

Exhibitions as Sites of Artistic Contact during the Cold War

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 8-9, 2019, IASI (RO)

Conference Abstracts

Organizers:

Cristian Nae
Katalin Cseh-Varga

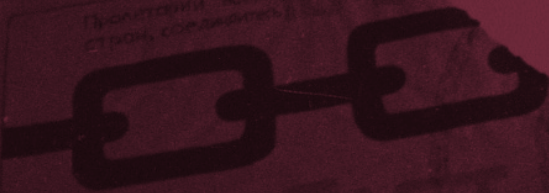
Dates:

DAY 1: Friday, Nov 8
DAY 2: Saturday, Nov 9

Location:

"E. Caudella" Hall, UNAGE Iasi,
29 Cuza Voda St., Iasi (Ro)

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CONTACT

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Contact. Trans-idea Art
Constantin Flondor, Iosif Kiraly, Doru Tulcan, Mail Art
Performance, 1982
Courtesy of Iosif Kiraly

Exhibitions as Sites of Artistic Contact during the Cold War

November 8 and 9, 2019

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iasi, Romania

Organizers: Cristian Nae (George Enescu National University of Arts, Iasi)
Katalin Cseh-Varga (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna)

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Universitatea Națională de Arte
George Enescu
Iasi



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CONFERENCE TOPIC

Exhibitions as Sites of Artistic Contact during the Cold War

This symposium explores the agency of art exhibitions during the Cold War (1958-1989) in establishing transnational collaborations across the Iron Curtain, revealing the complexity of interrelations between art, society, and politics. In this way, the conference not only challenges the standard ideological division between 'East' and 'West' but looks at visual micro- and macro-histories through the lens of internationalism. The conference applies a broad understanding of East, Central and Southeast European art with a simultaneous view of international politics, global art currents, and local institutional as well as non-institutional decisions about art making in the region.

The conference investigates the exhibition as a medium, as a space of cultural contact and cultural diplomacy, as a site of exchange of objects and thoughts, as a space of gathering together, and as a location of innovative curatorial formats and alternative art practices. The organizers and contributors aim to reveal significant moments of conflicting, strategic, or peaceful contact with state institutions and politics. Their purpose is to map out the ways in which formal and informal networks of artists, objects and institutions have contributed to the circulation, transfer, adaptation, and reception of ideas and artistic practices on both sides of the Iron Curtain through the exhibition as a reflexive art for(u)m.

Conference Abstracts

KEYNOTE LECTURE

DAVID CROWLEY

National College of Art and Design, Dublin

David Crowley is a cultural historian of Eastern Europe under communist rule. His authored books include *National Style and Nation-State. Design in Poland* (1992) and *Warsaw* (2003) and he is the editor – with Susan Reid – of three volumes: *Socialism and Style. Material Culture in Post-war Eastern Europe* (2000); *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (2003); and *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (2010). As a curator, Crowley's major exhibitions include *Cold War Modern* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2008–9 (co-curated with Jane Pavitt); *The Power of Fantasy. Modern and Contemporary Art from Poland* at BOZAR, Brussels, 2011; *Sounding the Body Electric. Experimental Art and Music in Eastern Europe* at Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, 2012 and Calvert 22, London, 2013 (co-curated with Daniel Muzyczuk). His most recent show, *Notes from the Underground. Alternative Art and Music in Eastern Europe 1968-1994*, continues his interest in the intersections of music and visual art. First mounted in Łódź, Poland, in autumn 2016, it travelled to Berlin in 2018 (also co-curated with Daniel Muzyczuk).

The Imagined East

In his study of late socialism, *Everything Was Forever Until it Was No More*, Alexei Yurchak reflects on the 'imagined West' projected by Soviet citizens from the traces of Western culture which crossed into the East. There was an 'imagined East' too, forged from fantastic images of Soviet socialism in the West. These reverberating image-worlds came together in the 1980s when Soviet and Eastern European architects, artists, musicians viewed their own activities through the (paradoxical) lens of an 'imagined East'. Revolutionary images derived from the radical avant-garde of the 1920s were revived, albeit seemingly ironically.

These mirror worlds met in a number of exhibitions including one on Soviet 'paper architecture' at the Architectural Association in London in 1988 and another that brought Timur Novikov's New Artists to Liverpool one year later. In this talk, David Crowley will reflect on how international exhibitions aligned with Perestroika and Glasnost foretold the end of the Soviet system with images that seemed to represent its revolutionary origins.

SESSION 1

ZSUZSA LÁSZLÓ

Artpool Art Research Center, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest

Zsuzsa László is a researcher at Artpool Art Research Center and is completing her PhD in Art Theory at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. Between 2009-2018 she was researcher and curator at tranzit.hu. She has (co-)curated various tranzit.hu exhibition and publication projects, including: *Art Always Has Its Consequences*, 2008–2010; *Parallel Chronologies 2009-*, *Regime Change—Incomplete Project* (2012), *Sitting Together*, 2016. She is member of board of tranzit.hu and the editorial board of the online magazine mezosfera.org. Between 2008–2012 she was lecturer at the Intermedia Department of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, and between 2005–2007 at the Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies, ELTE, Budapest. In her research and curatorial activities she explores transnational exhibition histories in relation to the concept of East-European Art in Cold War era, and the interconnections of pedagogical practices, cultural and social history of the neo-avant-garde.

Reciprocal Decipherments – Circulating Works, Words, Ideas, and Agents as Constituents of the Discourse on East European Art

How the category “East European Art” was constructed, and what specificities and validity it may have? The lecture discusses these questions through case studies of artistic exchange in the late seventies and early eighties that aimed at establishing transnational collaborations through personal encounters across the iron curtain and also within Eastern Europe. Research tours and incurring art events of this period signify a shift from previous international art practices based on the dematerialized concepts circulating through catalogues, assemblings, and mail art to the need for on the spot experiences and personal confrontations. Being together, making interviews, holding discussions, lectures, and performances became indispensable tools of creating and decoding contextual meanings that also debunked the utopia of international avant-garde – as well as mail art - as a transparent common language.

Starting from the concept of contextual art and the international meetings at which it emerged I examine two parallel art tours and related art projects that performed cultural translation and contextualized documents of art practices circulating in the more and more globalized circuits of the art world. My first case study is the international art event “Works and Words” (De Appel, Amsterdam, 1979), which was a large-scale presentation and meeting of art and artists from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Poland. I put another iron-curtain crossing exploration in parallel with the “Works and Words” project, the Western-European Art Tours of György Galántai and Júlia Klaniczay made between 1978 and 1982.

With both case studies I propose that “East European Art” is not a category, and neither an halfway level between national and global art, but a discourse that is produced by the dynamics of recontextualization and cultural translation of various art practices from the local to the international scale and vice-versa, thus also providing a relational reinterpretation of the ideological frameworks (like Marxism and capitalism, politicized culture and cultural freedom, etc.) through which the eastern and western art scenes were so often opposed to each other.

SESSION 1

KATALIN CSEH-VARGA

Hertha Firnberg Fellow, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

Katalin Cseh-Varga is a historian and theoretician of visual, intermedia and performance art with a focus on socialist Central Europe, especially Hungary. She is currently working as a Hertha Firnberg Fellow at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and holds a lecturer position at the Department of Theatre, Film and Media Studies at the University of Vienna. Katalin is about to finish a book entitled *The Hungarian Avant-Garde in Late Socialism: Art of the Second Public Sphere* (I.B.Tauris, forthcoming). Her postdoctoral research project focuses on thinking about art in Central and Eastern Europe during state socialism. Besides being active as a project coordinator and editor, Katalin presents and publishes extensively on art theory and methodology in late socialist East-Central Europe, intellectual history during state socialism, public sphere theory in the post-totalitarian condition, performance and intermedia art, as well as archival studies.

The Art of Contact. Exchange, Immateriality and Ambition

It was in 1970 when Hungarian painter László Lakner conceptualized *Foot Art* as a football game to be played at the Hungarian Museum of Fine Arts. He imagined a performance-like event to be realized in an environment surrounded by invaluable artworks – a sort of institutional critique, a discourse that became quite popular during the 1970s. Lakner, who started to become more and more involved into ephemeral and conceptual art practices in the years to come, suggested *Foot Art* as a potential artwork for consideration to Harald Szeemann who was organizing *documenta 5* (1972) at the time. Lakner shared his idea not only with Szeemann, but with fellow Hungarian artists and the art historian, networker and curator László Beke. Based on Lakner's concept Beke drafted a very ambitious curatorial project for Szeemann's *documenta* entitled *Hungarian Foot Art Club*. This complex "exhibition within the exhibition" would have consisted of a selection of artworks by Hungarian neo-avant-gardists and also of a football game between Hungarian artists and the eleven best international artists to be held in Kassel's Fridericianum. Despite all the ambition and preparations (like training sessions held in Hungary) from Beke's side, Szeemann neither included Lakner's *Foot Art* nor did he select Beke's *Hungarian Foot Art Club*.

The story of this unrealized art and curatorial project is the framework for my paper that can be analyzed from many different angles and allows for a variety of interpretations many of which will be addressed in a comprehensive study. For the sake of the conference talk I will limit myself to the aspect of "getting and remaining in touch" as well as the importance of communication in the (unsuccessful) realization of an exhibition project. Because contact is the main theme of the conference, I would like to theorize it from the standpoints of form and motivation.

SESSION 1

IEVA ASTAHOVSKA

Latvian Center for Contemporary Art, Riga

Ieva Astahovska is an art scholar, critic and curator. She works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, where she leads research projects related to socialist and post-socialist art, as well as non-formal education projects, focusing on current contemporary art processes. She has compiled and edited a number of publications – the anthology *Valdis Āboliņš. The avant-garde, mailart, the New Left and cultural relations during the Cold War* (2019), *Workshop of Restoration of Unfelt Feelings. Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš* (2016), *Revisiting Footnotes. Footprints of the Recent Past in the Post-Socialist Region* (2015), *Recuperating the Invisible Past* (2012). She has curated exhibitions *Valdis Āboliņš or How Fluxus Came to Aachen* in Ludwig Forum, Aachen (2018), *Archaeology of Kinetics in Riga Art Space* (2016), *Visionary Structures. Form Johansons to Johansons in Bozar*, Brussels (2015) and *Latvian National Library* in Riga (2014).

The New Left and Exhibitions as Tool for Cultural Relations

Isolation policy in the countries under Soviet occupation during the Cold War was very strong, and it also applied to arts; artists from this region (apart from a few exceptions) were not able to establish international connections and participate in the exhibitions in the West. However, at the same time in the Cold War 'battle' art and through it also exhibitions were used as the ideological tool, confronting the opposite side with a different set of cultural values. In my presentation I would like to focus on the role the New Left movement and its members played in the West in 1960s and 1970s, seeking for possibilities to diminish the abovementioned isolation and seeing art exhibitions as significant tool for international cultural relations instead of confrontations. These attempts included complex and also controversial tactics like cooperation with Soviet authorities, while each of the parties was thinking they were using the other in the name of a more significant cause. As a particular case study I will examine the exhibition *20 Realists from Soviet Latvia* at the art and information fair IKI in *Düsseldorf* in 1973. This exhibition was initiated and organized by Latvian emigré Valdis Āboliņš (1939–1984), Fluxus curator and mailartist, later also the executive secretary of leftist art association *Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst in West-Berlin*. Inspired by critical theory and the ideas of the New Left he was looking for opportunities to establish cultural relations between the West Germany and Latvia, which was isolated in the Soviet bloc. Although his activities, including the exhibition in *Düsseldorf* became part of the sphere of interest of the Soviet secret services, for him it was an opportunity to put the art from Latvia into an international context, overcoming its isolation and exposing it to contemporary currents.

SESSION 1

DANIEL GRŮŇ

Institute of Art History, Slovak Academy of Sciences and The
Július Koller Society, Bratislava

Daniel Grůň is an art historian, curator and writer. He studied art history at Trnava University (Slovak Republic). In 2009 he completed his Ph.D. thesis on art criticism of the 1960s in Czechoslovakia. He was a co-curator of international retrospective *Július Koller One Man Anti Show* (MUMOK, Vienna, 2016; MUSEION, Bolzano, 2017) and has been writing on artist's archives, self-historicisation and legacy of neo-avant-gardes. Currently he teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava and conducts research at the Institute of Art History. He is in charge of The Július Koller Society. Lives and works in Bratislava.

Ideology vs. Sensitization. Investigating Spectatorship in the Work of *A White Space in a White Space* by Stano Filko, Miloš Laky and Ján Zavarský

White Space in a White Space teamwork project by Slovak artists Stano Filko (b. 1937), Miloš Laky (b. 1948) and Ján Zavarský (b. 1948) was realised in 1973-74 shortly after the so called "normalisation" (1972) started liquidation of liberal socialism in all spheres of culture and blunting of political resistance associated with the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Project's title recalls the fundamental motif of Kazimir Malevich's *Suprematist Composition: White on White*, which appeared a year after the October Revolution and was intended to lead to spiritual freedom. Launching stimulus for these artists came when they outgrew the individuality of artistic genius in collective creation. Secondly, in their joint manifesto they rejected any affinity with Art of the Object, the Environment, the Concept, Hyperrealism, Minimal Art, Lyrical and Postgeometric Abstraction, which are terms defined predominantly by West European and Anglo-American criticism. The aim of this paper is to investigate complex aesthetic and political content of this project in relation to the modernist ideology of the exhibition space. *White Space in a White Space* was documented for the first time during a one-day exhibition in the House of Art in Brno. The catalogue, with a manifesto in four languages, reproduces photographs from the exhibition. The painting, using a synthetic acrylic white colour (called 'latex'), is carried out by mechanical means with a manual roller, thus excluding individual signature. In 1975 the team of artists was invited to exhibit at the 9th Paris Biennale. Despite Laky's death the team project continued in 1977 with an exhibition in the Fiatal Művészek Klubja (Young Artists' Club) in Budapest. In the subsequent years 1977-80 Stano Filko continued to work on *White Space* independently. His solo third stage after *Sensibility* (1973) and *Sensitivity* (1974-6) was *Emotion* (1977). Alongside works done with the painting roller, Stano Filko produced post-conceptual pieces, "text-arts": *Transcendence* (1978-9) and *Transcendental Meditation* (1980). During this period Stano Filko was exhibiting in Poland and realisation of the work was bound up with the performative application of white paint directly to the walls of the gallery. Initially Filko together with Laky and Zavarský proceeded from the premise that the space which their pure art was to enter would be neutral. Now in Czechoslovakia of that time it was not possible to exhibit an art project of this kind publicly. This leads to assumption that the project's purpose was to work with the model of the white cube and irrevocably to transform not only the perception of idealised space, but also to shift spectators perception and notion of infinity.

SESSION 2

CATERINA PREDA

Department of Political Science, University of Bucharest

Caterina Preda is Senior University Lecturer at the Department of Political Science, University of Bucharest, Romania. She is working on art and politics (both cultural policies and artistic artifacts) in modern dictatorships and for now in Eastern Europe and Latin America (with a focus on Romania and Chile). She also deals with the aftermath of dictatorships through an analysis of art of memorialization or art of memory. Her latest title *Art and Politics under Modern Dictatorships. A Comparison between Chile and Romania* (Palgrave, 2017) analyses the relationship between art and politics in two contrasting modern dictatorships. She also edited *The State Artist in Romania and Eastern Europe The Role of the Creative Unions* (Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti, 2017).

A Look at East-South Cross-Regional Links during the Cold War through Exhibitions

This presentation proposes an analysis as part of the focus on “cultural transnationalism” or “cultural internationalism” between the South and the East, or of the “Socialist Second World”. It takes into account Piotr Piotrowski’s concept of horizontal art history and his call to see the union between the marginalized East and the Global South, as well as the discussion put forward by the artistic projects which engaged with the transregional solidarity of artists during the later stages of the Cold War. This analysis examines the constellations of transregional relationships as mediated through institutional collaboration practices of the Cold War period through the case of the Chilean Museum of Solidarity.

While scientific literature has shown limited interest in these transregional links, several contemporary artists have investigated transregional solidarity of left-wing movements of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly as part of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), through their work. In this context, this presentation will bring forward the case of the relation between the Museum of Solidarity (1970) in Chile and a communist regime in Eastern Europe, Romania. In fact, the Romanian example negates the logic of artists acting in solidarity with a cause put forward by the socialist artists of Chile, and introduces the possibility of the institutionalization and politicization of the cultural field by the socialist state. This approach also applies to the transregional cultural links.

SESSION 2

JULIANE DEBEUSSCHER

University of Barcelona / Université Grenoble Alpes

Juliane Debeusscher is an art historian based in Barcelona, Spain. Her work addresses the circulation of unofficial central European art across the Iron Curtain, with a particular focus on exhibitions and transnational networks. She is currently finishing her PhD (Universitat de Barcelona/Université Grenoble Alpes), with a fellowship from the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities associated with the research project *MoDe(s) Decentralized Modernities: Art, Politics and Counter-culture in the Transatlantic Axis during the Cold War*. Among her last publications is the edited volume of the Journal of Global Studies and Contemporary Art (REG | AC) on "Cold War networks and circulations: Cross-cultural Dialogues and Practices throughout the Global South (1957-1991)" (with Paula Barreiro López), and chapters in the books *Media and the Cold War in the 1980s* (2019) and *Atlántico Frío. Redes transnacionales del arte y la política en los tiempos del Telón de Acero* (2019). She is currently participating in the project *Confrontations. Sessions in East European Art History, 2019-2020*.

Negotiating the East-South Connection in and from the *Encuentros de Pamplona*

The decade of the 1970s was a period in which internationalist aspirations in the arts reached an unprecedented level on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In this context, exhibitions constituted a privileged terrain for artistic encounters and exchange. My paper addresses the case of The *Encuentros de Pamplona* [*Pamplona Meetings*], an eight-days festival of avant-garde arts held 1972 in the city of Pamplona, in Spain, during the last years of Franco's dictatorship. The *Encuentros* represented a significant episode for the inscription of the Spanish art scene in an international context, as well as for art's incursion into the public space in a context where artistic experiments were still viewed with suspicion by the authorities. It also allowed a local audience to discover practices developed abroad, including from the other side of the Iron Curtain, with the participation of artists from Socialist states (in particular, Czechoslovakia).

Relying on archival sources from the period and on recent readings of this event orchestrated by the Museo Reina Sofia (1997 and 2009), I will consider this event taking into account the tension between the Spanish context – still marked by repression and censorship – and the manifestation's international reach, which contributed to transcend the blocks' cultural boundaries and enable contacts between artists from regions of distinct geopolitical and social backgrounds. I would like to put for discussion the role of art exhibitions in the process of articulation of an Eastern-Southern European connection during the Cold war, contemplated here as a heterogeneous area of cultural transfers and entanglements. In fact, while the connections between Latin America and Eastern Europe have been the subject of recent studies and comparisons, the latter's relationships with Spain has been much less explored and deserves further examination. Rather than discourage us to do research on this topic, the fact that the documentation concerning these Southern-Eastern relationships within Europe is difficult to access, or even non-existent in some cases, should invites us to reflect on the on the gaps that still exist in the history of artistic relations during the Cold War, and on possible ways to fill them.

SESSION 2

DIETMAR UNTERKOFER

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

Dietmar Unterkofler is an art historian currently based in Bozen-Bolzano. Studied Comparative Literature, German Studies and Cultural Studies in Vienna, Bologna, and Belgrade. He was teaching at the University of Novi Sad, and he holds a PhD from the Vienna University. His thesis “At second glance – Neo-Avant-garde and Conceptual Art in Hungary and Serbia 1965-1980” offers a detailed comparative analysis of experimental art in late socialism in Hungary and Serbia.

Non-Aligned Internationalism: Awkward Encounters and the New Art Practice in Yugoslavia during the Cold War

Internationalism and cross-border-relations are key factors within the development of the critical art from the 1960's and 70's. This is especially true for the peripheral (in comparison to the acknowledged – western – centers) movements from Yugoslavia. Ideas, Individuals and media are persistently crossing borders, disciplines and contexts, while intensifying on singular occasions and places. Those 'awkward encounters' created by artists through their actions and interventions facilitated processes of confrontation, cultural translation and mediation. The practices of the artists were creating micro-political situations where specific publics encountered new perceptions and new forms of making knowledge. Artists from Eastern Europe mostly strived for establishing contacts with their Western European and American likeminded fellows. The role of Yugoslavia during the Cold War was a singular one, positioning the country outside the East-West dichotomy implemented by the Iron Curtain. By choosing and promotion a third way, well known under the name of self-management-socialism, the countries' leader Josip Broz Tito managed to manoeuver more or less successfully through the wild waters of Cold War. Yugoslavian cultural politics were on the other hand – most probably deliberately – contradictory. On the one hand experimental and critical forms of art that were deemed subversive in the eyes of the authorities were marginalized; on the other hand, this kind of art was presented at international events and festivals and promoted. The goal was clearly to present the image of a tolerant and open cultural nation to the rest of the world, yet to follow cultural politics internally that were in line with the political reflections of the party. Besides the cultural events such as Nove Tendencije (1961 – 1973) , which was exclusively dedicated to the New Art of neo-avant-garde, neo-constructivism, computer-art and all the way to conceptual art, the international music and theater festival FEST (from 1971 on) and BITEF (Beogradski internacionalni teatarski festival, from 1967 on), it was the so-called student cultural centers (Studentski Kulturni Centar) where international avant-garde art developed in the 1970s are to be located.

SESSION 2

KÄDI TALVOJA

Institute of Art History and Visual Culture,
Estonian Academy of Arts

Kädi Talvoja (PhD) is a researcher at the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture, Estonian Academy of Arts. Her research focus lies in the historiography of Soviet visual art, especially the developments of national discourse(s) in Soviet art ideology, policy and practice.

Triennials of Baltic Art as a Dysfunctional Format of Internationalism?

In my paper I address the Baltic art triennials, which offered during 1970s and 1980s the most intense platform for transnational communication for Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian artists, having quite limited mobility outside USSR. Inspired by biennials of graphic arts in Ljubljana (1955) and Krakow (1966), in 1968 Estonian artists instituted Tallinn Print Triennials, with original ambition to establish a tradition of international biennials. (The first exhibition with (proper) international participation happened only just 1989). The enterprise was followed by the Vilnius Painting Triennials (1969), Riga Sculpture Quadrennials (1972) and Triennials of Baltic Young Artists (1979), filling these decades with frequent meetings of Baltic artists.

The triennials enjoyed relative freedom of periphery and exposed the newest (even avant-garde) trends in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian art. The rich selection of prizes and competitive atmosphere inspired artists to innovations, at the same time the comparative context directed the attention to the differences in the republics' art. The very triennials kept alive and cultivated the cliché images (and self-images) of national schools – Estonian art being described as restrained and rational, Lithuanians related to expressive temperament – at work even today.

As Moscow was losing or diminishing its mediating role in the cultural communication of different parts of Soviet Union, these self-initiated shows, in its way, displaced the format of established Baltic joint jubilee exhibitions in Moscow (1960, 1966, 1973). However, the revitalizing effect of the triennials did not last. Not growing into international events, by the 1980s this confined format gradually lost its incentive function: the national particularities diffused and art renomee declined.

SESSION 3

PAVLÍNA MORGANOVÁ

Academy of Fine Arts, Prague

Pavλίna Morganová is an art historian and curator, based in Prague, Czech Republic. Works as a director of the Research Center and vice-rector for art, research and development at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. She lectures on Czech Art of the 20th century, is a co-editor of the anthologies of manifestos and documents from Czech art 1939-1989 (Academia, 2001) and *Czech art 1980-2010* (VVP AVU, 2011). She is the author of the book *Czech Action Art / Happenings, Actions, Events, Land Art, Body Art and Performance Art Behind the Iron Curtain*. Her recent book/guide published in *Czech Walk through Prague* is mapping the places where the happenings, performances and other actions took place in 1960s, 70s and 80s (it is going to be published in English in 2017). She also published texts in art journals and catalogues, e. g. *Jiří Kovanda / I Haven't Been Here Yet* (Wrocław Contemporary Museum, The Brno House of Arts, 2013), *Between the First and Second Modernity 1985-2012* (National Gallery in Prague, 2011), *Fluxus East* ((Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, 2007); *Action, Word, Movement, Space* (Gallery of the City of Prague, 1999).

Exhibitions in the Whirl of History

This paper is based on research entitled *The Medium of the Exhibition. Czech Art 1957-1999* conducted at the Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (VVP AVU) over the past three years. As indicated by the title, this research focused on the transformation of exhibitions during the second half of the 20th century. This was a period in which the culture of the Central and Eastern European regions underwent a turbulent political transformation, and the exhibition as medium saw a complex change. Within the contours of the communist regime, the exhibition was a propagandistic tool of the ruling party's political and cultural aims. During more liberal times, it was a vehicle for new artistic approaches and also served to codify the periods' art history interpretations. Yet throughout the post-Second World War period it mainly served as a means of communication within the art community. If it took the form of an exhibition in a private flat, a studio confrontation or a gallery retrospective, it did not play in this regard such a substantial role. I will examine exhibition types from official to secret, unofficial shows; from collective jury-based to curatorial exhibitions; from white cube to apartment shows. I would also like to analyse how the exhibition spaces actually looked, how they were run and what the social rituals connected to exhibition practices were.

In fact, exhibition history is, to a far greater extent than a traditional history of styles, influenced by changes to the political, social and economic situation, which is inscribed on institutional structures and within exhibition possibilities themselves. The history of exhibitions thus becomes in many respects the institutional history of the art industry. Nevertheless, the exhibition remains, above all, a cultural tool for communicating presently acknowledged artistic values.

SESSION 3

CLAUDIA FRIEDRICH

Department of Art History - Art History and Art Market, University of Cologne

Claudia Friedrich studied Art History with a focus in the mediation of art regarding the art market and museums (M.A.) at the Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf, 2014. Since 2014 she is a Research Assistant for Art History and Art Market Studies at the Department of Art History at the University of Cologne. She co-developed the project *ART | GALLERY GIS | COLOGNE*. She participated in the conference: “The Galerie Stern within the context of the Rhineland Art Trade during National Socialism” with a Keynote Lecture about “On the development of Düsseldorf’s art trade from the mid 19th century until 1945” (with Prof. Dr. Nadine Oberste-Hetbleck). She is editing Manager and author of numerous publications in Art and Art Market Studies.

'Eastern Intermezzi' at the ART COLOGNE during the Cold War

Founded in 1967 the *ART COLOGNE* was the first art fair worldwide to specialize in contemporary art. Over the decades the "Fair for Modern and Contemporary Art" became the role model for a globally prosperous format. Generally art fairs evolved as exhibitions and presentation platforms in the art market as well as essential junctions in the art system. In this way, art fairs developed in their function an increasingly strong forces of gravitation and radiance within the transnational art system. The concentrated accumulation of protagonists, artists, art dealers, gallerists, and objects of the network of 'Art', has to be described as a melting pot and social interaction space. Art fairs produce the breeding ground for a diffusing transfer of knowledge and culture.

In 1967 the primary objectives of the *ART COLOGNE* (*Kunstmarkt Köln*) were to promote German artists and establish a new center for the art trade in post-war Germany. Due to the competitive situations, for example with Art Basel in 1970, the Cologne Art Fair opened up to international exhibitors. Until 1989, the participants and exhibitors of the *ART COLOGNE* came mainly from the "western focused" art and cultural area. Nevertheless, sporadically a few galleries and art institutions based at 'behind the Iron Curtain' took part. On the basis of the digital mapping project *ART | GALLERY GIS | COLOGNE* the following eastern european protagonists are identified: AHG Hemus, Sofia, Bulgaria / Sztuka Polska, Warsaw, Poland / Artunion – Galerie Fészek, Budapest, Hungary. Central questions of the contribution should therefore be: What prerequisites, backgrounds and networks are behind these participations and collaborations? Which art was shown and can the booth-exhibition be reconstructed?

SESSION 3

VERONIKA ROLLOVÁ

Academy of Art, Architecture and Design, Prague

Veronika Rollová, is an art historian based in Prague. In her research she addresses history of art, architecture and design in relation to politics with a special focus on the ways in which Czechoslovak art institutions approached public space during the Cold War era. Since 2018 she works at the Academy of Art, Architecture and Design in Prague on a five-year project „Architecture and Czech politics since 19th to 21st Century“. In 2019 her Ph.D. dissertation was published under the title *Pražský hrad na cestě ke komunistické utopii (1948–1968)* (Prague Castle on Its Way Towards Communist Utopia (1948–1968) and she also edited a volume *Contact. International Symposium of Ceramics Bechyně 1966–2018*. She is a curator of the Mimochoodem Gallery in Prague, which deals with site-specific projects created by young artists in the public space, and since 2018 participates in research and other activities related to the International Symposium of Ceramics Bechyně.

Fragile Opportunity: International Exhibition of Ceramics in Prague 1962 as a Site of Contact between East and West

After the World War 2 clay became a material of a great interest among artists such as Pablo Picasso or Asger Jorn for its expressive quality and connotations with “primitive” art. The International Academy of Ceramics (AIC) was established in 1952 in Geneva as a non-political organization and its main goal was a promotion of clay in a context of contemporary art. International exhibitions were taking place in different countries under the auspices of AIC to fulfil this mission, starting with Cannes (1956) and Ostend (1959). The International Exhibition of Ceramics in Prague (IECP, 1962) was arranged thanks to the Czechoslovak pavilion’s success at the EXPO ‘58, with Czechoslovakia as the first Socialist country to ever host an AIC exhibition.

In the proposed paper I would like to explore a role of ceramics in cultural diplomacy of the 1960s – with AIC trying to expand outside of Europe (Istanbul, 1967) – and pay special attention to IECP 1962 as to a specific occasion, at which the differing strategies of East vs. West – and also of the state vs. individual artists – met. Countries outside of the East–West dichotomy also came into the equation: Argentina won a golden medal in Prague. In Socialist context, ceramics was valued for its connotations with “folk art”; interconnection of art with industry; and as an export article. IECP was one of the first Czechoslovak attempts to find new forms of inwards-oriented propaganda after Stalinist-era strategies became obsolete, but new ones were yet to be found. The exhibition was originally planned for 1960, when the Czechoslovak authorities claimed, that Socialism has successfully been built. The IECP was seen as a unique possibility to “market” this success to both Czechoslovak citizens and foreign visitors. For artists from Central Europe the IECP proposed a different possibility altogether: to participate in growing “ceramics network”, which successfully crossed the Iron Curtain and remained vital until the 1980s.

SESSION 3

DÁNIEL VÉRI

Ferenczi Museum Center, Budapest

Daniel Véri is an art and cultural historian, head of scientific affairs at the Ferenczy Museum Center in Szentendre, Hungary. He is a member of the research group “Confrontations: Sessions in East European Art History” (UCL, 2019–2020). His research interests include Central European art from the 1945–89 period, especially the artistic reception of Jewish identity and the Holocaust, as well as the cultural history of blood libels. He holds a PhD in the history of art from Eötvös Loránd University (2016); his dissertation was dedicated to János Major, a major Jewish figure of the 1960s–70s Hungarian neo-avant-garde (See ‘Leading the Dead’ – The World of János Major. Budapest: MKE, 2013). Previously, he received MA degrees in art history (ELTE, 2009) and history (Central European University, 2010). Recent publications include: “Holocaust and the Arts: Paths and Crossroads”, in: *Art in Hungary 1956–1980: Doublespeak and Beyond*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2018; “The Tiszaeszlár Blood Libel: Image and Propaganda”, in: *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitism in International Perspective*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019.

The Great Book Theft. French-Hungarian Exhibitions Across the Iron Curtain

In 1959 an exhibition of French books was organised at the Budapest Kunsthalle: by the end of the two-week show, most of the books on display had been stolen by visitors. The Kádár- regime, which came to power by crushing the 1956 revolution intended to assuage its own isolation: in 1958, Hungary participated at the Brussels World's Fair, as well as – follow a ten year hiatus – at the Venice Biennale, the French book exhibition was the third such project.

Many of the 'thieves' of the book exhibition sixty years ago were artists studying at the Academy of Fine Arts as well as art history university students, who would become outstanding representatives of their profession in the decades to come. For them, the colourful illustrated art books, especially the volumes introducing contemporary Western art, constituted an exceptionally significant resource. At that time information was extremely scarce: no such exhibitions were allowed to enter the country, while art history education did not span beyond the turn of the nineteenth century. Following the exhibition in Budapest, another show was organised for Hungarian books at the Sorbonne in Paris, visited by Tristan Tzara and Louis Aragon, among others. The idea of organising the book shows had been on the table since 1956, but the enterprise was delayed by the 1956 revolution and ensuing retaliations. The exhibitions were eventually realised, but the French made every effort to avoid higher level diplomatic relations, from which the Hungarian leadership expected the confirmation of its own legitimacy. The vernissage was also overshadowed by the revolution: French youth were handing out pamphlets by the Comité Déry, demanding the release of the Hungarian author from prison.

These twin exhibitions are exquisite examples of cultural transfer in the Cold War era, when art books were in fact tools of "soft" power in a context defined by the rivalry and conflict of world powers.

KEYNOTE LECTURE

KLARA KEMP WELCH

The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London

Klara Kemp-Welch specialises in intersections between art and politics in the 20th century with a particular focus on modern and contemporary art from former Eastern Europe. She was educated at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies and University College London, where her doctorate on East-Central European Conceptualism was supervised by Professor Briony Fer. Before joining The Courtauld in 2009, she lectured at University College London, the University of the Arts London (Camberwell), and the University of York. Her publications include *Antipolitics in Central European Art. Reticence as Dissidence under Post-Totalitarian Rule 1956-1989* (London: IB Tauris, 2014) and *Networking the Bloc. Experimental Art in Eastern Europe 1965- 1989* (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press, 2018). She is currently writing a monograph on *Art, Labour and Migration in a 'Two Speed' Europe*.

Experiences of Alienation and De-Alienation in the Experimental Art World of the 1970s

With reference to the capitalist bloc at this time, Lawrence Alloway defined the art world as 'a sum of persons, objects, resources, messages, and ideas... monuments and parties, aesthetics and openings, *Avalanche* and *Art in America*'. The art world system he sought to characterise was a decentralized network of artists, art historians, critics, gallerists and dealers, driven by a convergence between 'intellectual interest and high profits'. He noted grimly that 'withdrawing from the art world' appeared to be the only cure for what he called the 'alienation by distribution effect'. On the other hand, the success many experimental artists in Soviet satellite countries had had in forging international art world connections, resulting, among others in the exhibition at de Appel in Amsterdam *Works and Words* in 1979, led Czech artist and art historian Jaroslav Anděl to claim enthusiastically that an artist's nationality was fast becoming an irrelevance and that 'the contemporary artist seems to be a resident of a global art village with no borders: works of art in cognitive spirit appear everywhere, and it happens that some artists living far apart seem sometimes to be more akin... than others living in the same town'. This paper explores the question of alienation and de-alienation in relation to the wider social dimensions of the cold war art world as a system, with a focus on key experimental artists, events and exhibitions in the Soviet satellite countries.

KEYNOTE LECTURE

SVEN SPIEKER

University of California at Santa Barbara

Sven Spieker teaches in the Comparative Literature Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He specializes in modern and contemporary art and culture, with an emphasis on Russia and Eastern Europe, and a special interest in issues related to documentary and knowledge production. Spieker has lectured and published on topics ranging from the historical avant-garde (Malevich, Rodchenko, Dziga Vertov) to late 20th century art practice from Wolfgang Kippenberger to subREAL. His books and articles have appeared in German, Korean, Russian, Swedish, Polish, and English. Spieker's latest book publication is an edited volume devoted to the relationship between art and destruction (MIT Press/Whitechapel Gallery, 2017). The monograph *The Big Archive* (MIT Press, 2008; Korean translation 2014) focused on the archive as a crucible of European modernism. Spieker is the founding editor of ARTMargins Print and ARTMargins Online.

Demonstrative Modes of Exhibition in Eastern Europe during the 1960s and 1970s

My talk concerns what I will provisionally call “exhibition-as-demonstration” in Eastern European Art of the 1960s and ‘70s. I am interested in artists who, circumventing institutional outlets, turn public spaces (streets, squares, nature) into a “demonstration zone” that competes as such with official space and its demonstrative displays of propaganda and slogans. The artist-driven demonstrations I am interested—from B. Szombathy’s carrying a photograph of Lenin through the streets of Budapest to T. Gotovac displaying pages of the womens’ magazine *Elle* in a forest—straddle the line between art action, parapolitical display, and a semiotic practice oriented at what Walter Benjamin called “exhibition value” (*Ausstellungswert*). The “demonstrations” by the group Collective Actions; E. Tot; T. Gotovac; B. Dmitrijevic; B. Szombathy; E. Partum; and I. Grigorescu that I will be focusing on in my talk, while they all differ in many respects, share certain characteristics: they are mobile; demonstrative; appellative; and didactic.

SESSION 4

Kirill CHUNIKHIN

Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg

Kirill Chunikhin is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, National Research University Higher School of Economics, St Petersburg. He holds a Ph. D from Jacobs University, Bremen. He was a Pontica Magna Fellow at New Europe College, Bucharest, Romania and was the recipient of a TERRA foundation grant for research in the USA. He is currently participating in the international seminar *Periodization in Art History and its Conundrums. How to tackle them in East-Central Europe* (NEC, Bucharest) which is part of the Getty Foundation's *Connecting Art Histories* initiative.

Mediating through Design: Cold War and Materiality at the Exhibition *Graphic Art USA: 1963-64*

In 1959, the United State Information Agency (USIA) organized the American National Exhibition in Moscow (ANEM), which introduced a cross-section of twentieth-century American painting to the Soviet people. The ANEM art section fulfilled a curatorial mandate: At the expense of canonical and conservative Socialist Realism, recent experiments with abstraction in modern American art strongly contrasted totalitarian from democratic regimes. This demonstration turned out to be a major success for the American policy of advancing visual art in the USSR, and the social and cultural impacts of the ANEM on Soviet people have been acknowledged within the Cold War scholarship. However, it is still an open question how the ANEM influenced consequent USIA exhibitions of American art in the USSR.

In order to answer this question, I consider the poorly examined exhibition *Graphic Arts: USA, 1963-64*. This show of over 1,000 cutting-edge works of art visited four Soviet cities, attracted more than 1.5 million people, and subsequently turned out to be one of the most effective USIA travelling exhibits. Analyzing *Graphic Arts: USA* and comparing it to the ANEM, I demonstrate how both positive and negative lessons of the ANEM influenced the evolving USIA approach to exhibiting American art in the USSR. Ultimately, I will speculate whether *Graphic Arts: USA* was a new phase in the representation of American culture abroad, and in exploiting contemporary design for transmitting ideology overseas.

SESSION 4

Alessandra FRANETOVICH

University of Florence

Alessandra Franetovich is an art historian and independent curator. She is currently a PhD candidate in Art History at University of Florence, with a three year scholarship. Her dissertation research addresses the concept of the archive as a device to artistic self-institutionalisation, and investigates the role of archival practices in the construction of Russian contemporary art, through the case study of the Archive of Moscow Conceptualism owned by the artist Vadim Zakharov. She has led lectures, seminars, and conferences on her research at Universität Leipzig, Deutsche Forum für Kunstgeschichte / Centre allemande d'Histoire de l'Art di Parigi, University of Turin, PAV, Museo Parco Arte Vivente, Albertina Accademy of Fine Arts, University of Pisa. As curatorial assistant she collaborated with museums, art institutions, and galleries in Italy. As an independent curator, she has curated exhibitions and collaborated with art galleries, non-profit spaces, and festivals. Her latest articles and essays have been published on Middle Plane and e-flux, the last will be published on Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai.

Tracing the Italian Network of Russian Unofficial Soviet Art in the 1960s and 1970s

The paper attempts to present a first reconstruction of the polyphonic and not so evident network that played a pivotal role in the diffusion of Russian unofficial Soviet Art in Italy since the 1960's up to the end of the 1970's. A story that is characterized by political interests and intromissions, social omissions, and later by lack of memories and attentions.

The main focus will be on the figure of Enrico Crispolti, art historian, art critic and curator of important exhibitions, with the aim to investigate his connection with Russian unofficial Soviet art since the exhibition *Alternative attuali 3* [*Current alternatives*] realized in 1965 at L'Aquila, that presented for the first time to the Italian public this artistic experience through drawings lent from Italian private collection, up to the mayor exhibition *La nuova arte sovietica: una prospettiva non ufficiale* [*New Soviet art: an unofficial perspective*] realized in 1977 in Venice together with Gabriella Moncada, and later known as Biennale del dissenso.

I would like to stress the role played by Crispolti in collaboration with different figures active in the cultural and art scene, mostly of them close to the Italian Communist Party, to trace the existing connection between the diffusion of unofficial Soviet Art in Italy, that sometimes went hand in hand with a certain typology of Italian artistic production close to the leftist direction in the country, and the political reality of a country subject to a strong process of Americanization while being one important point of reference for the development of the Communist Party and its closeness to USSR.

SESSION 4

Galina Dekova

National Academy of Arts, Sofia

Galina Dekova is an art historian; she holds a PhD from the National Academy of Arts; board Member of UBA (Union of Bulgarian Artists). Current positions - curator at Gallery Vaska Emanouilova, branch of Sofia City Art Gallery and adjunct professor at the National Academy of Arts, Sofia. Past work experience includes - Co-Curator of Enchanted Kingdom. 130th Anniversary of the Birth of Nikolay Raynov. Exhibition (2019), Curator and Artistic Director at Studio-collection Svetlin Roussev (2012–2018). Research field: Bulgarian modernism, art from the XX century. Author of the publications: *The Eleophotographs of Dimitar Dobrovich – a Specific Case* (2017), *Danail Dechev- Homecoming* (2015).

Artistic Relations between Socialist Bulgaria and the Western World

There are so many occasions of interchange in terms of visual art and art exhibitions, artistic residencies, personal and institutional connections across the Iron curtain during socialism in Bulgaria that one is tempted to believe that it was a rather permeable membrane that was especially intended to pass through art and cultural products. Especially the efforts of Ludmila Zhivkova functioning as a minister of culture between 1977 and 1981 was marked by an unprecedented extension of state regulated exchange with the West.

A starting point of artistic exchange in visual art might be set in 1961 when a large representative exhibition of Bulgarian art was presented in Paris. Later, due to the fact that the Bulgarian Union of Artists was recognized a major conductor of political propaganda it was given an unusual independence to conduct foreign relationships. As a result, in the 70-ies the annual representation of Bulgarian artists at the Autumn Salon was established, which culminated in a particular Bulgarian section for contemporary art in 1981 with more than 20 participants. Following an exclusive contract for cultural exchange with the Viennese Künstlerhaus in the 80-ies there was a significant activation of the connections with Austria. Another phenomenon is the state company for foreign trade Hemus, that was solely intended to distribute Bulgarian culture in Western countries and among others established a Bulgarian gallery in Washington. There was also a nonregulated part of interpersonal connections which the state could not completely prevent such as the individual participation of Bulgarian artists at international forums or the contacts between artists and foreign diplomats.

SESSION 4

Anna Markowska

University of Wrocław

Anna Markowska is an art historian, curator and critic, graduated from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. She is currently a professor at the University of Wrocław. Her research and teaching interests focus on art and culture from 1945 till now, comprise art after Holocaust, Polish art under Communism, art strategies in relation to power, methodologies of history, post-war American art. He has just published: *Dlaczego Duchamp nie czesał się z przedziałkiem* (*Why Duchamp didn't part his hair*, Universitas, Krakow 2019).

Two Exhibitions of 1948 as Models of Participation in the Communist Revolution in Poland

In 1948, two important exhibitions took place in Poland – in Łódź and Wrocław – which visualized the concept of the so-called indulgent revolution. It was a concept formulated immediately after World War II by the Communist administration to carry out social and political changes in the country (which at the time fell within the reach of Soviet domination), decisively but without strict doctrines in the cultural sphere. This was supposed to result in winning many exhausted and traumatized citizens over by the new government.

In the workers' Łódź in turn, where the huge textile industry had just been nationalized, the so-called Neoplastic Room (Sala Neoplastyczna) inspired by the De Stijl movement was created in a local museum as an

exhibition space for the international avant-garde collection gathered already in the interwar period. The space was designed by Władysław Strzemiński, a collaborator of Kazimir Malevich in the 1920s, and commissioned by Marian Minich, director of the museum, who decided to follow in the footsteps of Alexander Dorner and his project *Raum der Abstrakten* by El Lissitzky at the Provinzialmuseum in Hannover (1927). Although Strzemiński was already communising before the war, he escaped from Russia in 1922 and settled down in Poland because of the Soviet revolution, which, spreading terror, very soon began to devour its own children. Since the Łódź collection of international art did not include works by Soviet artists, and Strzemiński, even before the war, was distancing himself from the too pushy combination of art and party agitation, the exhibition space seemed – at least at first glance – not to refer to the needs of current politics. It was austere, abstract, based on vertical and horizontal lines and basic colours. The second city, Wrocław (until recently German Breslau), hosted the most spectacular *Exhibition of the Recovered Territories* (*Wystawa Ziem Odzyskanych, WZO*), where art was not the main protagonist because it focused primarily on the economic achievements of the territories annexed to Poland after the Yalta Conference in 1945. However, many outstanding Polish artists, representing different artistic positions, were employed to present these achievements. As a result, the WZO turned out to be the most heterogeneous of the three exhibitions, and by focusing on the national economy it became a kind of a utopian vision full of abundance, fulfilling the role of a potlatch. Numerous kiosks, shops, restaurants, and cafes were full of delicacies and goods absent from everyday life for the inhabitants of the destroyed country, and the merry-go-rounds, boats, and the nearby zoo allowed to have a nice time. Art was only one of many other proposals. The WZO was an exhibition with broad propaganda ambitions, because the World Congress of Intellectuals in Defense of Peace, which took place during the exhibition, gathered many personalities from the world of culture, including Pablo Picasso himself, who was then at the peak of his fame and who, on the occasion of his arrival in Poland, boarded an airplane for the first time.

The first exhibition offered the joy of a higher self-awareness, so that material sacrifices were not a problem; the second promised the abundance of all goods and good fun. Soon, however, the idea of revolutionary gentleness collapsed and with it the possibility of choice and private international contacts.

SESSION 5

Andrea Bátorová

Comenius University, Bratislava

Andrea Bátorová is an assistant professor at the Institute of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. Between 2011 and 2017, she was a researcher at the Institute for Cultural and Visual Studies of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. Her research focuses on alternative and unofficial art and its societal contextualization between the 1960s and the 1980s in Eastern Europe, especially in the former Czechoslovakia. Between 2007 and 2009, she worked as an assistant curator at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart in Germany. She received her doctoral degree from the University of Regensburg, Germany. Her thesis, entitled "Action Art in Slovakia in the 1960s: Actions by Alex Mlynárčik", was published in German in 2009 and in Slovak in 2011. She has given invited lectures at the 102nd CAA Annual Conference in Chicago, the Tate Modern in London, the AAH Annual Conference in Norwich, Humboldt University in Berlin, the University of Vienna, and the 13th Congress of Gesellschaft für Theaterwissenschaft in Frankfurt. She participated at the project "Action art beyond the Iron curtain" (DFG, 2015- 18). Recent publications include "The Art of Contestation. Performative practices in the 1960s and 1970s in Slovakia" (2019).

Alternative Art and Exhibition Practices in the 1960s in former Czechoslovakia

In my paper I examine the interrelations between western and eastern art scenes in former Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. In mentioned decade, former Czechoslovakia went through a complicated process of whole complex of socio-political changes or even ruptures, which were reflected immediately in the cultural field. In my contribution I focus on innovative exhibition projects, which happened in the liberal atmosphere of "socialism with a human face" and which became sites of international cooperation. These exhibitions act like a mirror of in the Czechoslovak cultural field, transformed by such striking changes as mentioned above.

Concretely, I would like to focus on the work of Slovak artist Alex Mlynárčik, who 1964 traveled to Paris and got in contact with artistic scene there by meeting Pierre Restany. Following this meeting in Galerie Lara Vincy a vivid cooperation over many years started, which included Mlynárčiks solo-exhibitions in Paris in (1966) or in Milan (1969) and his participation on large-sized shows like Superlund in Sweden (1967), or Biennial of young artists in Paris (1969). As well, Mlynárčik organized huge happenings in cooperation with international artists, like in happening „Day of Joy“ (1971) or „Evas wedding“ (1972). After the "normalization" started in 1972, Mlynárčik was excluded from the Association of fine artists (which ment the prohibition to exhibit his works) and Restany was officialy forbidden to enter Czechoslovakia, their cooperation went on in form of alternative project „Argillia – regnum ex alio loco“ – a state without boundaries – which was a kind of semi-fictional project.

Another key exhibition, which I would like to present in my contribution, is the large size international show „Danuvius 68“, which was planned as international exhibition of contemporary artworks. The aim of „Danuvius 68“ was to present the recent tendencies in artworld and reflected the liberal development on the cultural field in 1967 and 1968. On 21. August 1968 as the occupation by the Armies of Warsaw pact began, the show was almost finished (it was just few days before the opening). „Danuvius 68“ was planned as an extraordinary art biennial in Eastern Europe, but it remained a single exhibition. In my paper I would like to explain the circumstances and examine the complex nexus between mentioned art exhibitions and politics, which was extremely pulsating and fascinating.

SESSION 5

Cristian Nae

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iasi

Cristian Nae is associate professor at the National University of Arts “George Enescu” in Iași, Romania, where he teaches courses on contemporary art history, critical theory, visual and exhibition studies. He has benefited from scholarships and research grants from the Erste Foundation (Vienna), the Romanian Council of Scientific Research (CNCS-UEFISCDI), the CAA-Getty International Program, the Getty Foundation (Los Angeles) and New Europe College (Bucharest). Currently, he is senior advisor in the project *Periodization in the History of Art and its Conundrums. How to tackle them in East-Central Europe* (New Europe College, Bucharest), supported by the Getty Foundation as part of its *Connecting Art Histories* initiative. His latest studies have appeared in collective volumes published by Wiley-Blackwell (2019, forthcoming), de Gruyter (2019) and Routledge (2018). Nae edited the book *(In)Visible Frames. Rethorics and Experimental Exhibition Practices in Romania 1965-1989* (Idea, 2019). As a curator, he is the co-organizer of the exhibition *Rethinking the Image of the World: Projects and Sketches* (Musée Mill, La Louvrière, Belgium, 2019), which was part of the Europalia Arts Festival. Nae also curated *Unfinished Conversations on the Weight of Absence*, the exhibition marking Romania’s participation in the 58th Venice Biennale (2019).

The Invention of Space. Alternative Exhibition Spaces in Romania during the Cold War

Romania's artistic system during socialism was constituted mainly by artists and art critics activating in a centralized network of institutions run by the Union of Fine Artists and/or the Ministry of Culture. After 1971, concomitant with an increasing political isolation from the international artworld, Romanian artists who embraced experimental art practices sought to invent "grey zones" inside the existing art field - spaces of aesthetic autonomy where the imposed aesthetic ideology might be avoided, ignored or subverted. While some galleries like Amfora and Galeria Nouă attempted to create a "curated" program in the 1970s, other experimental art practices were relegated to marginal spaces: private houses, non-artistic venues (the hallway of the Architecture Faculty or the Village Museum in Bucharest, the Pharmacy Museum in Sibiu, the Botanic Garden in Iasi etc.); they were located in basements and attics or performed in the street. Internationally, many performative or conceptual art pieces were communicated through mail art for exhibitions (*Arte de sistemas*, CAyC; *Messagio Terra*) or artist-run publications, which became alternative exhibition platforms. The state-supported participation to international exhibitions was also used temporarily as an experimental platforms due to the "minor" condition of textile or decorative arts.

This presentation intends to map several disruptive exhibitions, situations and events that created heterotopic spaces within the existing institutional infrastructure in Romania between 1971 and 1989. Using Henri Lefebvre's notion of space as a "practiced place", I would suggest that such interventions in the so-called "second public sphere" invented temporary zones of artistic encounters within the structure of everyday life.

SESSION 5

Magda Radu

“George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iasi
and Salonul de proiecte, Bucharest

Magda Radu is a curator and art historian based in Bucharest. She is one of the founders and co-curator of the program Salonul de proiecte, which functioned between 2011 and 2015 at MNAC Anexa and is now an independent initiative located in the Universul Palace in Bucharest. She edited (or co-edited) several exhibitions catalogues and books, among which: *Art in Romania Between 1945-2000. An Analysis from Today's Perspective* (2016), *subREAL* (2015), *Dear Money* (2014) and *André Cadere / Andrei Cădere* (2011). In the last few years she also curated exhibitions at institutions including MUSAC, Leon; Spinnerei, Leipzig; and Photo España, Madrid. She was the curator of the Romanian Pavilion at the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (2017).

Turning the Tables: Émigré Artists and the West during the Cold War

The presentation will consider the phenomenon of artists who left Romania during the Cold War, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. Departing from an exhibition organized around this subject in Bucharest in 2019, my endeavor will seek to further develop some considerations highlighted in the exhibition, focusing on a few examples which will hopefully help us rethink issues pertaining to cultural transfers and diasporic subjectivities during a period when the chance to travel abroad could completely and irrevocably change the course of a person's life. Reactivating the memory of those decades today becomes all the more necessary given that we find ourselves at a turning point, in which we are urged to reflect on the change of the political regime in 1989. In regard to the intersection of East-West viewpoints that such a project reveals, an important line bringing together multiple positions is the articulation of a critical, lucid perception of the West, also throwing into relief the issue of the failure to adapt—sometimes compounded by a conscious refusal to do so—to the artistic mechanisms of the “free” world.

SESSION 5

Zofia Reznik

Institute of History of Art, University of Wrocław /
Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław

Zofia Reznik is an art researcher, curator, cultural animator and academic teacher. Her research interests include contemporary art, gender and memory studies, oral history and herstories, artistic research, psychogeography and new media. She graduated from the Inter-faculty Individual Studies in Humanities (MISH) at the University of Wrocław and finished postgraduate Gender Studies at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Currently, she is preparing a PhD dissertation on the artistic research in XXI-century Poland, under the supervision of prof. Anna Markowska at the Institute of the History of Art of the University of Wrocław. Since 2018, she is directing a research project on the oral history of women's art of the 1970s in the so-called Regained Territories (*The Art of Wrocław Women Artists in the 1970s in the Light of their Micronarrations*, a National Science Center grant no 2017/27/N/HS2/02476). She's a co-chairwoman of the Version Foundation and a lecturer at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Arts and Design in Wrocław.

"Women's Art in Wrocław in 1978 and the International Feminist Exhibitions of the 1970s"

The *Women's Art* exhibition that took place in 1978 in Wrocław was the only international women's art exhibition – and a feminist one! – presented in Poland under the communism, followed by the further feminist-driven or feminist-informed presentations taking place not before the transformation of the 1990s, and mainly in the XXI century. Being a very small presentation in a tiny Jatki PSP gallery, it included works of Carolee Schneemann, Suzy Lake, Noemi Maidan and Natalia LL, who was the organizer of this presentation thanks to both her international contacts and local status.

In this paper I would like to present this project within the interwoven contexts of the struggles of the feminist movement of the decade, the international artistic neo-avantgarde and its aspirations, as well as the socio-political context of the 1970s Poland and, especially, focusing on the cultural specificity of the so-called Regained Territories and its cultural capital – Wrocław.

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Zanna Gilbert

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Zanna Gilbert is a senior research specialist in the Getty Research Institute's curatorial department. She completed her PhD at the School of Philosophy and Art History at the University of Essex, UK, in collaboration with Tate Research. Her research focuses on transnational conceptual art, concrete art and poetry, Xerox art, and the international mail art network. From 2012 to 2015, Gilbert was Andrew W. Mellon C-MAP postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, where she was responsible for research focusing on art in Latin America and was founding co-editor of MoMA's online publication post. She has curated a number of exhibitions, including *Daniel Santiago: Brazil Is My Abyss* (Museu de Arte Moderna Aloisio Magalhães and Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói, 2012, 2014); *The Unmaker of Objects: Edgardo Antonio Vigo's Marginal Media* (MoMA, 2014); *Home Archives: Paulo Bruscky and Robert Rehfeldt's Mail Exchange* (Chert, Berlin, 2015) and she contributed a section on artistic exchange for the exhibition *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980* (MoMA, 2015). Most recently, she was co-curator of the PST:LA/LA exhibition *Making Art Concrete: Works from Argentina in the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros* at the J. Paul Getty Museum (2017). She is co-editor of the forthcoming book *New Material Histories of Concrete Art* (Getty Publications).

Exhibition as Information Flux: Experiments and Internationalism at “Zanini’s MAC”

During the 1970s, the radical rethinking of the artwork in the mail art movement led to an intense experimentation with exhibition norms. This presentation looks at how mail art challenged an institution to reimagine its exhibitions through a networked methodology and to imagine a new internationalism from 1970s Brazil. The Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of Sao Paulo, or “Zanini’s MAC” as it became known after its director Walter Zanini, was a crucible of networked activity during the 1970s. A succession of experimental exhibitions encouraged the exchange of art as information and enabled direct communication between artists and the institution.

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*Horea Bernea meeting with Joseph Beuys in exhibition New Direction
Richard de Marco Gallery, Edinburgh, 1970, Courtesy of RDG*



