

RE CONF: Stalin's Cultural Legacy (Bristol UK, 15.-16.03.03)

Maja&Reuben Fowkes

16.03.03)

Dear List,

As one of the speakers at the upcoming conference on 'Stalin's Cultural Legacy' Bristol UK (15-16.03.03), I'd like to take the opportunity to reply to Piotr Kopszak's recent message on the inappropriateness of the title and approach taken by the conference. I also see the phrase 'cultural legacy' as a neutral expression and believe it was deliberately chosen to give conference participants a free hand to broadly consider the effects of Stalinism on culture. In my view the study of, for example, the artistic doctrine and practice of socialist realism in painting and sculpture does not have to be undertaken in the spirit of moral condemnation.

Most recent studies of Stalinist culture have eschewed the denunciatory tone that was usual during the Cold War, opening up the possibility of a more nuanced interpretation of communist strategies to control culture during the Stalin era, as well as an appreciation of the complexity of the artistic and popular response. There is no reason why academic study of the diverse outcomes resulting from Stalin's dramatic and far-reaching interventions in culture should cause insult to the victims of the Stalinist terror when the intention is to foster a better understanding of the history of the period.

Sincerely,
Dr. Reuben Fowkes

--

see <http://www.reubenfowkes.net/> for
the visual arts and cultural
history of eastern europe, socialist realism and contemporary central
european art

From: "H-ArtHist (Iris Mahnke)" <mahnke@nikocity.de>

ArtHist.net

Date: Wed, 12 Feb 2003 08:24:37 +0100

Subject: RE CONF: Stalin's Cultural Legacy (Bristol UK, 15.-16.03.03)

From: kopszak@mnw.art.pl (Piotr Kopszak)

Date: Tue, 11 Feb 2003 11:26:55 +0100

Subject: Re: CONF: Stalin's Cultural Legacy (Bristol UK, 15.-16.03.03)

Dear list,

Prompted by the message announcing "Stalin's Cultural Legacy" conference, which is going to take place in Bristol UK (15.-16.03.03)

I would like to draw your attention to inappropriateness of such conjunction. "Cultural legacy" is a neutral term with positive overtones and using this term to describe the outcome of Stalin's activities in the sphere of culture without any qualification is insulting to the memory of his victims and eventually can help eradicate this memory rather than keep it alive.

Yours faithfully

Piotr Kopszak

--

Piotr Kopszak, Ph.D.

Polish Art Gallery, National Museum in Warsaw

-----> <http://kopszak.mnw.art.pl/>

Reference:

RE CONF: Stalin's Cultural Legacy (Bristol UK, 15.-16.03.03). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 13, 2003 (accessed Mar 11, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/25489>>.