

Focus on The Other Side of Everything

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There is a door that has been locked for 70 years in the household of **Srbijanka Turajli?**, a professor at the University of Belgrade and an important political figure in the fight against Serbian dictator Slobodan Miloševi? in the 1990s. Srbijanka is the mother of filmmaker **Mila Turajli?**, who gave us *Cinema Komunisto*, an excellent documentary about cinema in Tito's Yugoslavia. Now she is in the [IDFA](#) ^[1]'s Competition for Feature-Length Documentary with *The Other Side of Everything* ^[2], which world-premiered at Toronto. The film had the locked door in her family apartment as its starting point, and ended up as an invaluable document that seamlessly unites the personal, the political and the historical.

In 1946, as Tito's communist authorities were nationalising the bourgeois properties, the Turajli?s' apartment was deemed too big for just one household, so a part of it was taken away from them and given to another family. Srbijanka's grandfather Dušan Peleš was a minister in the government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, so the "bourgeois" label is quite fitting.

We follow the stories of the past that flow into the present through Srbijanka's memories and archive materials that detail the political processes all the way from the liberation of Belgrade in 1945, through the student protests of 1968, to the 1990s Balkan wars, initiated by Miloševi?, the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 and the dictator's downfall in 2000. Perhaps more importantly, it also includes footage from 1990s Belgrade, which shows that there were indeed more than just a handful of people who opposed the attack on Croatia and Bosnia that he used the former Yugoslav Army for, in addition to numerous civil and student protests and rallies throughout the decade. Some of these featured Srbijanka as a speaker before crowds of tens of thousands.

From her mother's window, the filmmaker has spent ten years filming events unfolding outside

their building in the very centre of Belgrade, surrounded by government buildings and embassies, and she captures the consequences of one of the numerous demonstrations that the city was witnessing: the police use tear gas to disperse protestors demonstrating against something we are not really sure of – it could be Kosovar independence or perhaps an attempt at a gay pride parade. It does not really matter; in Serbia, history is always happening in the present.

But the film really works best in the way that all of this footage is organically interwoven with intimate interviews between mother and daughter, expertly edited by **Aleksandra Milovanovi?** (*Cinema Komunisto*) and **Sylvie Gadmer** (*Cain's Children* [3]). Here, the personal literally becomes political and vice versa, while the historical has a universal immediacy that brings the film full circle back to the personal, and to the locked door from the beginning of the film.

The Other Side of Everything is a multi-layered work by a thoroughly precise and dedicated filmmaker who is nothing less than perfect at balancing facts, ideas and emotions, and has an uncanny sense of dynamics, even managing to create moments of pure poetry.

The Other Side of Everything is a co-production by Serbia's Dribbling Pictures [4] and France's Survivance [5].

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Links

[1] <https://www.idfa.nl/en/>

[2] <http://cineuropa.org/f.aspx?t=film&did=332857>

[3] <http://cineuropa.org/f.aspx?t=film&did=263306>

[4] <http://cineuropa.org/id.aspx?t=prodcompany&did=331412>

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