THE FESTIVAL: FOR YEARS AWAKE - FIRSTBORN GIRL[1] FESTIVAL TURNS TEN!

Under the slogan "FOR YEARS AWAKE" this year we look back on our long-term collaborations and look forward to new networking potential. This constitutes the fundamental practice and essence of the festival “FIRSTBORN GIRL” because it is the only way in which we can collectively act in order to build forward-thinking communities.

The slogan of this year’s “FIRSTBORN GIRL” not only aims to consider our ten years of active engagement in culture and activism, but it also parallels feminism and the women's movement in this area that has existed for years. As much as it commemorates this retrospective review of the past, it is also a call for new endeavours, new ways of resisting and fighting against patriarchal norms, practices, and the narrow worldview - often justified as the "natural order of things". This year, “FIRSTBORN GIRL” recalls the perseverance of the feminist movement and reiterates its feminist vision of freedom and transformative power for those left on the margins.

We have divided this year’s jubilee edition into two parts: *spring awakening* with a rich discourse program and the *fall visual program*, in which we offer a program for everyone's watchful eyes, with an accompanying *green program, music program* and *informal education activities*. The focus of the first part of the festival is humour. "There is no fiercer political weapon than laughter," said Maggie Hennefield in her text on the key role of comedy in the feminist movement. The subjective nature of humor and its dependence on the social context in which it occurs make it an exceptional tool for those who wish to comment, intervene or point to a particular situation or condition in society. Historically, men have been the leading commentators. This is mainly due to their social dominance, unlike women and other minorities, who are historically marginalized in the field of comedy. This disproportionate allocation of power implies an already established public perception of what is considered funny, what situations we ridicule and who is the butt of the joke, and most often than not, it is a specific marginalized community.

The discussion of humor in the scope of feminist resistance is nothing new; on the contrary, the indisputable subversive power that is born of feminist comedy has been talked about for years. Aside from the classic concepts and comedy models, social networks, especially Tik Tok, are launching new and fresh ways to ridicule the misogyny plaguing the internet. Hence, the need to expand this debate and employ a feminist critique seems like a logical next step in the FIRSTBORN GIRL festival.

Because of this, this year’s FIRSTBORN GIRL opens a discussion that centres on humor as a feminist tool that blocks what is the fast lane of patriarchal humour, sustained by misogyny and harmful stereotyping. We wanted this year's program to reflect our commitment to occupy this "boy’s club" and to reconsider the function of humor in society, from the point of view of those that are mostly ridiculed.

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[1] Original title: “ПРВО ПА ЖЕНСКО”

VISUAL PROGRAM:

SCHOOL OF FEMINISM: FEM 101.02, in cooperation with Medusa (Certificate ceremony held on May 26th at the MKC Club)

The FEM 101.02 School of Feminist Writing, organized in partnership with the feminist platform Medusa, explored humor as a tool for feminist resistance in its lectures and workshops. The program aimed to equip participants with the skills for nuanced and in-depth analysis of feminist narratives, alongside the development of argumentative writing and advocacy through creative expression.

Spanning almost three months, from March to May, the program comprised five lectures and seven workshops. Participants were introduced to key concepts in feminist thought and gender studies through a combination of theoretical sessions and practical activities. The training highlighted the importance of feminist history, resistance strategies, and creative expression in challenging gender inequality, encouraging participants to critically re-examine power dynamics, gender relations, and their own roles in these structures.

Renowned theorists, professors, and feminists with extensive expertise in these fields led the sessions, ensuring a rich and comprehensive learning experience. Beyond the classroom, participants engaged in hands-on assignments, contributing articles to Medusa's online platform and publishing their work upon completing the program. Their collective creative efforts culminated in the production of a fanzine featuring their writings, which was further promoted as a testament to their achievements.



PeachPreach: An Evening of Women’s Storytelling - 'GAGS'

As part of the 10th anniversary of the FIRSTBORN GIRL Festival for feminist culture and action, Tiiiit! Inc. hosted a gala event under the PeachPreach initiative, themed “GAGS.” Held in May at the Philharmonic of the Republic of North Macedonia, the event marked a milestone in both venue size and audience reach, despite pandemic restrictions that limited ticket sales to 75% of the Philharmonic's capacity. Organized in compliance with health protocols for indoor events, the gala became the festival’s most significant gathering to date.

The evening featured a diverse lineup of storytellers, including artist Jana Jakimovska, mountaineer and artist Ilina Arsova, writer Petar Andonovski, radio host Maja Kazakova, director Sofija Ristevska, and Croatian writer and activist Mima Simić. Their narratives collectively challenged norms, highlighted personal experiences, and celebrated the transformative power of storytelling.

The broader theme of the festival’s anniversary edition focused on the subversive power of humor, particularly its historical exclusion of female voices and its frequent mockery of “typically female” experiences. Patriarchy has long claimed humor as a male-dominated domain, using it to reinforce stereotypes and ridicule marginalized communities. This monopolization has resulted in stale, repetitive humor that perpetuates harmful norms under the guise of “not being politically correct.”

The “GAGS” theme reimagined what humor can be, offering diverse interpretations of what makes us laugh while shining a light on the unique perspectives of those often excluded from mainstream comedic spaces. By doing so, the event not only entertained but also challenged societal preconceptions about humor, reclaiming it as a tool for feminist resistance and transformation.

CREATIVE WORKSHOP: "Gender Equality Takes Two"

A Workshop for Children with Artist Selma Selman

Tiiiit! Inc., in collaboration with the Helsinki Citizens' Parliament (hCa) from Banja Luka, organized a creative workshop for children aged 7 to 14. Held on June 5, 2022, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, the workshop was part of the #AŠtoNeBiMogla (“Why Can’t I?”) campaign aimed at engaging children and youth.

Led by the renowned Bosnian artist Selma Selman, the workshop encouraged participants to explore and discuss gender diversity. It aimed to inspire young minds to challenge gender gaps in education, fostering conversations about equal opportunities in school enrollment, advancement, and retention for both girls and boys, women and men.

Selma Selman, a globally acclaimed artist of Roma origin, is known for her groundbreaking work in performative and media art. She is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards and continues to exhibit at festivals worldwide. Selman is also the founder of "Get the Heck to School!", a project dedicated to increasing educational access for Roma children. Her ultimate goal is to raise the percentage of Roma children attending school from the current 15% to 95%.

The workshop reflected Selman’s passion for education and equality, providing a platform for children to engage in meaningful discussions and creative expression, while addressing critical issues of gender and social inclusion.



FEMINIST STAND-UP

As part of the tenth-anniversary edition of the FIRSTBORN GIRL Festival for feminist culture and action, the inaugural Feminist Stand-Up event was held on May 26th.

This groundbreaking event aligned with the festival’s focus on the subversive power of humor and comedy, showcasing performances by actress Angela Stojanovska, theatre director Sofija Ristevska, and drag king Boris Gay. The event boldly occupied the traditionally heteronormative space of humor and comedy, a realm often used to ridicule marginalized groups.

By reclaiming this space, Feminist Stand-Up challenged entrenched norms, providing a platform for narratives that turn the tables on mockery. The performances pushed beyond conventional "hehe" humor, using wit and satire as tools to critique societal injustices and amplify feminist perspectives.



SHAME ON YOU!

An Evening of Queer Storytelling and Fun with DJ Zoki Bejbe
(Part of Skopje Pride Weekend)

On June 11, as part of Skopje Pride Weekend, Tiiiit! Inc. hosted SHAME ON YOU!, an evening of queer storytelling and celebration, conceptualized and hosted by Rumena Buzarovska and Ana Vasileva. This event built on the legacy of the PeachPreach series, previously held in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

The program featured five narrators from North Macedonia's social, political, and cultural spheres, along with a guest from the wider Balkan region, offering a total of 12 storytellers over the events in 2022 and 2023. Each narrator shared short, personal stories about bodily, gender, and sexual shame—experiences that marked their existence outside the boundaries of societal norms, hence the term "queer" as an identity outside the acceptable social framework.

The event aimed to reclaim shame and transform it into empowerment. By publicly sharing their experiences with a twist, the narrators turned the tables on those who ridicule others from a place of privilege. The stories subverted the oppressive dynamics of gender, sexual, and moral policing, reframing shame as a tool of resistance and joy.

Held at a rented public venue, SHAME ON YOU! connected deeply to shared human desires, pleasures, and behaviors, creating narratives of defiance against societal pressures. Instead of bowed heads and blushing cheeks, the event celebrated laughter as a liberating act. It sought to use humor to dismantle the social norms that perpetuate shame, empowering individuals to resist and thrive.

The evening concluded on a high note with an energetic DJ set by **Zoki Bejbe**, turning resistance into celebration and solidarity into joy.

“NAKED LIFE”

A Performance by Olja Grubić and Via Negativa

On June 18, artist Olja Grubić presented “Naked Life,” a provocative performance conceptualized in collaboration with Via Negativa.

The performance featured naked female figures navigating the space—among the audience, on stage, and along the walls—blurring the lines between observer and participant. Grating vegetables became a central motif, with performers shredding carrots, zucchini, and cucumbers in sexually suggestive positions. This dual imagery of the woman as both housewife and sexual object was juxtaposed with fragments of the performers’ inner thoughts, which unfolded audibly in tandem with the sounds of the act.

“Naked Life” invited profound reflection on the essence of being - what it means to inhabit a body, to exist within conditions of life, and to confront the possibilities and limitations of existence. Rejecting ideology as a definitive answer, the performance used poetic language to convey the intimacy of human presence and the interplay of physical, mental, and emotional states.

The event concluded with a discussion titled “Naked Monologues,” offering space for the audience to engage with the themes of the performance and explore the layers of meaning presented through its bold and evocative imagery.



WE COME WITH A BOW

Exhibition by Šejla Kamerić

In a collaborative effort between CRIC - Festival for Critical Culture and the FIRSTBORN GIRL Festival for Feminist Culture and Action, the exhibition "We Come with a Bow" by renowned artist Šejla Kamerić was presented for the first time in North Macedonia. This landmark event, hosted at the National Gallery of North Macedonia - "Cifte Hammam," aimed to foster critical dialogue about the intersection of contemporary art and pressing social issues, with a focus on cultural stereotypes and their oppressive impact on gendered narratives. The exhibition was curated by Natalija Paunić, with the gallery reinforcing its commitment to open and accessible public spaces.

The exhibition showcased a selection of works, including:

- “Mother is a Bitch”: Transferred from Kamerić’s solo show in Belgrade.
- Photographic Pieces: “Embarazada” and “Unknown.”
- Works from Series: “Hooked,” “Missing,” and “Digital Nudes.”
- “Rose Garden”: A new piece that expanded on the themes in “Hooked,” addressing the containment and representation of the female body.

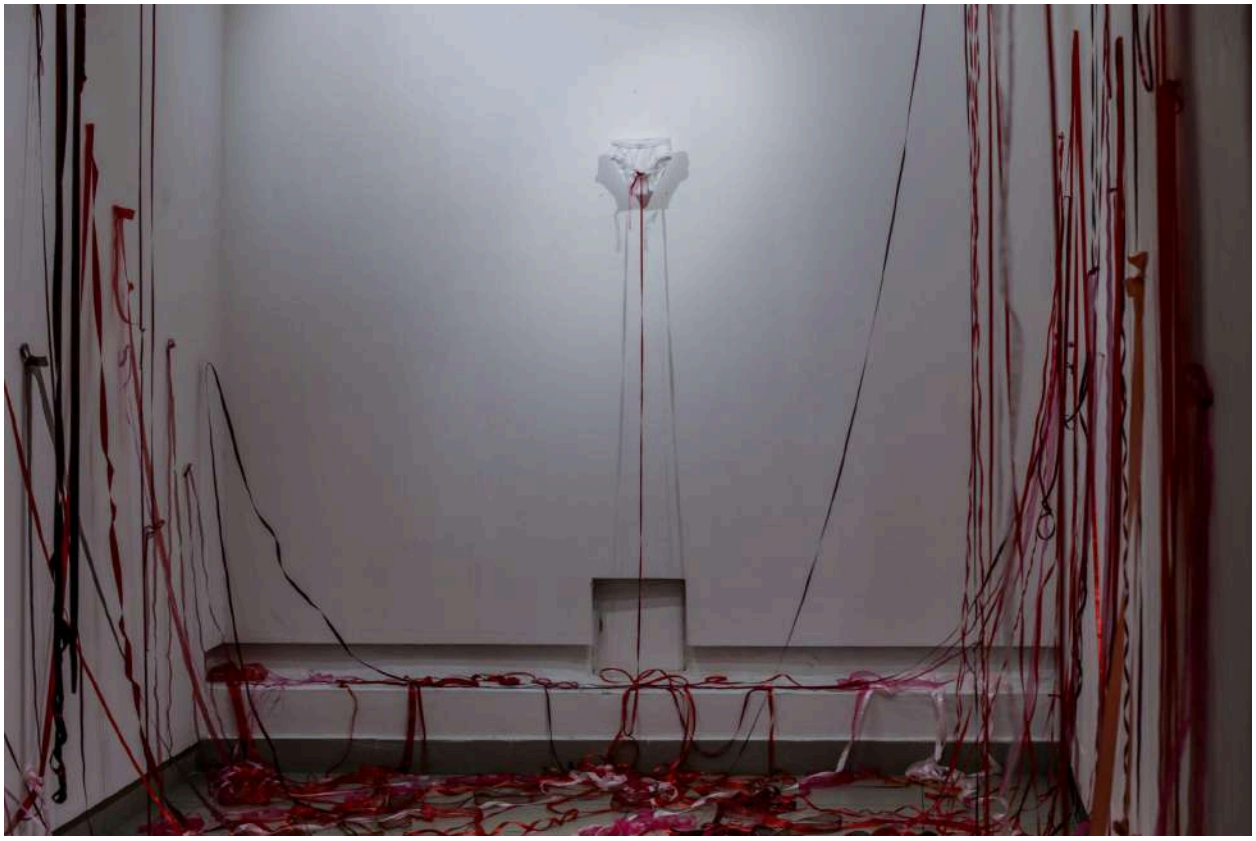
The exhibition opened with a compelling presentation by Šejla Kamerić, who shared insights into her work’s exploration of gender, political, and socio-cultural themes. It examined the

historical portrayal of women as witches or objects, engaging with themes from radical feminism, socialist feminism, and post-structuralism. Through everyday domestic elements, Kamerić illuminated societal issues that often go unnoticed. The discussion was guided by Branislav Dimitrijević, a historian and theorist of art and culture from Belgrade. This engaging session allowed attendees to delve deeper into Kamerić's artistic vision, with the artist addressing audience questions and comments.

The centerpiece, "We Come with a Bow," featured an elongated red ribbon, initially resembling a decorative bow on women's underwear. As it extended and enveloped the audience, the ribbon's transformation symbolized agency and power, challenging the notion of objects as static or passive. Kamerić's work used this gesture and others to question the (de)construction of gender, identity, intimacy, and sexuality. The word "bow" itself carried layered meanings—referring to both a decorative object and an act of submission, reflecting how women navigate societal expectations within patriarchal and neoliberal frameworks.

The crocheted roses, laden with symbolic meanings such as love, power, sensuality, and sacrifice, evoked the Hortus conclusus motif from Christian iconography, which historically framed female sexuality as both a danger and something to be contained. Scholar Liz Herbert McAvoy notes this concept's duality: while women were ostensibly "protected," the true intent was to suppress their perceived threat to men.

Through "We Come with a Bow," Šejla Kamerić masterfully intertwined themes of domesticity, feminism, and cultural critique, creating a thought-provoking exploration of the dynamics between physical, emotional, and societal existence. This powerful exhibition challenged audiences to reconsider how women's roles and identities are shaped by historical and contemporary narratives, ultimately turning ordinary symbols into profound statements on agency and resistance.



WE CARRY SOIL IN OUR POCKETS

Solo Exhibition by Nevena Aleksovski

The solo exhibition “We Carry Soil in Our Pockets” by artist Nevena Aleksovski delves into themes of family migration, belonging, and the relationship with the land. Drawing from her own and her family’s migratory experiences, Aleksovski explores the intersection of history, gender, and personal geography, adding rich socio-political layers to her work. It is a poignant exploration of migration, memory, and belonging. She employs materials such as earth, stones, concrete fragments, old clothes, and textiles to examine the complex relationship between individuals and the concepts of territory, space, limitation, appropriation, and exclusion. Through her visual articulation of personal migrant experiences and familial connections, Aleksovski connects deeply personal narratives to universal themes of loss, memory, and belonging.

Her minimalist artistic style evokes soft impressions of land and movement, with carefully arranged objects that carry familiar, evocative stories. These elements create a metaphorical bridge between her family’s history and the viewer’s own experiences, fostering an intimate understanding of shared human connections across time and space.

The project documents Aleksovski’s unique exploration of her past, presented for the first time in this exhibition. By navigating the boundaries imposed by human structures - physical, emotional, and societal - she creates space for new memories to emerge. These memories are

gently built upon the foundations of the lives her ancestors led, honoring their journeys while forging her own path forward.

The exhibition was accompanied by the release of her book, “Melancholy of the Abandoned Lands,” published and edited by PrivatePrint. Both the exhibition and the book serve as a dialogue with her ancestors, whose bonds with the artist were disrupted by migration and premature loss, such as the passing of grandparents and personal dynamics, complementing the themes explored in the exhibition.

The event was curated by Jana Stardelova, program coordinator at Tiiiit! Inc., and organized by the same. Together, the exhibition and book form a comprehensive narrative that bridges the personal and the universal, the past and the present, and memory and creation.



WORKSHOP: WHAT IS YOUR HOME?

A Workshop for Children with Nevena Aleksovski and Dorotej Nešovski

On October 6th, as part of the anniversary edition of the FIRSTBORN GIRL #10 Festival, Tiiiit! Inc. collaborated with the Children's Creative Center to host a workshop titled “What Is Your Home?” Led by artists Nevena Aleksovski and Dorotej Nešovski, the workshop invited children aged 9 to 12 to explore the concept of "home" through creative expression and discussion, engaging them in a meaningful exploration of a universal yet deeply personal topic through various artistic and social activities, including drawing, painting, collage-making, writing,

socializing, playing, and talking. These activities centered around thought-provoking questions such as what does home represent for us, what makes a home unique, who creates a home, and can we have more than one, how do we imagine our ideal home, etc. Through these exercises, children were encouraged to express their feelings, ideas, and experiences about home in a visual and imaginative way.

The workshop aimed to foster creativity and self-expression in children, provide a safe space for children to discuss their experiences and perceptions of home, encourage imaginative thinking about home, including its characters, objects, and possibilities and help children understand and articulate their emotional connections to their spaces, underlining the importance of nurturing children's emotional and imaginative connections to their world.

By blending playful activities with thoughtful discussion, the workshop highlighted the diverse ways children experience and define "home," offering insights into how they relate to their environments and express their sense of belonging.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the children's collective creations - drawings, collages, and writings - were compiled into a joint book. This fanzine was photocopied and distributed to each participant, serving as a tangible reflection of their shared exploration and creativity.

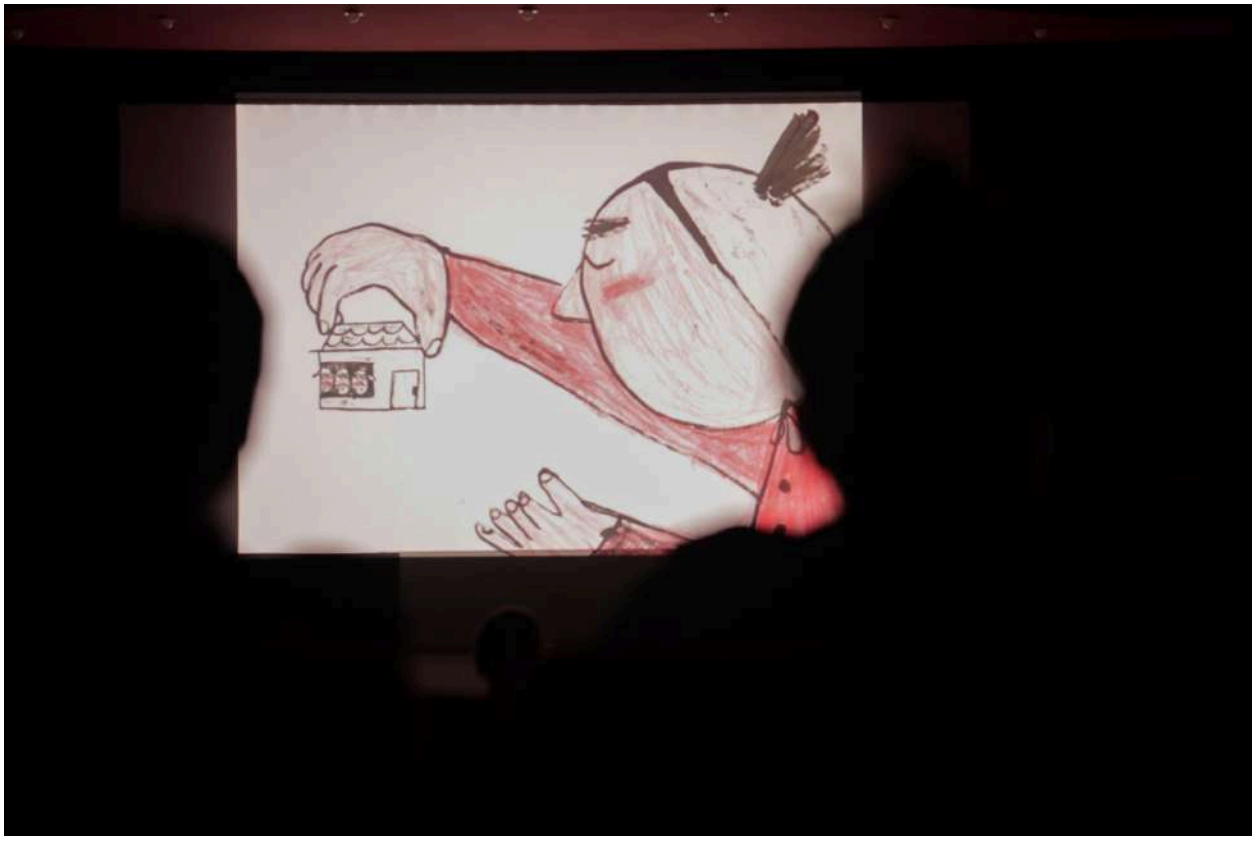


FEMINIST FILM PLAYGROUND WITH DIANA TOUCEDO AND KUMJANA NOVAKOVA

The Feminist Film Playground program was a multifaceted exploration of feminist perspectives in cinema, encompassing one workshop and three movie screenings. The workshop, held on October 20, offered participants the opportunity to engage with filmmakers Diana Toucedo and Kumjana Novakova in a discursive program focused on feminist approaches to film. This three-day workshop, structured as a public discussion, was open to all, regardless of gender, profession, or background, encouraging an inclusive exchange of ideas and perspectives.

The movie screenings took place on October 21, 22, and 23, featuring four films: “Mutzenbacher,” “Swing and Sway,” “Granny’s Sexual Life,” and “Tattooed on Our Eyes We Carry the Aftertaste”—the latter directed by Diana Toucedo, followed by her lecture. The curated selection explored the intersections of gender, sexuality, and social change across diverse historical and cultural contexts.

The program began with an examination of historical attitudes toward female sexuality, highlighting controversial representations and the shifting moral landscape. Each film in the Feminist Film Playground provided a distinct perspective, collectively enriching the dialogue on how social forces, personal histories, and cultural practices shape the ongoing conversation about gender, sexuality, and identity. One film delved into the provocative and contentious depiction of female and child sexuality in a notorious literary text, linking it to contemporary societal values, where sexual discourse is simultaneously ubiquitous and fraught with tension. Another piece explored the emotional and physical distance imposed by global events, using dance and personal documentation to depict the resilience and connection between two women separated by hemispheres. Their creative collaboration served as a means to confront shared frustrations, desires, and the evolving dynamics of identity and communication amid violence and upheaval. A more intimate narrative invited viewers into the memories of elderly women reflecting on their pasts, offering a poignant glimpse into the evolving roles of women in early 20th-century Slovenia. Through these recollections, the film illuminated both the personal histories and societal progress that inform contemporary understandings of gender and intimacy. Finally, the program presented a reflection on collective labor and shared experience in a coastal community, focusing on the lives of shellfish gatherers. This segment highlighted the intertwined relationships between humans, nature, and tradition, emphasizing how collective effort fosters a sense of unity, identity, and belonging.



Book Promotion / Exhibition Opening / Round Table: Invisible Archives: "Makedonka - Organ of AFW[2]" (1944–1952): Historical Experiences and Cultural Memory

Including "Document Missing" - An Exhibition by Hristina Ivanoska, Museum of North Macedonia

On October 28, the Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia in Skopje hosted a significant event in collaboration with the Center for the Research of Nationalism and Culture - Skopje and Tiiiit! Inc. The event celebrated the research and promotion of “Makedonka - Organ of AFW” (1944 -1952), the first women's magazine published in the Macedonian language.

The program began with the opening of an exhibition by artist Hristina Ivanoska, titled “Document Missing: ‘Makedonka’ – Emancipation, Meaning, and Desire.” This exhibition explored the cultural and historical significance of the magazine, reflecting on its role in advancing women's emancipation and its broader societal impact.

The event also featured a round table discussion titled “Research Perspectives of the First Macedonian Women's Magazine ‘Makedonka - Organ of AFW’: Individual, Institutional, and Public Dimension.” This discussion coincided with the promotion of the second volume of the

[2] Anti-Faschist Movement of the Women

text collection “Invisible Archives: Makedonka - Organ of AFW (1944–1952): Historical Experiences and Cultural Memory,” published by CINIK - Skopje and edited by Ivana Hadjievska and Jana Kocevska, Tiiiit! Inc.'s program coordinator.

The text collection presented a thematic and critical analysis of the magazine's history, contributed by a team of five researchers: Ivana Hadjievska (Political History), Jana Kocevska (Social Aspects), Darko Leitner-Stojanov (Emancipation Process), Manja Velickovska (Literary Aspects), Hristina Ivanoska (Artistic Research). The publication's preface was written by Dr. Ivana Pantelic from the Institute for Contemporary History of Serbia, Belgrade, and its epilogue by Dr. Jelena Milinkovic from the Institute for Literature and Art, Belgrade.

The round table brought together contributors and additional experts, including: Vera Bunteska, former President of the Association of National Liberation Fighters, Dr. Biljana Kotevska, an expert in gender and public policies and Dushica Lazova from meduza.mk. This collaborative event provided a multidimensional exploration of the magazine’s legacy, blending artistic interpretation, academic research, and public dialogue. It illuminated the magazine's historical role in fostering gender equality, cultural memory, and social progress in North Macedonia, while also examining its continued relevance in contemporary feminist discourse.



PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

The performance program of the FIRSTBORN GIRL Festival's jubilee edition reflects this spirit of collective resilience and care. The festival thrives because it has always been a shared space - one of meeting, mutual recognition, and a refusal to leave anyone behind. It is a place where tenderness and cooperation transcend hierarchies, made possible by the enduring dedication of those who have supported and shaped it from the very beginning. In a world where crises such as pandemics, climate collapse, wars, and nuclear threats no longer occur in isolation but feed into one another, it often feels easier to envision the end of the world than to challenge the cycles of expansion, exploitation, and extraction that sustain it. To survive, we must come together - holding hands tighter, hugging closer, loving more fiercely, and daring to imagine the most radical alternatives for our future.

Premiere of the Performance: I NEED A NEW BODY

By Viktorija Ilioska

As part of the festival and in collaboration with Lokomotiva - Center for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture, the 47th Youth Open Theatre Festival hosted the premiere of “I NEED A NEW BODY” by choreographer and performer Viktorija Ilioska (North Macedonia/Germany). The performance was followed by an artist talk, *The Missing Dialogue*, moderated by Biljanja Tanurovska-Kjulavkovski and Kristina Lelovac. “I NEED A NEW BODY” is a powerful and thought-provoking work that invites audiences to reconsider humanity’s exploitative practices and the intersection of bodily and planetary exhaustion. The artist talk that followed deepened the conversation, fostering dialogue about the interplay of identity, resources, and the urgency of collective care in a world on the brink. It confronts humanity’s unsustainable relationship with the planet, reflecting on our consumption-driven depletion of its resources. “I NEED A NEW BODY” examines the paradox of "pumping"—a process central to both the extraction of the Earth's vitality and the alteration of human bodies. This duality captures the exhausting cycle of capitalist production and reproduction alongside the feminist ethos of renewal and empowerment.

The performance does not shy away from the inevitability of waste and depletion, but rather situates itself in the liminal space where the body’s limits meet its potential for transformation. Through a series of evocative movements, the piece explores the body as both an exhibition and a resource, navigating the tension between these roles. It questions how we sustain ourselves when the Earth’s resources have been drained, what happens when our bodies, too, are stretched beyond their capacities, can the process of "pumping" serve as a metaphor for both exhaustion and regeneration…

The performance was realized as a co-production between Lokomotiva-Center for New Initiative in Arts and Culture/Choreographed bodies program, Life Long Burning (LLB)/ Performance Situation Room program, NDA Slovenia and Viktorija Ilioska.



GREEN PROGRAM:

WHY IS FASHION A FEMINIST ISSUE?

The “Why Is Fashion a Feminist Issue?” program provided a compelling argument for rethinking how we consume and produce clothing. By promoting sustainable practices and challenging exploitative systems, the initiative underscored how fashion can become a powerful tool for feminist activism and environmental change. In recent years, growing attention has been given to the devastating effects of fashion overproduction, unethical working conditions for textile workers, and the environmental pollution caused by the industry. Who makes our clothes, how are they made, and from what materials? These pressing questions demand answers that could ignite a feminist revolution in the fashion world. The 10th edition of the festival joined this critical debate by creating a platform for education, discussion, and practical solutions to promote sustainable fashion practices. Below is an overview of the program’s highlights.

Lecture: Fashion and Feminism
by Aleksandra Spaseska

Journalist, translator, and activist Aleksandra Spaseska delivered a thought-provoking lecture on the intersection of fashion and feminism. She emphasized how the choice between fast fashion and sustainable fashion is inherently a feminist issue. Fast fashion relies on the exploitation and disempowerment of textile workers, most of whom are women, while

perpetuating environmental degradation. In contrast, sustainable practices support environmental integrity and socio-economic justice by providing living wages, safe working conditions, and reduced ecological impact. By supporting ethical and sustainable production methods, we not only mitigate environmental harm but also empower the women who work tirelessly in factories to produce our clothing. The lecture concluded with an informal discussion, encouraging attendees to reflect on their role in creating a fairer, more sustainable fashion system.

Workshop: “How to Build a Sustainable Capsule Wardrobe?”

Facilitators: Aleksandra Spaseska and Borjan Isajlovski

Today’s consumer culture pushes for rapid consumption and replacement, resulting in mass-produced clothing of lower quality and shorter lifespans. The workshop offered practical strategies to combat this trend by introducing the concept of slow fashion - a mindful and sustainable alternative to fast fashion. Participants were encouraged to buy vintage or second-hand clothing, repurpose and upcycle old items, support local manufacturers and designers, invest in high-quality, long-lasting pieces, etc. Creating a sustainable capsule wardrobe - a collection of versatile, essential clothing items - was a focal point. While the process may initially seem daunting, facilitators encouraged participants to take small, thoughtful steps, such as clearing their closets of rarely worn clothes and caring for garments to extend their lifespan. Questions such as how can I care for the clothes we already own, what is the Sustainability Pyramid, and how does it guide ethical consumption or which capsule wardrobe model best suits our lifestyles were explored.

Participants were invited to bring up to three clothing items they no longer used, whether due to changing tastes or the desire for something new, that was exchanged with others, thus promoting reuse and reducing waste.

Some clothing items brought to the event—such as T-shirts, quilts, sweatshirts, and canvas bags—were repurposed with the help of Partisan Print, a collective specializing in screen printing. This initiative highlighted creative ways to upcycle old materials while fostering ecological responsibility.

To further support sustainability, the program provided instructions for reducing one’s ecological footprint, including, traveling to events by bike or on foot, using reusable thermoses or cups instead of disposable plastic ones, recycling waste materials in designated bins, opting for metal spoons over single-use plastic ones, etc.



MUSIC PROGRAM

The FIRSTBORN GIRL Festival once again spotlighted the stark gender disparity in the music industry, a persistent issue both globally and locally. Women remain significantly underrepresented in the field, with only 21.6% of artists, 12.6% of songwriters, and a mere 2.6% of producers being women globally. At music festivals, the numbers improve only slightly, with 27% of performers being female. In our country, the situation is even grimmer, where the music industry is nearly non-existent, music festivals are scarce, and conversations about the gender gap are still largely whispered rather than addressed.

Driven by an undeniable urge to rectify this inequity, this year's festival celebrated the incredible talent of female artists. The musical program featured exclusively female singer-songwriters who performed not to chase chart success or fulfill quotas, but to assert their artistry and convey their messages. These performers brought with them a profound sense of purpose, defying the discouraging conditions of an often male-dominated music scene. Their music resonated with vulnerability, emotional depth, and political consciousness, softening hearts while strengthening spirits.

This year's lineup included Joanna Risteska, a Skopje-based solo artist and instrumentalist whose compositions blend acoustic and electric guitar with analog techniques to create layered, orchestral soundscapes. Her work spans a diverse range of styles, from contemporary classical to cinematic and experimental rock. Sara Renard from Zagreb captivated audiences with her

experimental indie-pop sound, seamlessly merging electronic and theatrical elements. Through her music, she raises awareness of neoliberal love, religion, women's rights, and personal stories. Also featured was Marija Kaeva, a seasoned vocal soloist, musician, songwriter, and radio host with over 15 years of experience. Her music reflects her depth as an artist and her commitment to connecting with audiences. Tea Shaldeva, also known as Galatheia, a prominent Skopje radio host at the independent, volunteer-driven Radio “103” and Amok Radio, brought her distinctive voice and production talents to the festival. An almost "resident artist" of the FIRSTBORN GIRL Festival, Tea collaborates with numerous bands and creates her own music, continually pushing the boundaries of the local music scene.

Through this powerful and inspiring lineup, the festival reminded us not only of the glaring gaps in representation but also of the transformative potential of amplifying women’s voices in music.



INFORMAL EDUCATION:

FEMINIST TOUR

On March 19, Tiiiit! Inc. organized a Feminist Walking Tour in Skopje, designed specifically for high-school students[3]. The tour aimed to highlight key locations in the city that hold historical significance due to the contributions and actions of women over the years.

[3] All Activities that include students under the age of 18 include a previously signed Consent form by parents/guardians.

This initiative was inspired by “Women on Women,” a previous project of Tiiiit! Inc., and the publication deriving from it “Our Path: 25 Women's Stories from History,” a guide that maps geographical points tied to women who played pivotal roles in the historical development of the country. Led by Angela Stojanovska, a young actress, the two-hour tour provided students with an engaging opportunity to visit sites of cultural and historical importance related to women's heritage in Skopje. Along the way, participants learned the stories behind these places and the remarkable accomplishments of the women who shaped them.

By blending education with exploration, the Feminist Tour not only honored women’s contributions to history but also offered young participants a meaningful connection to the past, fostering awareness of the vital role women have played in shaping their society.

WHY 8-TH OF MARCH?

The "Why the 8th of March?" activity persists as a vital initiative addressing the absence and deliberate exclusion of feminist and gender equality topics in North Macedonia. The avoidance of these subjects does not shield young people from sensitive content; rather, it denies them a critical space to analyze historical trends, ask questions, embrace mistakes, and ultimately learn. Against the backdrop of patriarchal mainstream historical narratives, this initiative creates an essential platform where feminist perspectives can challenge traditional educational approaches.

This year, the focus was on film and female characters in cinema. The program was divided into two segments. The first part explored the representation of women in Macedonian cinematography, providing valuable insights into their roles and contributions. The second part facilitated a focused discussion aimed at introducing students to female characters on screen while encouraging conversations about contemporary topics within feminist film discourse.

The activity reached a broad audience, engaging four educators, eight high schools, and 250 students. By fostering this critical dialogue, "Why the 8th of March?" continues to inspire young minds to reflect on gender equality and feminism through an educational lens, addressing gaps in mainstream narratives and promoting progressive thought.



Зошто 8 Март?

ПРИРАЧНИК ЗА ЕДУКАТОР(К)И