

## **Sarah Carne: I Love my Yugo**

### **Liverpool Biennial, 18–26 September**

Artist's cars: often cheap, sometimes clapped out, rarely stylish, and usually unloved. Sarah Carne loves hers though. *I Love my Yugo* is her homage to the Yugo 45A she inherited from her parents. It's a road trip-come-installation-come-inter-gallery taxi service – a journey-within-a-journey. I caught a ride when she was ferrying art-passengers between venues at the opening weekend of Liverpool's Biennial. Ring the Yugo Booking Line; operators all busy so leave a message; operator gets back to me within minutes and pick-up point and time are arranged. Before long I'm squeezing into the back seat of the car along with two fellow passengers (I've got to say this isn't a car designed to fit three grown adults in the back) and being directed as to how to operate the in-car DVD player... we're off.

The car is adorned with Letraset markings on its wings and bonnet. A time-line on the offside details the Yugo's history from purchase in 1988 to the present, while on the nearside is a list of all the RAC and AA mechanics that have ever come to its rescue (it's currently suspended from the former for over use of its service). The film we're watching charts Carne's improbable journey in her Yugo from the cars adopted home in High Wycombe to its birthplace in Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro (the former Yugoslavia). Off to Dover it goes, then across the Channel, down through France and Northern Italy and onward as the quest to find fellow Yugo owners unravels, causing much disbelief and amusement amongst border officials. Once in Novi Sad, there are Yugos a plenty to check out. Most drivers are not overly impressed by their own 45s and at the main Yugo dealership in town we meet Bora who struggles to answer Carne's questions as to why one should choose to buy one of the cars – they are neither stylish, nor fast, nor comfortable. More encouraging though is Davor. He has converted his Yugo 45 into a souped-up racer and takes Carne for a spin around the night-lit streets of the city. Davor is confident in the car's ability to win races but is less sure about taking Carne's own beloved Yugo for a drive – he doesn't like the right hand drive, says the pedals are too far over and laughs as he starts the ignition. The film cleverly draws on genres as diverse as road movie, travelogue, reality TV and *Wicker's World*, and there's a touch of Michael Palin's Brit abroad explorer spirit thrown in too. As the journey(s) unfold you find yourself with one eye on screen and the other on what's happening out the window. Parallel narratives develop, one on screen – a given – the other in real-time and unique for each passenger.

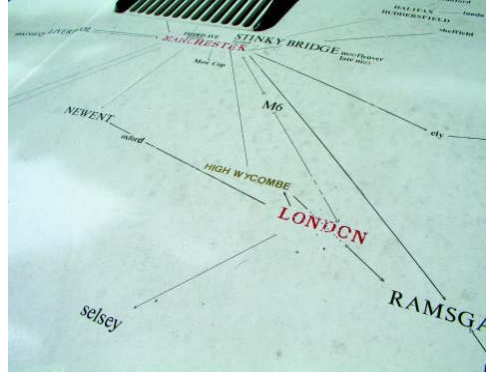
Back to the movie and the return journey goes off without a hitch until the home straight. Stopped by customs officials back at Dover who, unlike the NATO forces that bombed the Yugo factory at Kragujevac in 1999, are satisfied that there are no strategic armaments on board, the Yugo refuses at the last hurdle. The film fades and we leave Carne and her car blocking the path of other vehicles, cursing at her attempts to restart the travel weary little engine. It's the end of our journey too – time to make way for a new bunch of art hungry travellers.

And back home for me! From my window I spot my own poor dejected car sitting in its favoured spot on the communal car park. It's been a week since we last drove together and already there's a film of late summers' dust and whatever that sticky stuff is that appears if you park under a tree covering the bodywork. Sure, it's old, yes it has a leaky roof, but yeah, I love it all the same.

'I Love my Yugo' also picked-up at galleries in East London 8-17 October and will take it's final passengers between galleries in Manchester 29 October – 7 November. For further information see [www.sarahcarne.co.uk](http://www.sarahcarne.co.uk)

**Stephen Palmer**

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All images: Sarah Carne, I love my Yugo, video still, 2003.