Remembering Yugoslav Technological Futures: Technostalgia in (Post)Yugoslav Popular Culture
Natalija Majsova

How is Yugoslavia's technological past remembered in contemporary (post)Yugoslav popular culture; and what futures does transpire through these memories? To look into these questions, Majsova proposes to examine (post)Yugoslav technostalgia as a cultural sensibility articulated across literature, documentary film, and video games, focusing on the interplay between mnemonic canonization and speculative reinvention. For instance, game critic and writer Sergej Hvala's autobiographical book *Prva bitnost* (2022) and film director Slobodan Maksimović's documentary *Tehnika ljudstvu* (2015) celebrate the ingenuity of early computer enthusiasts, programmers, and software pirates, spontaneously privileging predominantly masculine protagonists and retrospectively incorporating shared Yugoslav technological experiences into (Slovenian) national history. A different relationship with the past emerges in Žiga Virc's mockumentary *Houston, We Have a Problem*! (2016) and the independent video game *Space Yugoslav 2D* (2022). Combining retro aesthetics, electronic soundscapes, and Yugoslav popularcultural references, these works transform technological modernity into a repertoire of unrealized possibilities. While the mockumentary constructs an alternative past through fabricated archival evidence, the game makes an alternative future experientially available through play. Drawing on Raymond Williams's concept of structures of feeling, this talk lays out in what ways and to what effects (post)Yugoslav technostalgia reimagines the futures once promised by the advent of the space age and the cybersphere.



Natalija Majsova is an Associate Professor of Cultural Studies and Head of the Centre for Cultural and Religious Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. Her research focuses on collective and cultural memory, popular culture, film, and media in post-Yugoslav and post-Soviet contexts, with particular attention to transnational circulation, decolonial imaginaries, technostalgia, and the cultural politics of futurity. She is the author of *Soviet Science Fiction Cinema and the Space Age: Memorable Futures* (Lexington Books, 2021) and co-editor, with Kieran Nolan and Alex Wade, of *Silicon Dawn: Histories and Cultures of Creative Computing in Europe (1970-2000)* (forthcoming with De Gruyter – Brill 2027). She is the PI of MEMPOP: Mnemonic Aesthetics and Strategies in Popular Culture (2023-2026), a Slovenian-Croatian project examining memory work in film, music, and street art; and of TECHNOPST: Remembering the Early Digital Age (2023-2026).