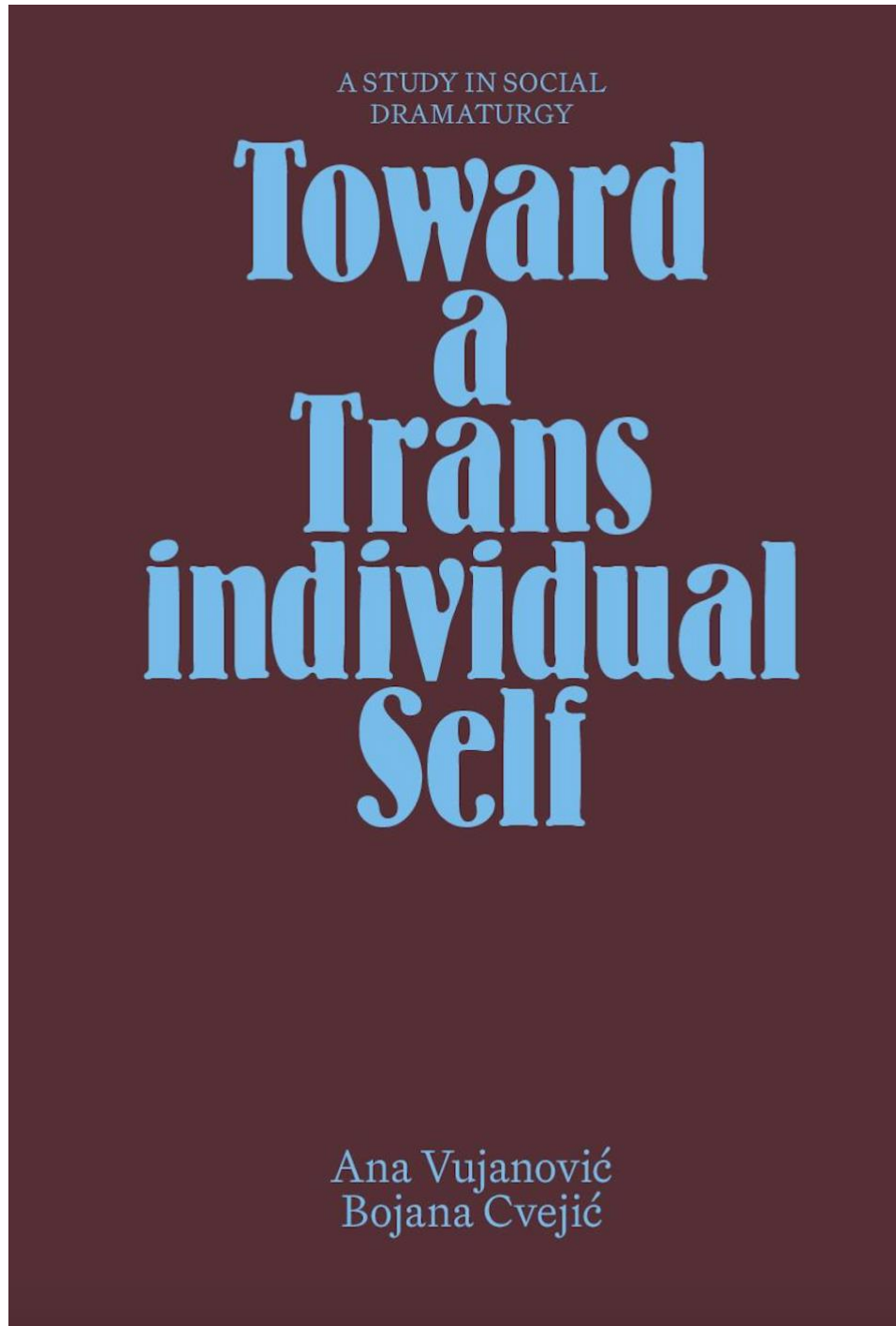


Ana Vujanovic and Bojana Cvejic, *Toward a Transindividual Self: A study in social dramaturgy*, Oslo – Brussels – Zagreb: Oslo National Academy of the Arts – SARMA – Multimedijalni institut, 2022



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A book that examines the processes involved in performing the self, *Toward a Transindividual Self: A Study in Social Dramaturgy* approaches this distinguishing feature of 21<sup>st</sup> century Western neoliberal self-formation from a transdisciplinary angle, where political and cultural anthropology, performance studies and dramaturgy intersect.

Starting out from their concern with the crisis of the social, which coincides with the rise of individualism, Vujanović and Cvejić critically untangle individualist modes of performing the self, surveying various forms of possessive, aesthetic, and autopoietic individualism. Their critique, however, does not amount to an argument for collectivism as a more socially viable alternative to individualism. Instead, it places them before the more fundamental problem of ontogenesis: how is that which distinguishes me as an individual formed in the first place? This question marks a turning point in their investigation, taking them back to the process of individuation that unfolds prior to, and in excess of, the individual.

This process of individuation encompasses biological, social, and technological conditions of becoming whose real potential is transindividual—or more specifically, social—transformation. Through a series of investigations into specific social relations (including solidarity and de-alienation), the authors take a dramaturgical approach in which the self is seen to actualize its transindividual dimension in a veritable ‘theater of individuation’ (Gilbert Simondon). This epistemic intervention into ontogenesis allows them to expand the theoretical horizon of transindividuation in an array of tangible social, aesthetic and political acts and practices. As with every horizon, while the transindividual may not be mere stone’s throw away, it is within reach, and the book encourages the reader to approach it.

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Ana Vujanović is a cultural worker based between Berlin, Belgrade and Amsterdam, where she works at the SNDO – Academy of Theatre and Dance. As an independent researcher and writer she works in the fields of performance, culture and gender studies. She is also engaged as dramaturge in contemporary theatre, dance/performance and art film. A remarkable part of her work is cultural activism and she has taken part in numerous self-organized, leftist organizations and initiatives in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia, and internationally.

Bojana Cvejić’ research spans performance theory, philosophy, and dance studies. Among several books, she is author of *Choreographing Problems* (2015). As a dramaturg, she has collaborated with many choreographers, and collectives on performances and self-organized platforms for artistic production, theory and education in Europe. Since 2017, she divides her time between Oslo, where she is Professor at the National Academy of the Arts and Brussels.

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# **TOWARD A TRANSINDIVIDUAL SELF**

## **A study in social dramaturgy**

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*Toward a Transindividual Self is an ambitious and capacious effort to theorize a new way to approach collectivity for political purposes through the lens of performance. Convinced that the current neoliberal conjuncture has only heightened a form of capitalist individualism that blocks notions of the social, the authors aim to show that a 'transindividual formation of the self can bring about different courses of action and a more socially driven imagination'.*

*Transindividuation, they assure us, shows how "we form ourselves on the basis of interdependence, sharing, commonality, as well as indispensability of the individual as the agent of creativity/knowledge, freedom, and change, who 'possibilizes' their own conditions of formation*

Professor Janelle Reinelt (University of Warwick), co-editor of *Critical Theory and Performance* (University of Michigan, 2006)

*Perhaps the most striking thing about this book is the manner in which it is able to engage with multiple discourses from political theory to aesthetics. In this way it both follows the ambitious scope of Simondon's work on individuation, and expands into areas that Simondon did not cover, most notably politics and cultural politics, which is the book's central concern: (...) Towards a Transindividual Self does a brilliant job of not only arguing for the importance and relevance for the transindividual as a concept for politics, performance, and the politics of performance, but of demonstrating a bold standard for political and aesthetic inquiry.*

Professor Jason Read (University of Maine), author of *The Politics of Transindividuality* (Brill, 2015)

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