



Review

The Cinema Makers: Public Life and the Exhibition of Difference in South Eastern and Central Europe since the 1960s by Schober, Anna.

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Yet once again, in the sections dealing with cultural politics, the author needs a firmer grip on the archival material: taking Artistic Council comments on the films at face value can be misleading.

The conclusion comments on the rise of serials and the development of animation 'not only for adults', as well as the changes in the representation of children in cartoons.

The book's weakness lies in its prolonged contextualization and the lack of confidence in dealing with the cultural politics in the relevant period. The book's huge strength lies in the readings of the individual films — and that alone is a great achievement. Only it makes this reader wish the book had been devoted to Khitruk and Khrzhanovskii (and maybe a bit of Norshtein) as founders of a poetic animation school, rather than 'animation of the thaw'...

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BIRGIT BEUMERS

Schober, Anna. *The Cinema Makers: Public Life and the Exhibition of Difference in South Eastern and Central Europe since the 1960s*. Intellect, Bristol and Chicago, IL, 2013. xiii + 241 pp. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. £24.95; \$40.00 (paperback).

IN *The Cinema Makers*, Anna Schober explores how, and under what conditions, critical and experimental filmmaking emerged in 1960s Germany, Austria and Yugoslavia. The result is a comparative portrait of youth culture in formation across diverse national contexts. Although many young directors of this decade were influenced by the international student movement, the sexual revolution and other underground and counter-cultural styles, Schober also demonstrates the importance of local culture and local politics in contributing to their specific aesthetic code. The geographic comparison is justified on two accounts. First, all three countries experienced concurrent cultural developments arising from grassroots activism. Second, the presentation of these cultures in dialogue, as interdependent, rescues the project from sidelining Yugoslav cinematic production as peripheral and unilaterally indebted to the work of 'dominant' Western cinematographers.

The creative and political shifts of this iconic decade are explored in the book through the concept of 'cinema activism', a term that for Schober refers to 'a social practice that intervenes in contested territories and is involved in the constitution of an (informal) public sphere' (p. 30). In less conceptual terms, this activism can be seen in a broad range of local activities organized around urban spaces — youth centres, clubs, festivals, concerts — where, in Schober's view, alternative identities, politics and sensations could be explored. The key

concepts of social space and public life — upon which Schober's argument rests — are elaborated in chapter one with reference to the theories of Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Jürgen Habermas (among others). The theoretical groundwork enables Schober to define the cinema setting itself as a 'spatial connection' that brings cinema into play as an architectural site, a space of socialization and a space of fantasy (p. 18). Overall, she argues that this cinema activism created a site of ambivalence where difference, alterity and otherness were first consumed and then produced by 'amateurs' — those with little or no training in cinematography — who created a body of aesthetically and politically challenging material. These claims are buttressed by close to thirty interviews (the bulk of the primary research) conducted by Schober with film directors, festival organizers and participants of the 'novi film' ('new film') movement in Yugoslavia and 'Expanded cinema' in Austria. The tone of the interviews helps recreate the heady days of youth rebellion and the initial encounter with alternative music genres, avant-garde cinema and underground culture in general. Importantly, these contributions from the directors emphasize the conditions of ambiguity that actually enabled these critical interventions. This is particularly significant for the Yugoslav context where 'experimental tendencies created themselves inside an institutional structure provided by the one-party system' (p. 75). For example, controversial screenings were often held at youth centres established by the socialist party, while personal connections with party members helped aspiring directors acquire technical equipment. Beyond infrastructural support, the relationship between the young radical directors and official state bureaucrats was equally complex, since there was no overt or explicit censorship policy. Instead, control over film production and distribution (both domestically and internationally), Schober aptly notes, was subject to "silent" and individual negotiation with the party' (p. 79).

The strongest point of the book is surely the fourth chapter, where Schober offers a formal reading of the films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Dušan Makavejev — a chapter distinct in style from the rest of the book. She argues that cinema is a space of fantasy where the ideals of 'activism' are transformed into an aesthetic style and form. Schober's discussion of Makavejev offers an effective analysis of the director's use of haptic gestures as a revolt against the 'over-verbalization' of the socialist public space (p. 166). This section, however, would benefit from a dialogue with other scholars covering very similar terrain since there is an already burgeoning literature on the director (by such authors as Raymond Durnat, Daniel Goulding, Pavle Levi and Roy Armes). By way of conclusion, Schober focuses on what she calls 'follow-up initiatives' of cinema activism that have been formed since the 1990s as a result of new digital technologies, markedly altered political circumstances (including

the dissolution of Yugoslavia) and shifting social values (attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism).

One drawback of *The Cinema Makers* is the breadth of its scope. Because the book is split between being a work of scholarship that advances theoretical claims *and* an academic exploration of historically-bounded cinema movements, Schober never gazes at a particular field for too long. This has two implications. First, since her readings of films service conceptual categories (transnationalism, difference, privatized ambivalence), some of these interpretations undermine the ambiguity and richness of the films themselves. Secondly, Schober's orientation towards constructing a working definition of cinema activism results in an ever-widening inclusion of diverse films, directors and performance art. Not only is this quantity of information overwhelming but it also puts forward the idea that any director or film can — on the grounds of some particular quality — be considered within the parameters of activism and difference.

On a final accounting, this accessible study coalesces the dynamism of cinema happenings into a coherent narrative and shows the origins of what have become — certainly in the case of Yugoslavia cinema history — cult years of film production. Schober also impressively captures the tone and spirit of 1960s youth culture, its irreverence, its politics and its playfulness.

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Roach, Andrew P. and Simpson, James R. (eds). *Heresy and the Making of European Culture: Medieval and Modern Perspectives*. Ashgate, Farnham and Burlington, VT, 2013. xix + 484 pp. Illustrations. Table. Notes. Index. £80.00.

THIS impressive volume has its origins in the International Medieval Congress of 2009, which centred on the theme of 'Heresy and Orthodoxy'. The twenty-three papers presented here necessarily represent only a fraction of the material presented at the conference which attracted some 500 papers on the congress's central topic.

In the first of six thematic sections, Maribel Fierro looks at politics and heresy in Muslim Spain and Alexander Murray treats upon the burning of heretical books throughout the Middle Ages. Marilyn Dunn's contribution here follows on from her previous work on Christianization among the Anglo-Saxons by applying to the Lombard conversion approaches advanced by theologians, anthropologists and others. Kallistos Ware analyses the Orthodox Christian