

# THE OTHER SIDE OF REALITY

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Novi Sad, Serbia

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In Yugoslavia in the 1960s, art was able to develop relatively freely. From a western perspective, this is now referred to as a 'different modernity' in Europe in the 20th century, and it is worth taking a look at it in order to broaden our understanding of contemporary culture.

The work of the Serbian artists Milan Popovic and Alexander Lucovic was also very individual and independent. They created surreal works, often charged with fantastic and metaphorical content. Their works can be seen in the *Art Collection of Rajko Mamuzic* Museum in Novi Sad, among other places.

The current right-wing nationalist government in Serbia is making it difficult to express free opinion in contemporary art. On the contrary, as in all right-wing nationalist governments, ethnically and religiously motivated art is promoted and the freedom of contemporary artists is restricted. In order to avoid repression, critical art is increasingly making use of indirect symbolism, which

offers a wide scope for interpretation and does not directly criticize current sociopolitical conditions.

My work *The Other Side of Reality* reflects this fact by re-staging some works by Milan Popovic and Alexander Lucovic, such as *Man with a Chair* (A.L.), *Redundant Man* (M.P.), *Cultus Familius* (M.P.), *The Dwarf in the Armchair* (A.L.) and others.

The female model in the photographs is wearing a typical folk costume from Novi Sad and, within the staging, serves conventional role clichés that contradict the free-spirited artists of the named works.

The question of how free art can be in a political environment that wants to regulate and control freedom of expression is once again depressingly posed, also in other European countries.