Art and Philosophy in Eastern Europe since 1945 (Florence/online, 26–27 Jun 25)

Casa Zuccari, KHI – Max-Planck-Institut, Via Capponi 22, Florence, Jun 26–27, 2025

Natalie Arrowsmith

"Trading Zones. Art and Philosophy in Eastern Europe since 1945" –
Transdisciplinary Workshop organised by Hana Gründler and Sven Spieker (a collaboration between the Research Group Ethico-Aesthetics of the Visual, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut and the Graduate Center for Literary Research, University of California Santa Barbara).

Venue: Casa Zuccari, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, Via Capponi 22, 50121 Florence & online (Zoom)

The Workshop investigates the trading zone between artistic and aesthetic practice and philosophical ideas in Central and Eastern Europe. We are interested in artists from the region who are engaged in a critical dialogue with philosophy and philosophical ideas (both from Eastern Europe and beyond), and whose work possesses transformative experiential, intellectual and political potential. We are equally interested in philosophers and theorists from the region whose thinking engages or addresses art. We view the relationship between art and philosophy as a productive form of synergy rather than as an instance of appropriation, static commentary, or prescriptive instruction.

In the workshop, we hope to address the following questions, among others:
- Which philosophical traditions and discourses have contemporary artists in or from Eastern Europe engaged with since 1945?
- How familiar and aware were theorists and philosophers from Eastern Europe with contemporary artistic trends, but also with the art of the past?
- Where have theorists or philosophers tended to conceive of art and aesthetic practice schematically, or with too much idealism? More generally speaking:
- To what extent can art and philosophy resist both all-encompassing formalism and ideological instrumentalization?

And, last but not least, in relation to current theory formation:
- Why is the interpretation of Eastern European art often still exclusively based on Western philosophical narratives, neglecting to take into account the rich traditions of theory and aesthetic thinking that exist in Eastern Europe, now and in the past?

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PROGRAM

THURSAY, June 26, 2025
2.00 - 2.30 pm: Welcome and Introduction by Hana Gründler and Sven Spieker: "The Nation and its Aftermath"

2.30 - 3.00 pm: Alexander Dmitriev (Charles University, Prague / European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder): "The Artistic Ukrainian Movement (MUR) in the Long (After)Life of National Modernism (1945-1949)"

3.00 - 3.30 pm: Adrienn Kácsor (Bauhaus University): "A Migrant Painter's Worldview after 1945"

Break

SESSION: Freedom and Crisis

4.00 - 4.30 pm: Jana Ndiaye Berankova (Columbia University, Institute for Ideas and Imagination, Reid Hall, Paris): "The True Realm of Freedom? The Polarity of Surrealism and Functionalism in the Writings of Karel Teige and its Critique"

4.30 - 5.00 pm: Karel Císař (UMPRUM, Prague) and Hana Gründler (KHI – MPI, Florence): "Art and Crisis in the Thinking of Jan Patočka"

5.00 - 5.30 pm: Constanze Fritzsch (KHI – MPI, Florence): "How to Digest Ernst Bloch? Carlfriedrich Claus' Readings of Bloch"

Break

SESSION: Objects and Words

6.00 - 6.30 pm: Branislav Jakovljević (Stanford University): "Reism, the Anti-Humanist Humanism"

6.30 - 7.00 pm: Cristian Nae (National University of Arts, Iasi): "Presence and Vision: The Artistic Reception of Poststructuralism in Romanian Conceptual Art"

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FRIDAY, June 27, 2025

SESSION: Thinking (Through) Media

9.30 - 10.00 am: Katalin Cseh-Varga (University of Vienna): "Cybernetics in Art Discourse and Art Practice across East-Central Europe"

10.00 - 10.30 am: Jakub Banasiak (Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw): "Pikto-sophy: Philosophical Inspirations in the Art of Jerzy Truszkowski in the Context of Late State Socialism in Poland"

10.30 - 11.00 am: Kseniia Pereplotchykova (European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder): "An Intellectual Legacy of bad photography: Boris Mikhailov's Unfinished Dissertation (1984/85)"

Break

SESSION: Art, Ideology, Politics

11.30 am - 12.00 pm: Sven Spieker (University of California, Santa Barbara): "'Artists Have to Study Philosophy': Mikhail Lifshits Speech 'Partiinost' and 'Realism' (1975)
12.00 - 12.30 pm: Keti Chukhrov (Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe): "The Polit-technological Architecture of Art Institutions in Russia between 1990-2022"

12.30 - 1.00 pm: Final Discussion

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