

Revisiting Heritage (Warsaw, 31 May–1 Jun 18)

Warsaw, May 31–Jun 1, 2018

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Marika Kuźmicz, Arton Foundation

REVISITING HERITAGE

International conference

www.fundacjaarton.pl

www.forgottenheritage.eu

The great interest in neo-avant-garde art, especially from ex-socialist European states, which we are witnessing during the last decade, confronts art historians and other researchers in the field with new and raising questions about methodology, the interpretation and reinterpretation of dominant narratives and the “official art history”. This becomes more acute when dealing with so-called “new media” art.

How to approach this huge body of material found in official (state) archives as well as “private archives” of artists and collectors? For example, on an interpretational level, is there a common source in neo-avant-garde practices throughout Europe that has been missed in dominant west-oriented canons? Or should researchers instead focus on the particularities having in mind different geo-political as well as social circumstances?

These kind of questions raised frequently during the research process of the FORGOTTEN HERITAGE project. Gathering researchers from Poland, Estonia, Belgium and Croatia, the project focused on neo-avant-garde practices in the countries of the “European rim”, with the aim of (re)discovering, (re)interpreing and promoting art practices that were mostly forgotten in the official international histories of avant-garde art. In our opinion we can change this situation by sharing digitalized artworks. Today it seems it's a common practice, but the question is if we use its all potential. This is why the core of our “FH” platform is the digitalized database, the repository, where we share a big number of data, like artists bios, critical texts and possible connections on many levels that link our artist together.

Using the tools of digital humanities, this project will deliver an online platform – a repository with a vast amount of data and descriptions of particular artists and artworks but also revealing connections between artists and institutions throughout Europe.

The political and social situation before and after the fall of the Iron Curtain has shaped an artistic map that abounds in blank spots. Dominant narratives of continuous division between East and West discouraged research focused on the connections and similarities between artistic practices and the mutual impact from the late 60s onward. By having in mind the discontinuous and porous character of the Iron Curtain, the conference invites scholars who research different dynamics within “uncanonical” artistic centers and exchanges between artists in the East and West.

The barrier had a dissimilar impact in different periods of post-war history in Europe. Obviously, it was also not the only line that formed exclusions for these are present in every environment and result from both general and personal factors. The political turn at the early 1990s abolished the division between the East and the West only to a certain degree, and in many situations it seems to have contributed to a further loss of contact with the past. At the same time it revealed that the so-called artistic margins were extremely productive. Seen from the current perspective, the space "beyond" mainstream turns out to be much broader than it appeared from the vantage point of time and geography of the Cold War, which flattened and simplified the image of the world. In this case, "loss" is not only a figure of speech. Addressing the situation, we realise now how many works by artists who shaped the art scene in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s failed to enter the museum as a result of neglect (at a global and local scale) and remained at the artists' studios or apartments – inaccessible or poorly accessible to researchers, let alone viewers.

The contemporary multitude of narrations, which we are witnessing at the moment favours challenging the (genuinely or seemingly) consolidated visions of the past and gives rise to several questions: What are the motivations of our research of this particular art of the past? Do our investigations imply that we still refer to a certain canon that we aim to verify? If so, what canon is it and who needs it? How do we search? What do we find? Can artists have a real influence on the present by managing their past, making it available, mythologizing it, rationing it? What are their strategies pertaining to the past and what strategies can be adopted by institutions? Can we reclaim something that was once forgotten? To which degree the digitisation of the artefacts and artworks from the past may re-create the image of art of the past and influence the image of the present? Is it possible to build a history that largely reflects our common experience even though we did not fully realise it? Researchers dealing with private archives of artists, who either worked in Central or Eastern Europe or had connections with these regions, are especially encouraged to propose papers so that research methodology can be discussed.

The conference REVISITING HERITAGE aiming to examine the ways of discovering and revealing the past of art and the reasons to do it.

The conference is organised by Arton Fondation (Warsaw) in cooperation with KUMU Art Museum of Estonia (Tallinn), Office for Photography (Zagreb) and LUCA School of Arts (Brussels) as a part of the international project FORGOTTEN HERITAGE – European Avant-Garde Art Online.

The official language of the conference is English.

To propose a paper, please send your abstract (no less than 300 and no more than 500 words including the title) to the Conference Team (conference@fundacjaarton.pl) by 6 April. In addition, please include a short biography (no more than 150 words with full affiliation), the title of presentation and contact details as a separate document. The successful participants will be notified by 15th of April 2018.

Reference:

CFP: Revisiting Heritage (Warsaw, 31 May-1 Jun 18). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 8, 2018 (accessed Mar 20, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/17546>>.