



creem

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19 US DOLLARS



# MARTA JOVANOVIC— ALTER EGO



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TEXTURE

artwork by  
 marta jovanovic courtesy of  
 boji contemporary

written by  
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I have heard it said that art is the alter ego of a person. In the case of Marta Jovanovic her conceptual fluidity plays with the constructs of self, performer, artist, and gender. The work of Jovanovic which spans photography, performance, video, and installation concentrates on the female body becoming a medium for art production.

Marta Jovanovic modernizes the siege of *Vimino* (Italian for Rijeka) by poet Gabriele D'Annunzio in her performance *Principe di Montemarossa*. Dressed in all black, with a bald head mimicking that of D'Annunzio, Jovanovic rides a black horse from the port of Rijeka to the museum located at the center of the city. She is regal and proud but simultaneously somber while she claims the capitalist city, if even for a brief

moment, as an artistic hub once more.

In *Silyestus*, a film named after the female alter ego of Gabriele D'Annunzio, we see the bald Jovanovic getting dressed in all black, and later donning a short black wig. As she gets dressed, working her way from fishnet stockings to a black dress, she slips money into the crotch of her panties. The seductive musical score "Tango For Her" by the famous Serbian composer Aleksandar Sincic adds to the seductive visual of the artist transforming herself into a nation's widow. Though the film is about the wave of new capitalism in Serbia, one cannot also omit the undercurrents of fetish and perversion. After all, money and sex make the world go 'round. D'Annunzio himself had a string of spectacular and scandalous affairs throughout his lifetime. He became known as the only man who could tempt Romaine Brooks, the painter, away from her female lovers. There also remained a mythos of whispers concerning his fetishes, such as his fascination with bedding lesbians. On the one hand, D'Annunzio was a genius poet and ambitious military hero, yet on the other, a man of many sexual exploits.

In *Meta Magdalena*, Jovanovic again plays with the notion of the double and alter ego in the physical duality of a split screen and the metaphorical duality of her as sculpture and actress. She further reinforces the duality with the Madonna/whore binary perpetuated by Western culture. Jovanovic also uses physical sculptural doubles in *Requiem*, where she attends to her dead second self, and in *It Is My Body*, a series of silicone casts of various parts of her body.

In *Pionirka*, Jovanovic uses the compositional structure of Helmut Newton's iconic *Here They Come* as she poses mid-walk engaging the viewer in a series of moments of undress. She starts fully dressed in the *pionirka* uniform, a national costume children wore in former Yugoslavia on November 29, the day when they were ceremoniously inducted into Josip Broz Tito's pioneers. In her state of undress she sheds her own look for a smile when she is rid of the uniform, acknowledging her liberated mature female self. Jovanovic's alter ego speaks about the freedom to make our own choices about our bodies, lives, ideologies, and art, something that in our daily selves might not otherwise exist.

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