

## State (Re)construction and Art (Warsaw, 19–21 Nov 18)

Warsaw, 19.–21.11.2018

Eingabeschluss : 01.10.2017

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"State (Re)construction and Art in Central and Eastern Europe 1918-2018" conference shall explore geo-cultural characteristics of the Old Continent's eastern part. We shall delve in particular in multi-level relations between political systems and the delicate matter of art that has often been used instrumentally by the state while at other times it has anticipated or constructed models of social self-identification. Discussion topics shall include the concepts of national art and idioms of pro-state artistic behaviours after 1918 as well as artistic activities that contest political regimes and systems at large. We shall look into the essence and role of identity models constructed in the cultural sphere against changing socio-political configurations. The period of political and economic transformation following the fall of Berlin Wall was marked by a push for integration by the European Union on the one hand, and renewed interest in the paradigm of regional, national and local identity. Various groups around the region have embraced the ideas of returning to the traditions lost or discarded in the times of nineteenth century imperialism, Cold War or as a result of globalisation. The conference shall also attempt to diagnose the processes of reinterpreting old and generating new narrations, national and local, in the context of globalisation and evolving notions on state cultural policies in the interwar and Cold War times as well as over quarter of a century that passed since the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

The conference is structured around key models that, while they lend themselves to chronological narration, also have a synchronic relationship; they lay emphasis on the dynamics of transformations, problems, shaping myths and artistic representations. The conference's main conceptual axes are: identity – dependency – relationalism. The terms shall be applied to the main discourses defining the region's specificity in interwar decades, post 1945 and post 1989.

The problem of identity encompasses the forming of new national states in Europe post World War I, includes the official idiom of state-supporting art of the 1920s and 1930s. The concept of imagined identity can be explored with reference to the official art and culture of the period and in the context of modernisation and modern society development projects. The theme of self-identification is also related to cosmopolitanism and supra-nationalism, provoking questions about preferred cultural patterns and generating avant-garde amalgams, thus looking at regional particularism against the backdrop of artistic perspective at large.

The concept of dependency has largely determined the political formation of Central and Eastern Europe during and after World War II. Countries of the region were either incorporated into or subjected to the USSR, as part of the Eastern Block. With temporal and regional variations, dependency histories were based on diverse artistic models, from "national form" to universal

idiom of modernity, filtered through the local tradition as well as international cultural models.

Finally, the relational perspective, the strongest in the context of post-communist transformation, explores the region's fluid identity against the expanding and changing European Union structures, as well as complex, nomadic geo-cultural policies, determined by the processes of globalization and homogenization of culture and its specific, regional dimension.

The dramatic reshaping of the political map in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries instigated deep change in the social climate, with state-related emancipation processes and changing cultural models stretching between tradition and avant-garde. The conference aims to show the place of art in complex political processes, pose questions about how art shaped, perpetuated and expanded beyond the social imaginary of Central and Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe between 1918 and 2018. The key point of discussion shall be the region's specificity, its cultural and artistic identifiers against the region's socio-economic landscape.

We invite representatives of various humanities: theory and history of art and architecture, cultural and literary studies, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, film, theatre and media studies. We would especially welcome papers / presentations in the following areas:

#### 1. Art in state (re)construction

- Art and national/cultural identity in the interwar period
- Art in the service of state authority in the interwar period
- Art and legitimisation of communist rule: propaganda, instrumentalisation, manipulation
- Post-communist "nostalgia": designer trend or aesthetic and/or ideological redefinition?

#### 2. Arts in contesting of the political system

- Art versus state authority in the interwar period
- Art in political activities of the emigrant communities in Cold War time
- Art in contesting legitimacy of the state from 1945 onwards

#### 3. Methodological questions

- Comparative studies of art of Central and Eastern European states
- Post-colonialism, post-totalitarianism or post-dependency? – perspectives in studying Central and Eastern European cultures
- Globalism vs. regionalism: contexts of interpreting art in Central and Eastern Europe
- Histories of art history and art criticism formulas in Central and Eastern Europe
- Is there a cultural/artistic specificity to Central and Eastern Europe?

Organiser: Warsaw Royal Castle

Conference Committee: Prof. Przemysław Mrozowski (Director of Warsaw Royal Castle), Prof. Irena Kossowska (Faculty of History, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun), Prof. Marcin Lachowski (Institute of Art History, University of Warsaw), dr Agnieszka Chmielewska (Centre for Europe, University of Warsaw)

Conference office:

XXX (Warsaw Royal Castle), dr Emilia Ziórkowska (Nicolaus Copernicus University)

Dates: 19-21 November 2018

Languages: English, Polish (translation provided)

Please submit your proposal with a brief CV (300 words each) by 1 October to:

a.chmielewska@uw.edu.pl; irena.kossowska@gmail.com; mw.lachowski@uw.edu.pl

Conference Committee has sole discretion regarding the choice of papers to be presented at the conference. Organisers shall attempt to secure funding to cover the cost of a four-day stay in a hotel indicated by the organisers and a one-day field trip including a visit to Warsaw Rising Museum and Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN.

Quellennachweis:

CFP: State (Re)construction and Art (Warsaw, 19-21 Nov 18). In: ArtHist.net, 13.07.2017. Letzter Zugriff 05.01.2026. <<https://arthist.net/archive/16017>>.