

TITO'S DESK

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Belgrade, Serbia

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1 photograph, fine art print

50 x 70 cm / 70 x 90 cm

Without a doubt, the massive, intricately decorated desk of Josip Broz Tito, the former president of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, stands as a symbol of political power and influence. Today, displayed at the Museum of Yugoslavia in the House of Flowers, not far from the resting place of Tito and his wife Jovanka, this piece of furniture impresses primarily due to its historical significance.

The political and cultural situation in Serbia's capital, Belgrade, is now different from Tito's era of idealized unity in multiethnic Yugoslavia. While some would prefer to see the museum closed sooner rather than later, viewing the cult of personality surrounding Tito as backward-looking and contrary to national interests, the high number of visitors from both domestic and international origins demonstrates that the history of former Yugoslavia and Tito's legacy remain highly significant.

How is cultural identity constructed and preserved, and how is cultural heritage used to shape national identities and political ideologies?

These and other questions about the complex history, culture, and politics of the country are raised by the image I have created, in which a young woman in a traditional local folk costume—equally a symbol of identity formation and self-location—looks through a large glass window at Tito's desk from the outside.