

Communism and Cultural Diplomacy in the Global South (Vienna, 19–20 Sep 24)

Vienna, Sep 19–20, 2024

Deadline: Mar 31, 2024

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Iron Curtains or Artistic Gates? Communism and Cultural Diplomacy in the Global South (1945–1991 and Beyond).

How did cultural interaction since 1945 unfold outside the realm of Western dominance, shaping omitted global narratives? While Cold War studies have long acknowledged the role of culture and the arts as instrument of „soft power,“ scholars have traditionally framed this role within a binary East-West narrative. More recent studies have highlighted the necessity of a complex, interconnected, and global view of this conflict, with a particular focus on the decolonization process. This workshop will explore cultural interactions between communist countries in Europe and those in the Global South, with the aim of challenging and deconstructing traditional Cold War narratives.

We seek to further analyze the specificities, similarities, and differences in the development of relations between the Global South and state socialist Europe. Although these issues have been increasingly discussed in the context of trade, labor, and education, they have not yet received sufficient attention in the realm of visual arts, material objects, and cultural institutions. We welcome contributions from Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern European, as well as especially the Global South perspectives. Our goal is to foster critical discussion of theoretical frameworks as well as illustrative case studies that emphasize the historical and contemporary diversity and specificity of these regions by avoiding their objectification and homogenization.

We invite submissions for 20-minute papers from across the fields of museology and cultural heritage studies; art, architecture, cultural, global, oral, and Cold War histories; and political science that focus on:

- Cultural relations, representations, imaginations, and their historical and political contexts;
- Roles and impacts of cultural institutions, programs, exhibitions, and objects in the (un)official cultural diplomacy;
- Mobilities and exchanges of artists, cultural workers, artworks, artifacts, and ideas across regions and continents;
- Networks between official policies, institutions, and individuals in shaping and implementing cultural diplomacy;
- Relationship between art markets, role of collectors in shaping state cultural policy, and surrounding issues of provenance;
- Actors, motivations, and backgrounds of cultural encounters, and their evolution from economic to ideological interests;

- Role of European state socialist states in cultural decolonization and anti-imperialist partnerships;
- Historical transcontinental power dynamics and inequalities in cultural relations and diplomacy;
- Colonial legacies and challenges in contemporary cultural institutions and curatorial practices.

Keynote Lecture: Prof Beáta Hock (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe; Humboldt University of Berlin)

Please submit an abstract (c. 250 words) and a brief bio to anna-marie.kroupova@univie.ac.at by 31 March 2024. Applicants selected by the scientific committee will be notified by 30 April 2024.

Organizers: Anna-Marie Kroupová & Noémie Étienne (Chair for Cultural Heritage Studies, University of Vienna)

Scientific committee: Friedrich Cain (University of Vienna), Noémie Étienne (University of Vienna), Beáta Hock (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe; Humboldt University of Berlin), Dietlind Hüchtker (University of Vienna), Anna-Marie Kroupová (University of Vienna)

Conference partners: Faculty Center for Transdisciplinary Historical and Cultural Studies (University of Vienna), FSP Global History (University of Vienna), Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on the Consequences of War, New Cold War Studies Research Group (University of Vienna), Research platform "Transformations and Eastern Europe" (University of Vienna)

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