V. Internationales Doktorandenforum Kunstgeschichte des östlichen Europas

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V. Internationales Doktorandenforum Kunstgeschichte des östlichen Europas / V International Forum for Doctoral Candidates in East European Art History, 4 May 2018, Chair of Art History of Eastern and East Central Europe, Humboldt University, Berlin.

In May 2018, the Chair of Art History of Eastern Europe at Humboldt University in Berlin organized the Fifth International Forum for Doctoral Candidates in East European Art History. Around sixty young scholars from all over the world participated in vigorous discussions on subjects related to the Art History of Eastern Europe. As in previous years, the forum was composed of four sections with two twenty-minute presentations each and one section of short three-minute presentations. Thus, in addition to the eight main speakers, all participants were given an opportunity to present their subject, research question and methodological approach.

The talks delivered, as well as the papers submitted, which were published on the forum's website,[1] demonstrated a wide spectrum of topics ranging from art-patronage and the migration of images between different media to the relationship between nationalism and art and architecture. Thus, as in the last year, predominant interest still lay on the social and political role of art and architecture. In considering this role, detailed investigations into the conditions of creation and perception of art and architecture in the given region stood in the foreground. This was reflected in the prevailing methodology, which focused on archival research and the social agency of art.

The studies presented dealt for the most part with artistic and architectural objects located at the geographical peripheries as well as at the medial margins of the common research area. Among them were border markers and welcome signs built at the entrances to counties and cities of Soviet Romania, textiles of Soviet Kazakhstan, contemporary art from the post-Soviet republics of Central Asia as well as 18th-century portraits and churches of the Serbian minority, which had an aristocratic status in the Habsburg Empire.

In regard to historical periods, the studies spanned the 18th to 20th centuries. The 18th century functioned as the framework of the first section, which began with a lecture given by Zalina Tetermazova (Moscow). Tetermazova presented a study on the relationship between Russian portrait paintings and their reproductions titled "Image 'Reflections': the Question of Relationship between Russian Portrait Painting and Engraving in the Second Half of the 18th Century." In her considera-

tion of this relationship, Tetermazova showed how E.P. Chemesov, D.G. Gerasimov, G.I. Skorodumov and other Russian printmakers applied different printing techniques and framing elements to modify their reproductions. In contrast to their painted originals, these images were framed with architectural and ornamental motifs, inscriptions, signatures, emblems and symbols. In conclusion, Tetermazova argued that the analysis of these engraved frames allows us to better understand the way contemporaries perceived Russian portrait paintings of the 18th century.

The following presentation, "Politics of visual Representation and Habsburg noblemen of Serbian ethnic origin in the 18th Century," was delivered by Aleksandra Čelovski (Belgrade). Based on archival research, Čelovski's study focused on the art and architecture produced by the Serbian minority in the Habsburg Empire, which had received aristocratic status. After describing the social structure of this minority and their place at the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid of Habsburg nobility, Čelovski considered the portraits of these noblemen, which applied aristocratic iconography, as well as palaces and churches commissioned by them. With these portraits, palaces and churches, the Serbian minority aimed to affirm their nobility by adopting the baroque cultural model of Habsburg Monarchy.

The two lectures of the next section, "The national imagination of post-Soviet countries at the Venice Biennale. The (re)construction of national identity" by Ekaterina Vingradova and "Photogrammetry in the network of politics and entrepreneurship. Albrecht Meydenbauer in the Province of Posen in 1885 and 1887" by Ewelina Wojdak (Poznań), focused on the question of national identity and the institutionalisation of art and architecture. The latter presented her research on the relationship between the preservation of monuments and the identity politics of nationalism in Prussian Poland in the late 19th century. In her study, Wojdak proposed to deconstruct this relationship by investigating the negotiation between Prussian politicians and the construction engineer and founder of photogrammetry, Albrecht Meydenbaur. Meydenbauer asked politicians for financial support to use photogrammetry to document the chapel of St. Prokop in Strzelno and the church of Blessed Virgin Mary in Inowrocław. In his argumentation, Albrecht Meydenbaur referred to the importance of protecting national heritage in order to convince the politicians. Thereby Wojdak showed how the idea of the "national" was instrumentalized to propagate photogrammetry, revealing the complexity of the relationship between the preservation of monuments and the identity politics of nationalism.

The presentation given by Ekaterina Vinogradova (Grenoble/St. Petersburg) dealt with the works of contemporary artists from the post-Soviet republics including Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan and others exhibited at the Venice Biennale. Interestingly, many of these artists were "non-official" during Soviet times. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, these "non-official" artists were chosen to represent their countries at the Biennale. The subject of their work was usually taken from the traditional culture of their countries, suggesting the desire of the young independent states to strengthen their national identity. Thus, these artists became in a sense "official."

After the presentation of Ekaterina Vinogradova, the forum took a turn towards the Soviet past. Roberta Curcă (Bucharest) gave a lecture on the monumental welcome signs and border markers built at the entrances to different counties and cities in Romania in the 1970s. Curcă considered their construction history and functionality and showed how these welcome signs and border

markers were built during the administrative restructuring of the country to represent the local culture of the cities and counties, enforcing the separation and differentiation between them. Furthermore, Roberta Curcă compared the border markers and welcome signs constructed in Romania to those built in other countries of the Soviet Union, revealing their formal homogeneity determined by a common Communist aesthetics. Finally, she presented the manual for the design of welcome signs and border markers developed in South Africa, which treats them as art. Curcă used this manual to analyze the design of the Romanian border markers and welcome signs, raising questions about their cultural significance.

The next talk broadened the perspective on Soviet arts. Christinna Bonnin (MIT Boston) discussed the history of craft in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1975 focusing on three decisive shifts: 1.) the debate about the creation of socialist modes of production in the 1920s; 2.) industrialization in the 1930s, including the elimination of certain types of handwork; and 3.) the revival of handcraft following the development of a tourist industry in Soviet Central Asia in the 1950s to 1960s. The speaker analyzed these shifts using examples from the work of the Former Imperial Porcelain Manufactory, which turned into an artistic laboratory in the 1920s, as well as the mass production of textiles at the Trekhgornaya and Krasnaya Rosa textile factories in the 1930s, and the handmade textiles of a modernist group of young Kazakh artists in the 1960s. Following this storyline, Bonnin traced the change of ideas about handcraft and its binary relationship to industrial mass production in the Soviet Union, revealing Soviet craft as a result of the synthesis between traditional forms of Russian and Kazakh craftsmanship and capitalist socioeconomic models.

The next lecture, “How German was the Polish ‘French Century’? Artistic Transfers between Paris and Warsaw 1730–1810,” delivered by Konrad Niemira (Warsaw/Paris), offered an interdisciplinary approach to the investigation of artistic transfers between France and Poland in the age of Enlightenment at the intersection of art history, social history and sociology of art. In his investigation, Niemira focused not only on the transfer of art objects and the migration of artists, but also on the role of the different mediators including agents, amateurs and bankers involved in the art market. As a result, he reconstructed the exchange network between France and Poland, elucidating the great influence of the German art market on these artistic transfers. This influence framed the Polish reception of French art and culture in the 18th century.

The forum ended with Liisa Kaljula’s (Tallinn) presentation on “Estonian Sots Art! Reflection of the Soviet Modernity in Estonian Art under Late Socialism.” Sots Art was an artistic practice based on the re-appropriation of images from Socialist Realism and Soviet visual culture, which thrived in the Soviet Union in the 1960s to 1980s. Although Sots Art is commonly associated with the Moscow art scene, its different forms were also developed in other Soviet republics and Socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Following this line of argument, Liisa Kaljula presented the works of an Estonian art group called “SOUP’69,” which was active in the 1970s to 1980s. The members of the group adopted the principles of Pop Art using images from Soviet visual culture to create collages, prints, paintings and readymade objects. Thus, they founded a unique example of Estonian Soviet Pop or Union Pop. Considering their art works, Kaljula explained that although Estonian Soviet Pop shared the aspiration of Sots Art to analyze the aesthetically expressed political will to power embedded in the images of Soviet visual culture, its approach was nevertheless different. Whereas Sots Art was mainly deconstructive towards Soviet visual culture, the members of “Soup’

69” treated it in an unbiased way. Thus, Liisa Kaljula proposed revisiting Estonian Soviet Pop and scrutinizing its relationship to Western Pop Art and Soviet Sots Art.

After the conference, the discussions continued in the informal setting of the reception at the DAAD Gallery in Berlin, where the participants also enjoyed the exhibition “a straight line through the carcass of history. 1918-1945. 2015-2018” of the Ghanaian visual artist Ibrahim Mahama.

To conclude, this year, the Doctoral Forum demonstrated, once again, a broad assortment of subjects related to the Art History of Eastern Europe. It offered a unique platform for discussions and promoted connections among young scholars.

Notes:

[1] http://www.kunstgeschichte.hu-berlin.de/institut/lehrstuehle/lehrstuhl-fuer-kunstgeschichte-osteuropas/internationales-doktorandenforum/2018-internationales-doktorandenforum/

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