement around the two bodies indulging in sexual activity, which resonates with Paripović's "spiral" and with Gotovac's statement that all filmmaking involves voyeurism (Milenković 2013, 30). Now, Mulvey [1975] 1988, 57) observes that "the fascination of film is reinforced by pre-existing patterns of fascination already at work in the individual subject and the social formations that have moulded him," and uses psychoanalysis to unravel these patterns. She describes two pleasurable structures of looking: "The first, scopophilic, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object



**Figure 4.** Tomislav Gotovac, *Home porn movie no.2 or Obiteljski film II* (Family Film II), 1973, inserts from 16 mm film, director of photography: Slobodan Šijan, courtesy Sarah Gotovac/Tomislav Gotovac Institute, Zagreb.

of sexual stimulation through sight. The second, developed through narcissism and the constitution of the ego, comes from identification with the image seen" (Mulvey [1975] 1988, 61). Mulvey's achievement is to read these structures as rigidly gendered ones that can be grasped in dichotomies of male/female, active/passive, looking/looked at.

These structures are intertwined in complex ways in Iveković's and Gotovac's photo-performances. The authorial set-up of the photo-performances makes Iveković and Gotovac

the authors as well as the target or *spectrum* of the work, whereas the photographer or *operator* is the artist's partner. The artist's partner is, respectively, also the first implicit, tacit spectator of the scene, of the image he or she is framing. Now if we find the scopophilic structure and the structure of identification in the eye of the *spectator* (I take pleasure in looking at Gotovac and Iveković, I identify with their figures, their images, their bodies) as well as in the *operator-lover's* perspective, there is also the agency of the *spectrum-artist* that posits herself/himself as a displayed, looked at (not so) passive agent. In the case of Gotovac's *Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine* the male/female split is overturned and the object of fascination is queered. Ofak (2014, 11) comments on the unmistakable intimacy between "the two collaborators and lovers." Gotovac disclosed to Vijatović, who collaborated with him regularly as a photographer, "that being photographed by his wife aroused him" (Ofak 2014, 11). Thus, we can identify the artist's erection as a sign geared towards us as viewers just as much as towards his wife: his arousal is the private – yet not invisible – performance (achieved for his wife) turned into a fixed photograph for further (wider) consumption. Gotovac playfully embraces sexual objectification and turns the pattern of "woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man" (Mulvey [1975] 1988, 67) upside down. And still: let's not forget that he is the vulnerable, yet active agent of a *proposal* for a sexy magazine, suggesting agency in this process of objectification. Here it seems that the photo-performances handle the structures and patterns of fascination in a more nuanced and intricate manner than Mulvey's rigidly gendered and laid out reading grid will ever be able to.

Defining desire in a clarifying commentary of his book *Anti-Oedipus*, co-authored with Félix Guattari in 1972, Deleuze does not call upon gendered structures and the psychoanalytic grid. On the contrary, he articulates another kind of possible: "You never desire someone or something; you always desire an assemblage" (Deleuze [1989] 2004, translation N.L.). It is a person, but also the landscape wrapped within them, their friends, the timid sunlight bathing the scenery that you desire in its light that you desire, as a whole, as an "*agencement*" (assemblage). My postulate is that Gotovac and Iveković with their respective photo-performances are creating such an assemblage in the Deleuzian sense in a manner only artistic practice can assume: the dispositive of the photo-performance (as a kind of stage, as an apparatus) engineers the assemblage, it offers them as the desirable Other, but it also contains the landscape, the setting, the lighting along the way. Even the implied, invisible partner photographing in the shadow, *in absentia*, seems to be part of the thus generated assemblage. Deleuze himself does not speak of such assemblages of desire as something that is being staged, controlled upon, produced, etc. He elaborates on the origin of the event and puts it in relation to his practice of writing in pair with Félix Guattari, a practice that was started with the writing of *Anti-Oedipus* and that he interprets as an assemblage:

For an event to happen, there needs to be a difference of potential, and for a difference of potential, there needs to be two levels, there needs to be Two . . . .

We had to enter this assemblage that was new to us, writing in pair, that each of us was experiencing in a different way, for something to happen and when that something was passing, it was finally a hostility, a reaction against the dominant conceptions of desire, the psychoanalytic conceptions. You had to be two, Felix in psychoanalysis, me . . . (Deleuze 2004 [1989], translation N.L.)

Following his train of thought, I see the situation of the pairs implementing photo-performance – no matter how latent and unidentified the Other next to the Author remains



in authorial settings that do not subscribe to co-authorship (Iveković and Martinis, Gotovac and Cazi-Gotovac) – as a precondition of the event and of the circulation of desire in it: it is the Two that allow for the event to happen, the Two that create a difference of potential, that make possible the entering into an assemblage, as much for the Two involved as for the spectator that immerses herself in the photo-performance.

***Freeing the look of the camera: pair performance work towards a playful annihilation of the “invisible guest”***

For a reframing of the discussion that will allow for a deeper understanding, I now turn briefly to the invisible, private photo-performance *Synchronized Movements/Paths* (1979, Figure 5). Maja Savić and Paja Stanković were members of Grupa 143 along with Neša Paripović, Goran Đorđević, Miško Šuvaković, Biljana Tomić and others (Denegri 1978, 10; Vinterhalter 1983, 21). They all had a background in natural sciences and were interested in a collaborative, rigorous and minimalistic approach to art (Tijardović 1983, 33; Unterkofler 2012). In his thorough survey



**Figure 5.** Maja Savić and Paja Stanković, *Sinhronizovani pokreti/Putanje* (Synchronised Movements/ Paths), 1979, detail from two series of fourteen b/w photographs, courtesy of Maja Savić.

of the artistic practices of Grupa 143, Dietmar Unterkofler (2012, 289) attributes the photo-performance *Synchronized Movements/Paths* to both Maja Savić and her partner and fellow artist Paja Stanković and describes it as follows<sup>14</sup>:

The work consists of two series of fourteen black-and-white photographs each and an accompanying text. It visualises a set of movements that were performed according to a set of predetermined rules. According to those rules, always within the same time intervals and defined space, the two artists photographed the movements of their own naked bodies. The first series of photographs were (sic) shot by Stanković and feature Savić moving along an imaginary and closed path in a single direction. In the other series, it is Savić who shoots and Stanković who moves. (Unterkofer 2012, 289)

*Spectrum* and *operator* are here interchangeable: in order to complete the photo-performance, the two artists have to swap their roles and perform all functions once. Unterkofler (2012, 289) finds that “the resulting photographs themselves have no special aesthetic character; instead, the camera was used only as a photographing machine.” The photographs do have an eerie, intriguing quality that makes them appealing to my taste (and here, I do not agree with Unterkofler’s dismissal of any “special aesthetic character” of the photographs); nonetheless their blurry, out-of-focus, automated rendering of bodies and body movement obliterates the erotic tension that is present in the other photo-performances discussed in this paper. The structuring principle of *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* that turns the camera into a mechanic witness is here extended to a truly collaborative authorship based on reciprocity; but it remains similar insofar as the act of photographing in either works is not meant to produce aestheticized images, not solely to record an event, to keep a trace of a transient movement, but to create a third proposition, yet another space and time continuum: that of the photographic series.

This is perhaps exactly wherein these two photo-performances, *Synchronized Movements/Paths* and *Examples of Analytical Sculpture*, and to a lesser extent, the one by Gotovac, Tom, *Proposal for a Sexy Magazine*, differ from Iveković’s photo-performance. The latter is not a string of photographs displaying minimal alterations and a distinct seriality, but a sequence of four completely different photographs in which the dramaturgy of the images and their staging play an essential role. These four photographs create a stiff framework, a surplus (of meaning), something that is more than the sum of its parts: beyond the performance event in itself (that is not to be seen, not recorded by the photographs but merely suggested by them and the accompanying text), the photo-performance has its own sequence, narration, and performativity and most importantly, it opens up and plays with various connotative fields of meaning. While *Examples of Analytical Sculpture* (stripped bare of its reference to the artist/model myth) and *Synchronized Movements/Paths*, with their lapidary visual grammar, their affectless approach, even the scientific (or at least technical) feel of their titles, hint at the elaboration of a common theoretical discourse on performance art that is unburdened by the temptation of storytelling. Gotovac’s *Proposal* seems to linger in an in-between: it combines seriality on the one hand with staging and narration on the other hand, and seems to participate in the artist’s playful interest in the porn shock (thus opening up connotative levels of meaning as well). The four photo-performances, and here it seems relevant to underline this fact, were all produced within roughly the same year, 1978–79, in different places around Yugoslavia. It is striking that these performative works and



practices deal via their artistic means in a very nuanced and subtle way with issues that contemporaneous and later theorists could grasp only partially. As though bearing witness to the interrogations of a time, the works try out several paths, using common vocabularies and creating their own idiom through their singular use of performance, of documentation, of photography, and their understanding of framing.

## Notes

1. Throughout the article, first occurrences of performance titles are cited in the original language (Serbian and Croatian) followed by their English translation in brackets. Once they are introduced and in order to improve reading comfort, I consistently use the English translation to refer to them.
2. It was first shown in the exhibition *Primeri – druga skulptura 1961–1979* (Examples – Other Sculpture 1961–1979) that was curated by Miško Šuvaković and held in 1980 at the Belgrade Student Cultural Center. More recently, it was included in the epoch-making exhibition *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present* curated in 1998 by Zdenka Badovinac at Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana and subsequently in two exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade (MoCAB): a retrospective dedicated to Paripović's work in 2006 and a group show of Yugoslav artists from 1951 to 1989 in 2014. It has been discussed extensively in curatorial literature (Pejić 1998; Sretenović 2006, 84–88; Unterkofler 2012, 261–262). Depending on the sources – and probably on the curatorial choices as how to exhibit the artwork, and how this influenced the way it has passed into posterity –, it is described as a series of either twenty or of forty-two shots, organized in several horizontal rows.
3. When looking at the contact print produced by Paripović directly from the photographic film and consisting of 42 exposures (that was printed in the exhibition catalogue *Primeri – druga skulptura 1961–1979* (Examples – Other Sculpture 1961–1979) edited by Miško Šuvaković in 1980), one can see the movement around the woman's body – from the shoulders to the feet – following strictly the same chronology as in the twenty-photograph version of the artwork exhibited at MoCAB (see reproduction in Sretenović 2006, 42–43).
4. From the original artist statement in the exhibition catalogue *Primeri druga skulptura*: “po zamišljenoj spirali oko figure.” (Paripović in Šuvaković 1980, translation N.L.)
5. From the original artist statement: “autor same ideje.” (Paripović in Šuvaković 1980, translation N.L.)
6. This series of nine photographs is known under the title *Integral*, whereas parts of it – a selection of three photographs – have been exhibited under the alternate title *Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine*. This selection was included in the retrospective of Gotovac's work at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MSU) in Zagreb in 2003, see the exhibition's catalogue: Gattin, Marija and Jadranka Vinterhalter, eds. 2003. *Tomislav Gotovac. Speaking of pictures: djela iz fundusa MSU-a*. Zagreb: Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti Zagreb. Ana Ofak (2014, 7–9), whose paper I am citing in the following, is referring to the full series of nine photographs (*Integral*) but calling the artwork by its other title, *Tom, Proposal for a Sexy Magazine*. (The two photographs printed in Ofak's article come from the *Proposal* selection.) Even though I am discussing the full series of nine photographs I will keep referring to Gotovac's work by the latter as does Ofak, in order to keep coherence while citing her paper.
7. The etymology of these terms opens up fields of meaning that are relevant and should be kept in mind: while the “pair” comes from Latin *paria*, equal things, plural of *par*, equal, the “couple” stems from Latin *copula*, a link or bond.
8. Among them, the collaboration of Marina Abramović and Ulay between 1976–1988 has received a lot of exposure in recent years and has thus reached some sort of universal mainstream status; but many more can be named, such as the collaborative works of Vlasta

Delimar with Željko Jerman; later on with Vlado Martek; the still ongoing collaboration of Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, etc.

9. Or are these possibly the two operations of “découpage” and “agencement,” in the sense of Roland Barthes’ dictum of Structuralist activity, that are at play here: dissection and articulation, all at once analyzing sculpture and creating a simulacrum of it, disclosing its functions?
10. And here I would like to draw the attention on Barthes’ explicit reference to the body as a place of knowledge and wisdom, somewhat echoing questions of embodied knowledge and embodied research that performance art engages with.
11. His now famous quote “As soon as I open my eyes I see a film” was used for the title of an exhibition on Yugoslav art, see the eponymous catalogue: Janevski, Ana, ed. 2011. *As Soon as I Open my Eyes I See a Film: Experiment in the Art of Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s*. Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw; it was already the title of a Croatian monography on Gotovac’s work: Ilić, Aleksandar Battista and Diana Nenadić, eds. 2003. *Tomislav Gotovac. Čim ujutro otvorim oči, vidim film*. Zagreb: Hrvatski filmski savez.
12. An alternate title Gotovac used for this work is *Home porn movie no. 2*, showing his blatant and explicit interest in pornographic imagery.
13. Here I am indebted to Barbara Wurm’s cinephilia for bringing this work back to my memory.
14. Though there remain some inconstancies in Unterkofler’s text: he attributes the work entitled *Synchronized Movements* once to Savić only (2012, 276); he calls it once a collaboration (2012, 289); and the two series of 14 photographs printed at the end the book as Savić’s and Stanković’s common work (2012, 320–325) that correspond to the described work are entitled simply *Putanje* (Paths). In an email from 21 February 2018, Maja Savić did confirm that *Synchronised movements/Paths* is a collaborative work with Stanković, using the slash to combine the two titles.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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