

read re la tions no. 1

Blossoms or Snow?

Katrin Klingan and Hortensia Völckers discuss “relations,” the Federal Cultural Foundation, and the attempt to tackle transnational cooperation differently via art. The discussion took place in Kosovo, July 2004.

Hortensia Völckers: At the official founding ceremony for the Federal Cultural Foundation, the Federal Minister of Culture, Julian Nida-Rümelin, said to me: “The Federal Cultural Foundation is to consciously work in a supplementary capacity to what already exists, and on no account is it to enter into the event business.” He stressed that he sees the Foundation’s task as lying in supplementing what is in place and bringing international discussions, and the world, so to speak, to Germany. “relations” embodies this initial impulse in its pure form. It was one of our very first projects. Our idea was to seek out a new way for initiating and organizing cultural exchange, as supplementary support to the already existing biennials and large festivals.

Peter Wellach: And how does such a “new way” look?

Hortensia Völckers: Let me tell you a little story: When I met the artist Sokol Beqiri for the first time yesterday at Hemingway’s – or was the restaurant called Tiffany’s? – we talked about different curators and his experience with invitations to the “West.” What mattered to him was whether he and his colleagues from the “East” were in fact specifically meant, and not simply that merely “artists from the East” in general were being sought out. “relations” has a lot to do with attempting to realize another form of exchange. For Katrin Klingan it was clear from the very beginning that the projects in the east had to be the first contact partners.

Katrin Klingan: That’s right, they were to receive the funds that would enable them first to set up the required structures locally, and then to enter into dialogue with institutions and initiatives in Germany. The last thing we wanted was somebody going around again and picking out

artists or creative persons in general from eastern Europe. The cultural and artistic exchange was to be launched from there, from eastern Europe.

Hortensia Völckers: It is a difficult process, particularly the second phase in which “relations” now finds itself in which a dialogue with creative artists in Germany is being established. In particular the second phase, in which relations now finds itself, and in which the dialogue with creative artists in Germany is being established. The goal is to develop a project together that fits into the German context. This is extremely complicated and naturally a risky undertaking. You simply never know what will come out of this in Germany. But I nevertheless believe that it has been worthwhile to begin in this way, namely from eastern Europe.

Peter Wellach: Let’s take a step back: how did you go about looking for project partners?

Katrin Klingan: Because we are now in Kosovo, it’s perhaps best to explain how the project here, “Missing Identity,” came about, where we work together with Sokol Beqiri among others. Hortensia Völckers just mentioned him. For me it was very important when I first came to Kosovo. Not to enter into negotiations immediately, but rather to first of all observe and get a feel for the situation. It then turned out that I was able to accompany Dunja Blažević, who was among the most important advocates of contemporary art in the former Yugoslavia and still commands great respect today. On her first trip to Kosovo after the war, or rather for the first time in 20 years, it was a very emotional moment for all involved. I spent a week here. Of course, I was integrated into what was going on, but I remained in the background and gained quite good insight into how the art and cultural scene works. It was a gentle way of getting closer. A few months later, I then intentionally came on my own to Prishtina. I wanted to see how talks would go without the mediation of a confidant like Dunja Blažević. In the course of the long talks, I cautiously approached the question as to how they pictured a cooperation that could work in the long term. What is needed here? What kind of project is of interest for the artists here? What kind of interest does Germany hold for them? This is how I proceeded for all the projects. I always began by traveling to the different cities and towns and finding out through intensive conversations what the artists’ interests are.

Peter Wellach: Does the relevance of the participating artists within the art market play a role in selecting the project partners in the countries of eastern Europe?

Katrin Klingan: No. I don’t see it as a task of “relations” to support the international art market or to establish it somewhere. This kind of work is already being done by the large international exhibitions, to name just one example. For me, it is far more important to find out how we can set up longer-term and intensive working relationships in the field of culture: working relationships which are workable and which in the future other institutions, not just “relations” or the Federal Cultural Foundation, can join and utilize.

Hortensia Völckers: That is after all the essential thing about “relations”: to be as close as possible to the needs of culture and art and yet to avoid as much as possible being an instrument of the market or politics. We are interested in the ideas of life, the positions, the forms of expression, the aesthetic, the utopias and visions... everything that makes up a cultural praxis, a way of approaching the past, the development of ideas, and the ability to exercise critique. Coarse symbolism and a quite nauseating nationalist discourse hinder such a way of thinking. Perhaps one could summarize that “relations” acts not in the field of politics, but rather in the realm of the political. And this is also how “relations” has been set up. It is based on listening very attentively: what is needed where and what can art do there?

Katrin Klingan: I would like to pick up on another aspect, which Hortensia Völckers has just touched upon. For me, the heart of “relations” is to understand the tasks and roles artists, intellectuals, and academics are frequently taking on at present in the countries of eastern Europe, more or less voluntarily, the tasks and roles that are, in fact, beyond what it means to be an artist. At the moment everyone is looking in the direction of transformation and EU membership. In the course of this unbelievably rapid rebuilding of societies to make them fit for the EU, it is the artists, above all, who intervene and appeal for a pause, for a break, so that one can realize what exactly it is to be transformed (by whom, for whom, and how). We have to realize what’s happening: EU membership and transformation have become ideas that overshadow everything else. Although trans-

Visual Seminar, Sofia
Culture on television as a window to the world: the city. Page 4

ALTE ARTE, Moldova
Culture on television as a window to the world: where could this ever work? Page 6

De/construction of Monument, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Public space is being disputed. Monuments are cleared away, monuments are erected. Page 8

Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000, Croatia
What is the culture of civil society? Page 10

Rearranging. Art, Text and Everyday Life in Eastern European Countries
Things are being rearranged, and in many places things have been changed around. Page 12

East Art Map, IRWIN, Ljubljana
A (Re-)construction of the History of Contemporary Art in Eastern Europe (Slovenia). Page 14

Missing Identity, Kosovo
When attention turns to Kosovo, everyone talks about national identity. “Missing Identity” seeks to find out what is really missing. Page 16

Re:form, Poland
Poland is opening up to globalization, Poland is modernizing. “Re:form” asks about the silenced aspects of Polish (art) history. Page 18

Generation – a film project
Six filmmakers from six countries tell six stories on common features, differences, and new forms of self-understanding. Page 20

formation is, of course, a term that mainly comes from the west. Without it, or so it would seem, we cannot even begin to speak about these countries. This means, however, that our view is always directed at a future that is to be achieved, at change, at the new, and at a “things-have-to-be-different.” With this perspective one quickly loses sight of the present and all its issues. What are things actually like here? Take Kosovo as an example. Everybody has thousands of television images from the “crisis region” before their eyes. And yet hardly anybody knows or can imagine what it means to be a protectorate of the international community. Hardly anyone has an idea of what the everyday routine under the UN directorship is like. But here as well, in Kosovo, I often have the impression that even the decision-makers are not really interested in how things are going here at the moment. It is therefore decisive that all of the projects supported or set up by “relations” bring aspects to bear in the public discussion which are currently blankly ignored in the official political field.

Hortensia Völckers: We have therefore always sought out artists who convince us artistically, but are also engaged socially, irrespective of the discipline they work in or on what themes. Artistic quality and social commitment stand for us, in a certain way, on the same level. This does not mean raising the index finger and shaking it pedagogically and didactically. On the contrary, the poetic dimension of art is needed. To support the building of democracy with the means of culture and the poetics of art, this is what is decisive for us. At the Cultural Foundation we call this the “cultural challenge.”

Peter Wellach: You spoke of how both “relations” and the Cultural Foundation are trying to realize a different form of transnational exchange and dialogue. Is this conception working?

Hortensia Völckers: At the moment I have the feeling that the “lopsided situation” between east and west, as Nida-Rümelin has called it, is still anything but balanced. The lopsided situation means that the “East” knows very precisely what we do in the “West”, what we make, what we produce, where it’s all going. On the other hand, we hardly know anything about the “East.” And I don’t exclude myself from this. When, for instance, Katrin Klingan told me that she was traveling “next” to Moldova. I could only ask: “Where?” - “Moldova.” - “So,” I assumed, “this “relations” project has already moved into Asia.” I asked if I could come along, and when we finally arrived in Moldova - in Chisinau, the capital - everything was covered in white.

Katrin Klingan: That is... can I tell the story?

Hortensia Völckers: Please do, it is a wonderful story.

Katrin Klingan: Over the whole city, over everything that has the firm form of an object, lay a white film. It is like the snow that comes towards you, no matter where you are. Almost as if you are moving through slowed-down snow, when in fact, it is the pollen from the poplars. In Chisinau, and in other former Soviet states, it is called “Stalin’s revenge.” The cities built in the Soviet era frequently had broad poplar avenues. Only Moldova, and so Chisinau, has the “problem” of being unbelievably fertile. Wherever seeds fall, the next tree grows immediately. Thus, for three weeks of every year, “Stalin’s revenge” returns. For me this story shows in miniature what is also important for the “grand whole,” namely, that you have to travel to the cities, to their locations and learn about their past if you want to understand anything at all. Otherwise, you interpret the landscape incorrectly, mistaking blossoms for snowflakes, simply because you are in the east.

Hortensia Völckers: This is exactly the actual goal of “relations” and, in part, also that of the



Cultural Foundation: to provide Germany with information about other countries and to arouse interest about them. But this is anything but easy to do at the moment. We live in a time when Germany is very much preoccupied with itself and its own transformation processes, uncertainties, and anxieties. You can’t blame people for that. But it is difficult to convey the idea that we can learn something from “the others,” and that it is important for our own development to take outside perspectives into consideration, and to have other voices present here amongst us. We know very well how the west concentrates exclusively on itself, so to speak, within the microcosm of Germany itself. According to statistics, 49 per cent of West Germans were never in East Germany. They consider it to be too depressing there, or they follow their usual habits and travel southwards on vacation. I’m not condemning this, and it is certainly the reality in which we must operate if we don’t want to lose touch with reality. But what we, above all “relations,” want to attempt is to initiate a counter- maneuver. That probably sounds a bit too militaristic. But in any case, we want to launch and conduct a kind of operation.

Katrin Klingan: Operation is also militaristic. Here there is so much military. After so many hours spent with KFOR, military terms are all that occur to you. Basically though, relations is a test arrangement designed to re-ignite the desire to look beyond the end of one’s own nose.

Moderation: Peter Wellach

Dear Readers!

In the first issue of “read relations,” our new newspaper, we want to introduce the projects initiated and supported by ‘relations’ and provide you with a closer look at the work we do. We have just returned from Kosovo, more precisely from Prishtina, where we had intensive meetings with our partners from the ‘Missing Identity’ and the ‘ALTE ARTE’ projects as well as our international Advisory Board. You will hear the lingering echoes of these intensive and exciting encounters in the interview Hortensia Völckers and I gave shortly before our departure.

It is our view at ‘relations’ that dialogue, encounters with one another, and an exposure to one another form the basis for cooperation that goes beyond national borders. read relations aims to mirror this attitude. The project partners are given a forum to speak for themselves. On the following pages you will find both project descriptions formulated by the partners as well as a question we posed that takes up themes addressed by the projects. A question, so we believed, that would go to the heart of the work undertaken by our project partners. In part, the answers took us by surprise, and sometimes our questions were even politely rejected as “completely off the subject.” It is not least these misunderstandings that have further reinforced our conviction that all fixed ascriptions need to be revealed and reconsidered again and again.

The next issue of “read relations” will present the German cooperation partners involved with our projects and document their concerns and visions, following the principle we have put to the test here. Those initiatives and institutions developing a project for Germany - jointly with the projects already existing in the countries of eastern Europe - are indeed following a similar path as that taken by ‘relations’ and the foreign partners before them. They, too, are traveling to the respective countries to explain their concerns and working situations. What emerges is the joint conception and elaboration of exhibitions, workshops, as well as archive and publication projects. And the focus always circles around the same concerns: the effort to bring outsider perspectives into their own context and to discuss and query the constructs of national identity, approaches to history, and ways of dealing with memory and remembrance and the public sphere within the scope of, and in relation to, contemporary art.

We would like to thank all our colleagues for their support, their answers, their queries and contradictions, and above all for the patience they continually showed. We would also like to thank Maria Ziegelböck, whose artistic contribution you will find in the center of this newspaper.

We warmly invite you to join our dialogue!

Katrin Klingan

about relations

When I was introduced to Katrin Klingan, the artistic director of "relations," for the first time, in the cafeteria "Hani i 2 Robertëve" in Prishtina, her smile and appearance reminded me of the actress Kelly McGillis. She was reserved, smiling, and she had an exceptional ability – to listen. Through those very little words that I could get from her, I was not quite able to grasp her visions and insights. Only a year and a half later, I was able to catch the features of a sort of artistic map, a map where you could find the neuralgic spots of contemporary art of south-eastern Europe that Katrin Klingan prophesied to me in the cafeteria. After we had the chance to review and analyze all the programs on board, after we examined each proposed project in detail, a beautiful map of an artistic world started to unfold in front of me whose features seemed blurred in the beginning. The work, the energy, the enthusiasm and the results of "relations" made me very satisfied with my involvement in this project. I am hoping that this artistic map "relations" is unfolding before the European public will help us become more familiar with a world that was latently present all the time in this space, but without a map to direct us. I experience "relations" as a map that will send us all to the new cultural and artistic frontiers of this space that we call "Enlarged Europe."

Migjen Kelmendi

author and editor of the weekly newspaper "Java", Prishtina

The wall dividing Germany came down almost 15 years ago. Since then, one continually encounters the remark that the wall running through minds has yet to fall. These kinds of differences in mentality and culture are not only to be found in Germany, but across Europe. And with the enlargement of the European Union, they will become even more visible. For instance, in contemporary art one frequently encounters the prejudice that there is hardly any contemporary creative productivity in the countries of central and eastern Europe. And this is reflected not least in the art market. What a mistake! That markets cannot think and reflect but only respond (also to stupidity and ignorance) is an insight that one could have actually expected from reasonably enlightened Europeans. But the lack of awareness for the modernity evident in central and eastern European countries is possibly also tied to the lack of knowledge and ignorance resulting from the largely self-referential perception of western European provenance. Basically, simple political and cultural education is called for here. Command of a central and eastern European language will become a key competence in the enlarged Europe. "relations," an initiative project of the Federal Cultural Foundation, enters the fray precisely here with admirable offensive spirit: creative force fields in the respective cultural contexts are identified and generously supported. "relations" does not, however, only support. "relations" also takes on an important European bridging function. In this way, the enlarged Europe is contemporaneously synchronized and not seen as a backward appendix in need of a revolution to catch up. On the contrary, whoever studies and devotes their attention to these creative processes can identify many artistically creative and clever people on the fast lane towards a more complex Europe. Communication in Europe must therefore not be solely economic and political. It is becoming increasingly evident that Europe must also be a "Europe for its citizens." Plurality, multilingual voices, and difference are the elements which have to penetrate into the nucleus of a European self-consciousness and, above all, which have to be endured and held on to. "relations" makes this insight its own in a very exclusive way. Among my diverse activities, "relations" shines like a finely polished diamond, the value of which is first recognized by whoever takes on the risk of trying to locate creative contemporary trends and entering into dialogue with them. In "One-Way Street," Walter Benjamin remarks: "These are days when no one should rely unduly on his 'competence.' Strength lies in improvisation. All the decisive blows are struck left-handed."

Thomas Krüger

President of the Federal Agency for Civic Education, Bonn

Since the summer of 2002, one film repeatedly occurs to me: Pavel Braila's "Shoes for Europe", a documentary on the railworks at the Moldovan-Romanian border. Pavel Braila possesses the untiring curiosity that is needed to convey a European border situation: the difficulties arising when the trains are to be repositioned, the travelers who have to patiently wait, the strength necessary for overcoming the gauge differences, because in the twenty-first century eastern Europe is also separated from the west – besides everything else – by a 89 mm difference between the railway gauges. What happens on the borders of this new "Transformation Europe" is decisive – one must acquire awareness of the differences in the gauges, of routes requiring an obligatory visa through the "history" of the different countries, and of the traffic networks of the present, repaired in some places and still in disrepair in others. One has to have patience, strength, and a good feeling for balance to hold a train in the air and set it down on the right track gauge.

"Shoes for Europe" – the film still mirrors much of what I experience as a member of the "relations" advisory board, i.e., the challenge posed by the border: working through stereotypes, undermining conventions, the cross-over between the different areas of art and the disciplines of knowledge, the movements between social reality and the alternative possibilities envisioned by art. As with the Federal Cultural Foundation, from the beginning "relations" was also focused on working close to culture, not on serving as a prestigious representative vehicle of politics. "relations" does not shy away from the effort of adjusting to local needs and making possible projects that are to be carried through there. "relations" co-operates with very divergent partners: with artists, philosophers and theatre directors, with urban planners, curators, and many others involved in culture. Just how strongly this sense of proximity and local precision figures in the work of "relations" is shown to advantage by the diversity of working forms and themes which are in the meantime visible in Chisinau, Warsaw, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Sofia, Prishtina, or Zagreb: the art archive and the historical monument as media of remembrance, the TV program as a building block for a cultural public sphere, urban interventions which observe and trace the changes in a city in the context of privatization. "relations" supports the tackling of those challenges that are not solely the matter of business or politics, but also possess a cultural dimension. The projects initiated show just how important it is to also inject cultural potential into the current process of nation-building. Without the utopias and the visions of the artists and cultural actors, the building of a society, cultural diversity, and self-understanding are barely conceivable. In this sense as well, "relations" is a program for border-crossers: it extends the borders of what art and culture can achieve in this new Europe.

Hortensia Völckers

Artistic Director of the Federal Cultural Foundation, Halle/Saale

In the important programmatic steps "relations" has undertaken, the political goals take precedence over the artistic ones they are connected with. The projects originate directly out of the cultural and social contexts of the respective countries, and they are thought out and devised by people who live there. The associated images include precisely this embedment: the locations, such as Sarajevo in the summer heat or Chisinau blanketed in snow, only first become places of political and cultural experience through exchange with the people living there, with creative artists and others, through their ideas, their knowledge, and their projects. The intensity of this exchange is one of the important prerequisites ensuring the success of the "relations" program.

Dr. Silvia Eiblmayr

Director of the Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck

Visual Seminar

A project of the Institute of Contemporary Art Sofia in cooperation with the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia

The Visual Seminar discusses the changes that have taken place in the visual surfaces of urban space since the introduction of the capitalist market economy. With art actions in public space and the staging of discussion forums, questions raised by schooling the public's visual literacy are shown to be political issues.

Nowadays one witnesses a new visual wave: the previously dominant culture of the public image and the "society of the spectacle" (Guy Debord) are gradually being changed by the new complex structures of the "display," "interface," "billboard," and "scanned-and-sent" images. Together with home video, the video clip, and post-MTV culture, and with the expansion of design, lifestyle, and fusion cultures, the new visual-digitalized hybrids are saturating everyday life. The "Visual Seminar" deals with contemporary visual culture in so-called transitional societies. We want to have the changes taking place in urban space – and so the visual culture and the schooling of sight understood – as political issues. It is our intention to influence the cultural policies in our country through debate, and, thereby, increase public literacy in the field of "visuality."

Images of the City, Images of Capital

In Bulgaria, bureaucrats and "post-official" artists are still using and misusing the old visual codes in favor of aggressive neo-nationalism and premature anti-globalism. In addition, the mass media, frequently populist in its actions and itself easily manipulated, often circulate poor (and politically incorrect) imagery, feeding on both the outdated communist legacy and the no less propagandistic visual world of consumer society.

In this unfriendly context, the creative and innovative codes of contemporary art – with its capacity for mixing and transgressing systems of values, for aggressively breaking taboos, for creating new objects of desire, for deploying ironic quotations and for playing with complexity – is confronting a deficit of deciphering. The broad public in Bulgaria has great difficulty even "reading" the new artistic visual messages. This is one of the key reasons why the visual arts in Bulgaria have yet to achieve a significant public impact. To remedy the situation, we are staging regular public debates and promoting cooperation between artists and scholars within the framework of our fellowship program, conducted at the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS) under the direction of Alexander Kiossev.

The topics dealt with in the public debates, in part co-organized by the resident fellows, that have been held within the "Visual Seminar" up until now were: "Images of the City, Images of Capital," "Debates between the Visual Left and the Visual Right," "Philosophy of the Visual in the City," "Language in Public Space," and "Clichés of the Visual and the Word in Urban Space." Taking part in the forums are architects, city councilors and municipal decision-makers, investors and an interested public from the city of Sofia. The forums are accompanied by intensive press work. This year the "Visual Seminar" awarded for the first time a prize – a mirrored raspberry – for Sofia's most superfluous building. More than 200 persons cast their vote either via the internet or directly on site. We have also founded a "Discussion Club on Demand." The audience determines the topics and, upon demand, the "Visual Seminar" organizes the infrastructure and the moderation. Furthermore, another central module for us is to curate exhibitions and promote art actions in a public space. For instance, the resident fellow Krassimir Terziev played his video work on all the screens of the Sofia subway. His project continued with the exhibition "From Toward to Here." All the works of the fellows (4 per year) are documented in individual publications. The volume devoted to the first fellows, Milla Mineva and Luchezar Boyadjiev, "Sofia as a Sight" has already been published. Bilingual (Bulgarian/English), it is put out by the German publisher "Revolver – Archiv für aktuelle Kunst" in Frankfurt am Main. The public call for fellowship applications to the "Visual Seminar" topic "Cliché as Identity" has received numerous responses. The central question, formulated by the cultural theoretician Ivaylo Dichev, is, "What role does the cliché play in the construction of identities, whether national or religious identity or gender identity? Can artists even work without them?" And last but not least – we have developed an exhibition project called "Red Riviera Revisited." It aims to integrate outsiders' perspectives on the changing visual aspects of the country. The exhibition addresses mainly artists from Germany who visited the Bulgarian Black Sea coast (the Red Riviera) on vacation as children or youngsters before 1989.

Iara Boubnova



Luchezar Boyadjiev, "Stefan's Brigade (and his sons-in-law)", billboard on the facade of the National Art Gallery (former palace of the Czars), Sofia, October 2003

*Alexander Kiossev:

Lecturer at the Cultural Studies Institute of the philosophy faculty at the University of Sofia. Since 2003, he has been the director of its M.A. program "Arts and Cultural Institutions in the 20th and 21st Centuries." He is also a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia, where he was director until 2002.

*Iara Boubnova:

The internationally active curator is the director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Sofia and project leader of the "Visual Seminar." In 2002 she was one of the curators of the Manifesta 4 in Frankfurt/Main. Iara Boubnova is designated co-curator of the Moscow Biennial in 2005.

*The Society of the Spectacle (Guy Debord):

The French author, filmmaker, and artist Guy Debord formulated in "The Society of the Spectacle" his principal theoretical work published in 1967, the thesis that consumer society exercises a "soft" form of dictatorship through the dominant role played by the new electronic mass media.

relations in discussion

How do ideas and experiences of privacy and intimacy change with the introduction of a market economy?



Xtendo, "Therefrom Hereto," video still from the performance in Sofia's subway, April 2004

The city as political issue

The capital has undergone radical changes with the introduction of a market economy. Sofia has become more heterogeneous, more expensive, more dazzling, dirtier, and more confusing. Advertising is aggressive and radical. Absolutely no consideration is given to the historical cityscape or the concerns of residents, as is usual in the West. The municipal hospital for instance is solely identifiable by a bright blue Philips advertising sign on the roof. No other signs indicate that the building is a hospital. Walking down the broad boulevards in Sofia, one is surrounded by a sea of blue lights. In the absence of trees, the Allianz insurance company has created a veritable Allianz avenue by "planting" advertising billboards. As the sign easiest to decipher in a market economy, advertising is, however, only a partial aspect of the "Visual Seminar." Your fundamental concern is to analyze current patterns of perception and visual literacy, using analytical tools from both art and cultural studies. With this analysis you are aiming, ultimately, to ignite public discussion on such themes. If you don't mind, we would like to ask a personal question: what does it mean for you and your self-perception that Sofia is "becoming more urban"? Has this changed your idea and experience of privacy and intimacy?

Iara Boubnova:

Yes, if one thing is certain, it is that the city of Sofia is becoming more and more urban.... The "Visual Seminar" (VS) is all for it and contributes to the development of this process by kicking off and supporting public debate. The "Visual Seminar" is actually proud that this project is taking place in such a vibrant city and that we are able to concentrate on incorporating the critical and creative resources of theoreticians, artists and curators, media personnel, and inhabitants of the city along the way. VS often engages the political elite of the city by challenging them with its agenda and priorities, and that's an asset. The new urban environment is extremely lively and dynamic, in a constant flux. The sense of orientation in the city is changing every day. The process is fast, visual, and lends itself to interpretation by different artistic positions, positions originating from visual anthropology, sociology, theory of urban culture and planning, architecture, and even civic activism. The main point of the VS is not simply to question good taste or bad taste, corrupt practices or humiliating images, or to instigate change in terms of the public having a "say" in city affairs. The point is to "domesticate" the city as a living environment, to analyze its visual rhythm as a reflection on the life of society on the whole, and to participate in the "self-regulatory" dynamics of city life. The problem, however, is not, as your question implies, the shift in the "experience of privacy and intimacy".... Even when once upon a time all urban markers were "red," there was still space for privacy and intimacy. There were a lot of restrictions, yet there was space available for the construction of private identity, within certain limits, of course. It was the total lack of possibilities of having any public identity away from, and outside of, the ideologically correct collectivism that was the main defining factor of the socialist city of Sofia. This also involved the impossibility of having personal opinion or visual taste in public matters, including the city environment. The situation has changed, and the VS is a platform for transferring a set of private concerns and

views into the public domain. However, the current urban visual situation has links to the old one. The overwhelming perception today is that advertising (and that's just one of the city aspects VS engages with) and urban planning are tools for the construction of public consumer identity. It is the lack of possibilities for constructing other kinds of public identity (or the exclusion/inclusion mechanisms played out in the visual field) that we are concerned about. In conclusion, we could say that the new city environment does not necessarily challenge the sense of privacy and intimacy within city life; it's rather the space (visually detectable) between the private and intimate experiences/spaces of the various city inhabitants and groups of inhabitants that is under question.

Formats

Analyses of contemporary urban visual culture using the example of Sofia. Forum Visual Culture, resident fellow program, international guest program Visual Statement, exhibitions, publications

Project leadership

Iara Boubnova

Leadership of the fellowship program

Ass. Prof. Alexander Kiossev, Ph.D.

Team

Maria Vassileva
Iskra Zaharieva

Advisory board

Lachezar Boyadjiev
(artist, Sofia)
Prof. Dr. Iwaylo Dichev
(cultural anthropologist, Sofia)
Ass. Prof. Irina Genova, Ph.D.
(art historian, Sofia)
Boyan Manchev, Ph. D.
(literary theoretician, Sofia)
Ass. Prof. Miglena Nikolchina, Ph.D.
(philosopher, Sofia)
Diana Popova
(art critic, Sofia)
Kiril Prashkov
(artist, Sofia)
Nedko Solakov
(artist, Sofia)
Orlin Spassov, Ph.D.
(expert in the area of print and visual media, Sofia)

Fellows

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Milla Mineva
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ALTE ARTE

A project of the Center for Contemporary Art
Chisinau (KSA:K), Moldova

The internationally renowned artist Pavel Braila, together with a team and "relations", has developed the TV art and culture magazine "ALTE ARTE." Beginning in November 2004, the program will go to air twice a month on the state-owned station TV Moldova. "ALTE ARTE" will present and discuss contemporary art and culture on an international standard. The goal is to produce a direct connection between artists and the public.

In Moldova, there are currently 16 television channels transmitting in Russian, three in Ukrainian, and four in Romanian. The majority of the population views either the Russian station ORT (81%) or the state-owned station, TV Moldova (67%). TV Moldova mainly covers political topics and is geared towards commercialization. Cultural events, the new media, contemporary art, or new critical approaches find little attention here, as is generally the case in the mass media. The reporting of daily news, which exerts an enormous influence on the daily lives of the people, is also of extremely poor quality. This poor standard cannot be simply explained by a lack of viewer interest. Firstly, it is a result of many causes such as the absence of journalistic professionalism, an extremely restrictive media landscape, and a lack of sensibility for issues raised by art and culture. With an art and culture magazine, we want to convince the TV authorities and viewers of the value of an engagement

with contemporary art, for we firmly believe that an involvement with new art forms is just as important for establishing democracy as political and civic education.

The idea of putting an "Art TV program" on air comes from Pavel Braila. In October 2003, the state television authorities confirmed their official interest in an art magazine. The plan now is for a bilingual (Romanian/Russian) magazine that will be broadcast twice a month for 30 minutes of prime time, i.e. Saturday or Sunday at 11 am. We will broadcast in Romanian with Russian subtitles. Our goal is to report on every area and genre of contemporary art, to stimulate a critical discussion on individual works, and to support the artists of the region. Moreover, we want to show the influence art can have and has on society as a mediator of cultural values and norms. The cooperation with Razvan Georgescu, who has directed various seminars and workshops for over a year now with a view to forming a competent



team, has given us our first opportunity to work with foreign countries and begin an exchange with German-language media. Satellite editorial offices are planned for Bucharest, Kiev, and Berlin. As "ALTE ARTE" is not subjected to any restrictions in terms of production, we will also work experimentally. Along with reports and commentaries on exhibitions and individual artists, certain artistic works produced exclusively for television will form a central segment. In this respect, "ALTE ARTE" is a combination of two different formats: "TV on ART" and "ART on TV." The supporting project agency is the only institution in Moldova that is currently involved in contemporary art, organizing festivals, exhibitions, conferences, and artist exchange programs: the Center for Contemporary Art, Moldova, KSA:K. Its collection, contact network, and databank form the basis for our work. **Pavel Braila, Lilia Dragneva, Lilia Braila, Veaceslav Cebatori**



Pavel Braila, "Where is Somewhere?", video in color, stereo, 1min. Courtesy of the artist.

***Pavel Braila:**

The artist from Chisinau, Moldova, achieved international acclaim with his work "Shoes for Europe," which was shown at the Documenta XI in Kassel (2002). He is the leader of the "ALTE ARTE" project.

***Lilia Braila:**

Program coordinator for the "ALTE ARTE" project in Chisinau, Moldova.

***Lilia Dragneva:**

Artist and curator is Artistic Director of the Center for Contemporary Art (KSA:K) in Chisinau, Moldova, since 2002, and Editor-in-Chief of the "ALTE ARTE" project.

***Veaceslav Cebotari:**

The Moldovan filmmaker is active as Head of Production in the "ALTE ARTE" project.

***Razvan Georgescu:**

Television journalist and maker of documentaries for ARTE and ZDF, his focal points being culture, social issues, and eastern Europe. He is a producer of international documentary films and Chief Editor at the production company West-end Film & TV Produktion GmbH, located in Frankfurt am Main. He is also responsible for program development and the production of some episodes annually of the European culture magazine METROPOLIS/ARTE.

relations in discussion

What is behind the idea to produce the first TV magazine on contemporary art for Moldova's national broadcaster?



Art as counter-program

During the communist era, Moldova was an important supplier of fruit, vegetables, and wine to the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union disintegrated, production collapsed, and up to the present day around one third of all Moldovans have left their country. In the meantime, the communist government elected in 2002 has been forced to once again fix bread prices to ensure supply, and overall the infrastructure is very fragile. To take one example: state-run television is broadcast only six hours a day at present because anything more would exceed its capacity. The directors rotate every three months. In such a tense and over-stretched situation you are working intensely on preparations for the first culture magazine to be presented on Moldovan television. For over a year now you have been working tirelessly on giving what in difficult times may appear to be unimportant or unnecessary its rightful place. And it looks as if you'll be able to go to air in autumn. Is this cynicism or plain ignorance, or what is the vision that has convinced you of the need to present the arts and culture? What do you think the response

will be in the living rooms, or wherever the viewers may watch television?

Pavel Braila

As the idea first arose to develop an arts magazine for television that was to be broadcast nationwide and address a public familiar with the political and economic situation in Moldova, this sounded – for both observers and those directly involved – like an absolutely utopian project. The questions came thick and fast: would the state station allow a magazine to be broadcast that discusses a theme unusual and strange to the local public? What would the program look like? Which team would produce it? What about professionalism and experience? How many programs are to be broadcast and how often? Which equipment needs to be used? Where are the programs to be made? At what time are they to go to air? What is the program to be called? Format? Channel? Security? Communication? And so on and so on. Ten years ago an exciting contemporary art scene began to emerge in Moldova. The fundamental development steps were taken in the ensuing years. Now, with the contemporary art scene well established, we have reached a growth stage that demands further support, but above all this scene should be presented to a larger public. The answers emerge on their own the more we become immersed in the details of this project, hold meetings and discussions, experience stressful and disappointing moments, grab the telephone again, seek advice and help, and conduct workshops. Slowly but surely the future

program is taking shape and acquiring a structure. Today, more than a year after first being “mentioned,” the most interesting aspect is that the two camps of “doubters” have fully changed their ideas. For both observers and those directly involved, misgivings have given way to a specific name, “ALTE ARTE,” which has rapidly become an alternative audio-visual laboratory for everyone interested in art, i.e. for all those who want to report on a theme they are devoting their attention to, tell a story, or simply film a video that confronts others with an idea taken from contemporary art. To put it better, the need to present and to convey art and culture never ceases.... Today we believe we are able to take steps in this direction. Naturally we, too, cannot stay at home and moan about the dreadful dead end we, our country, are stuck in... another possibility for young, active people, as for many others, is to go onto the street – preferably to the government building – and chant “down with the communists,” etc. But there remains the possibility to do what we have decided to do: to work seriously and to give our best in this field. And not to forget: humor, of the right kind, and self-irony. Then there won't be a lack of the optimism that, with a touch of utopia, can achieve a great deal. Take it easy!! Do your best! And no cynicism! Only then, so we believe, can “ALTE ARTE” continue!

Format

TV art and culture magazine

Project leadership

Pavel Braila

Team

Lilia Braila

Veaceslav Cebotari

Lilia Dragneva

Collaborators

Larisa Barsa

Denis Bartenev

Igor Bodeanu

Victor Diaconu

Vadim Hancu

Nita Ion

Iulian Robu

Reporters

Dorina Bohantov

Stefan Rusu

Igor Scerbina

Marin Turea

Consulting advisors

Thorsten Essig

(picture editor and trainer for video journalists, Berlin)

Martin Fritz

(project organizer and curator, director of Festival der Regionen, Vienna/Ottensheim)

Razvan Georgescu

(chief editor at the production company Westend Film & TV Produktion GmbH, Frankfurt am Main)

Martin Pieper

(chief editor for culture at ZDF/ARTE, Mainz)

Hans Zimmermann

(cameraman and trainer for video journalists, Frankfurt am Main)

Other supporters

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

(www.ifa.de/media-im-pakt)

www.stabilitypact.org)

Soros Foundation, Moldova

(www.soros.md)

Contact

www.altearte/art.md

AlteArte@art.md



De/construction of Monument

A project of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, Bosnia-Herzegovina

After the break up of the former Yugoslavia, sections of the new elites are rewriting the history of their countries. In particular the high-handed manner in which monuments are erected and dismantled is proof of the newly achieved powerfulness of history. "De/construction of Monument" counters this phenomenon with artistic actions in public spaces in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar.

*Dunja Blažević:

Since 2000, the art historian and curator has been the Director of the Center for Contemporary Art in Sarajevo, originally initiated by the Soros Foundation. Before 2000, she was for many years editor-in-chief of the program for applied art at TV Belgrade, and in the 1970s, she was initiator and director of the legendary Student Cultural Center in Belgrade.

*Charles Landry:

Is an internationally recognized expert on the themes of strategic policy development and innovation and future planning for cities. In 1978 he founded Europe's leading planning organization, Comedia.

*Republika Srpska:

The Republika Srpska is one of the two existing entities of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Almost exclusively populated by Serbs, the Republic was recognized as a participating member state of Bosnia - Herzegovina in the Dayton Agreement of 1995. Banja Luka has been the seat of government since 1998.

*Open Society Institute (OSI):

Private foundation with its headquarters in New York. Founded in 1979 by George Soros. In the meantime, the network of Soros foundations covers over 50 countries and is present on all continents. The goal of the OSI is to promote the development of open societies by supporting improvements in education, media, public health, culture, and human rights.



Gordana Anđelić-Galić, "The number of monuments erected to glorify a single person is in direct proportion to the lack of individual freedoms," sketch for a banner, 2004. Photo: Branimir Prijak

What is the common denominator for the successor states of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia? The creation of nation-states (the process is still in progress) based on national or nationalistic ideologies and policies continues to dominate the Balkan political space. The result of such policies is not (only) liberation from the domination of the bigger and stronger, or the struggle against the aggressor in order to safeguard one's "own territory" and national integrity, but also the ethnic division and homogenization of a people, accomplished through the perpetuation of a feeling of endangerment and fear of the other. Thus the *raison d'être* of these new states is ethnic homogeneity - unity. One collective ideology - "the rule of the working class" - was exchanged for another - "the rule of the (ethnic) nation."

The reigning national policies have their equivalents in culture. These are occurrences of pseudo-national culture generated from the folkloric-religious matrix in a retrograde, obsolete form. The ruling national elite produces corresponding forms of its representation that can be recognized in mythic images and symbols of "the glorious and tragic past" of the nation. The implanting of a new cultural matrix is accomplished through the rewriting of history and the erasing of memory. Overnight, our heretofore heroes become terrorists and enemies, and vice versa; old symbols are erased and new ones are drawn - "more beautiful and older" than their predecessors; new anthems are taught, new "old" languages; dead writers and poets are "thrown out" of the books; dictionaries are corrected and rewritten; new place-names are introduced... all in harmony with the new patriotism. Yet, there is a contemporary art that reflects on

the time in which it lives, open to communication with the outside world, with others. This art uses and explores new media and art forms, poses questions, deals with social traumas, demystifies traditional notions of art as well as collective ideological patterns and truths. This "other art," with its practice - its method of organization, its working strategies, and spheres of interest - has the potential to change the dominant cultural models and thought matrices. Since the nineties, the genesis of the theme "De/construction of Monument" has been witnessed in the work of artists ranging from Mladen Stilinović, IRWIN, Sanja Iveković, and Rasa Todosijević to the youngest generation of artists such as Erzen Shkololli or Kurt & Plasto. What they have in common is the critical interpretation of the symbolic presentation of the old, the renewed or the new ideological constructs, or else the re-affirmation of "forgotten" figures and symbols. As Charles Landry stated in the Cultural Policy Experts Report for Bosnia in 2002: "In no country in Europe is cultural policy more important than in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Culture is both the cause and the solution to its problems. Cultural arguments were used to divide the country, yet culture might be able to bring the people back together again through the initiation of cultural programs that increase mutual understanding and respect." This diagnosis of the symptoms of the disease, as well as its cure, can be applied to all parts in Europe of the former Yugoslavia. The disease is called the manipulation of culture, art, religion and media by the nationalist elite. The cure is called the decontamination of culture.

To make this artistic potential visible and efficacious is the goal of this project. We recognize the

potential that an individual artistic attitude can have as a corrective to society and, indeed, this was the conviction that formed the starting point of this project. Rather, one could say that our project encompasses a number of aims, namely, the deconstruction of myths and the de-ideologizing and decoding of recent and distant history affecting us now. The material that artists will use for the construction of new meanings and readings in this project are monuments, symbols, icons - the ruling representations of various epochs. We want to change the existing cultural models. Our specific objectives are to establish new historical awareness; to promote new organizational forms in arts and culture; to promote individual artistic action as a means of social change; to recognize art as one of the elements of new social awareness; to compare the international to the regional reception of history. Similar to our work, our board crosses national borders. We thus invited Borka Pavicević (Belgrade), Shkëlzen Maliqi (Prishtina), Zelimir Košević, Jakob Finci, and Marina Gržinić to join the board. Besides this, we are also working together with organizations in Banja Luka (the capital of the Republika Srpska), for instance, the "Center for Informative Decontamination" that publishes the magazine *Buka (Noise)* and produces an anti-national show for a local TV station - "Alternative TV". We have also agreed to collaborate with an organization called "Ghetto," which specifically targets educating students of the Banja Luka Art Academy and provides for their inclusion in the SCCA programs, especially "De/construction of Monument." In the city of Mostar, we are collaborating with the group "Urban Movement," which started an initiative to construct a monument in Mostar commemorating Bruce Lee. Confident of

our noble mission to bring us back to the streets - wherefrom it actually originated - a popular icon, a champion of justice whose ethnic background is absolutely irrelevant to us all, we - the boys and the girls from "Urban Movement" Mostar - admire the bronze-cast statue of Bruce Lee. Lifesize and captured in his typical martial-art pose, Bruce is set on a low podium. Beneath him is the fountain from which only those who stoop low enough to pay tribute to the great hero are able to drink. Furthermore, we are cooperating with the New York and Sarajevo-based NGO "The Children's Movement for Creative Education." This pilot program involves a small number of students from Sarajevo and Lukavica and deals with interpretations of (and perspectives on) the most recent history of this younger generation.

Dunja Blažević

relations in discussion

What are the images motivating a project that opposes sorting history into ethnic categories?



In summer 2004 the banner was hung up in Sarajevo's General Tito Street. Photo: Branimir Prijak

Visions of a different remembrance

Eight years after the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a complex battle is still taking place. It's all about how the history of this new country with a population of around four million is to be written. The new elites are sorting through the whole "arsenal" of Yugoslav history to see what is suitable (for national purposes) and are grading it accordingly. Streets are given new names memorializing the new national heroes. Existing monuments are stored away in cellars if what or whom they remember point to the "wrong" heritage, and in their place new, "ethnically acceptable" monuments are erected. When no agreement can be reached on who that hero might be, the square is simply abandoned. In both cases, the broader public is seldom given an opportunity to take part in the decision-making process.

"De/construction of Monument" has, as you yourselves have phrased it, set itself the goal of "decontaminating culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina." You initiate art actions in public spaces, produce artistically inspired video clips, and cooperate with other cultural initiatives, irrespective of their nationality and generation. Through these different activities you confront the public, especially in Sarajevo, Mostar, and Banja Luka, with the idea that personal freedom must be gained independently from the politics of national identity. What we would like to know is: what images did you have in mind? What kind of visions did you have when you started your project? And

which ones are driving forward your work today

Dunja Blažević

Your question relates to the process of creating an idea. In the beginning, these were individual images and fragments emerging out of the existing practice. It was partially what had been done together with the artists who SCCA had supported, and partially an insight into the work of artists from the region. And suddenly, all these particles and images came together and formed one clear picture. Such a process of accumulation, linking individual facts and their synthesis, is the distinctive feature of our work. The most obvious form of a critical and sometimes provocative artistic engagement is the intervention in the ruins of monuments damaged during the wars not only in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, but also in the other countries of the former Yugoslavia. In all parts of the former Yugoslavia, "ethnocracies" rule and, therefore, "fighting the past" of another nation or of the past regime has become desirable behavior.

raise the right questions

In February 2005, my trip to Prishtina, Kosovo – where I met a group of young Kosovan artists and viewed their work – helped me to form the initial idea of the project. Similarities with the works of some artists from other parts of the former Yugoslavia, and especially with the works of the artists of the same generation from Sarajevo, were more than obvious. These similarities did not stem from their knowing each other, but from the similar social contexts out of which their art emerged. Starting with recent art practice and the issues it deals with, we are extending our action. We are including different disciplines which can help us to read these visual signs or artistic languages; these are disciplines which cleanse perception and are tools for "decontaminating culture," both of the individual and of society. The important thing for us in the process of working on the project is to raise the right questions, expand its meaning, and reveal the relativism of the common way of thinking. The

interaction between the participants in the project and the public – in fact, the attempt to create and activate a public – is the goal of the project. It will be a deliberate attempt to form a critical consciousness, and a critical correction in one segment of social life here and now. Of course, one initiative is clearly not enough to set off a broader change of social consciousness, regardless of its extensive combination of disciplines and methods. Nevertheless, this project initiates a positive process of individualization, critical opinion, and strengthening of the "the civil block," all of which are still practically invisible in our societies and are without well-built mechanisms for influencing those who make the important decisions for the whole of society and so determine its future. During the first part of the project – ART AND PUBLIC SPACE – as the idea was being turned into practice, it soon became clear that working and collaborating with the public media would be much more demanding and complicated than organizing an exhibition or a conference. Besides the preparations for the "academic" part of the event, the basic information about "De/construction of Monument" had already been spread through the public domain (TV, daily newspapers, radio stations as well as the different media we ourselves have issued – i.e., the booklet about the project, postcards, and posters). To attract and include a wider audience through the public media, one must present a clear message and pose a simple question to evoke reactions or to receive answers. This is the first lesson to be learnt. The banner that was installed in the very center of the city produced an immediate public reaction: monuments erected to glorify one single person is in direct proportion to the lack of individual freedoms (Gordana Anđelić-Galić). People stop, read, and "take the message with sympathy." From the very beginning, our question was launched on local internet portals: for whom and for what reason is a monument erected? We will take the result of this public opinion poll into account when the competition for the "New Monument" gets underway. Our next step will be a difficult task – starting negotiations with local authorities on intervening in urban spaces, which thus far have been under their total control.

Formats

Artist presentations, discussion forums, exhibitions, artistic interventions in public space, art and media productions, publications, political platform, new monuments

Project leadership

Dunja Blažević

Team

Amra Bakšić Čamo
Larisa Hasanbegović

Advisory board

Marina Gržinić
(curator and art critic, Ljubljana)
Jakob Finč
(president of the Interrelations Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo)
Želimir Košević
(director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb)
Shkëlzen Maliqi
(philosopher, director of the Center for Humanistic Studies Gani Bobi, Prishtina)
Borka Pavicević
(director of the Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade)

Partners

Urban Movement, Mostar
Center for Informative
Decontamination, Banja Luka
(www.fyka.com)
The Children's Movement for Creative Education, New York
(www.childrensmovement.org)
Kathrin Becker
(managing director and head of the Video Forum Neuer Berliner Kunstverein NBK, Berlin, www.nbk.org)

Other supporters

The Open Society Fund Bosnia - Herzegovina
(www.soros.org.ba)

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Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000

A project of the Center for Drama Art, the Multimedia Institute [mi2], Platforma 9,81 and What, How and for Whom, Croatia

“Zagreb - Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000” is a joint project of four influential non-profit organizations active in the area of contemporary culture in Croatia. The goal of the project is to support and strengthen the independent and non-institutional culture scene in Croatia by setting up a joint platform for art and culture projects.

“Cultural Kapital” is torn between the centrality of the respective capital cities and the transverse movement of capital, a phenomenon which is becoming increasingly evident in the internationalization of a cultural production that is continually losing its national characteristics. The communication exchange on a worldwide basis has radically changed the political economy of cultural representation. It is no longer a matter of presenting a representative, predominant culture produced within the borders of a nation-state to an abstract consumer of culture. Rather, individual subjects are connected with one another in specifically practical and theoretical fields, acting within the common context of a global economic production.

In the transitional phase we must ask the question: who is the social agent of cultural capital?

If this transition process means two things, namely, to surrender to market forces and to abandon social projects – or better the social as a project – then its most conspicuous effect is that the private interests of those involved in managing the public domain evade democratic controls and are no longer transparent. The tangible absence of social legitimization is mirrored in the mismanagement of public resources. Our ossified institutional culture and the system of public support dependent on it demonstrate how maintaining the status quo can sometimes amount to leading the way in this process of privatization of public interest. The sole motor of change in relations between the state and state-supported institutions is currently the dynamic generated by individual interests. Of particular significance here are the independent actors who understand and re-articulate cultural activities as social action and social activities in terms of critical culture.

The platform “Zagreb - Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000” has set itself the goal of strengthening collaboration between independent cultural initiatives which investigate the changed conditions of cultural and social praxis arising

from the increasingly regional significance of ever-extending economic and communicational exchanges. In this context these initiatives are to work on reforming the institutional structures with the aim of increasing the presence of and fostering opportunities for independent culture. Since 2003, the platform has initiated a series of regional, international, and interdisciplinary collaborations which present and develop new group dynamics, new collective strategies, and new working forms in culture production. This step is aimed at counteracting the control over productivity exerted by copyright legislation and intellectual property and at supporting the protection of the public sphere against privatization. In addition, proposals are to be submitted as to how the independent cultural sector can be strengthened and developed, and how its presence within “cultural capital” can be secured. Just as it fosters collaboration, so too the platform is keenly interested in investigating and extending the conditions and possibilities of “collaboration” itself, for “cultural capital” no longer refers to infrastructures, but rather collaborations: indeed, collaboration is its infrastructure.

The idea of cultural capital is out of joint

The cooperation/collaboration between the cultural actors, project partners, and the founding initiatives are to result from inherent needs and not prescribed obligations and rules. The “Center for Drama Art” (CDU) is to focus on two themes: firstly, the presentation of the new Croatian performing arts scene and how it operates within the context of a cultural policy increasingly geared towards prestigious representation; and secondly, the problematic issues of collaboration in performing groups and the significance of immaterial labor in artistic cooperation. The curators team “What, How and for Whom” (WHW) is also devoting its attention to the theoretical aspects of collective work in three projects. The projects “Bulletin Board” and “Collective Action” are to illuminate this topic historically as well as theoretically through discussions, lectures, exhibitions, and art actions. In addition, collaborating with the “Center for Drama Art”

and “Platforma 9,81,” WHW has organized a symposium entitled “Group Dynamics.” Another focal point of WHW’s work is international curatorial collaboration. Together with Swedish curators, WHW is undertaking a study, entitled “Normalization,” about how the term “normality” is undergoing shifts of meaning in the “post-transitional period” in Croatia. “Platforma 9,81” is to initiate two projects, working outside the habitual practices of mainstream architecture and urban planning. “Invisible Zagreb” investigates the potential cultural and public use of empty city spaces. In workshops, discussions, and public presentations, “5D Journal: No1 – Capital Space” studies the impacts processes of social and economic transformation are having on architecture and urban development in Croatia.

The “Multimedia Institute [mi2]” tackles the issues of how private economic structures and established intellectual processes are infringing on the public domain and tightening control over public interaction. The project “OutInOpen” is attempting to breach the influence “capital” has on the public with strategies taken from communication and information technologies. The aim is to enable new and larger spaces for independent public interaction. “SystemHack()” documents in an art exhibition actions that have managed to penetrate into and crack open closed systems, whether it be a copyright system, a surveillance system, or a system of beliefs. Together with the project partners WHW and CDU, the project “Public Domain and Creative Labor” will organize conferences, lectures, and exhibitions focusing on the themes of new licensing models for art and the management of immaterial labor. The project Swarm Intelligences is founded on the idea of uniting the intersections between the partners: the “Local Base for Culture Refreshment” (BLOK), the “Multimedia Institute [mi2]” (its theory module pastforward) and “Platforma 9,81” in partnership with Community Art. The emphasis of the project lies in the collaboration of different types of “intelligence in space,” meaning different types of treatment and behavior according to prearranged social space: these are the intersections of architectural-urban planning, artistic-organizational, and theoretical rationality.

*Center for Drama Art:

The Center for Drama Art in Zagreb was founded in 1995. The CDU is at once a think tank for alternative culture in Croatia and also a place of performance for contemporary Croatian artists. The CDU publishes the internationally renowned performing arts journal “Frakcija.”

*What, How and for Whom (WHW):

Artist and curator collective located in Zagreb. WHW sees itself as a platform for strengthening exchange and collaboration between cultural initiatives from a variety of backgrounds. In this context WHW organizes and stages exhibitions, readings and public discussions, featuring artists, curators, and cultural theoreticians from abroad.

*Platforma 9,81:

Founded in Zagreb, since 1999 “Platforma 9,81” has advanced an interdisciplinary and open dialogue within the architecture scene. The group’s main focus is on the problematic of conceptions for urban space and the influences globalization has on the perception of space.

*Multimedia Institute [mi2]:

NGO located in Zagreb that actively supports a more intense deployment of new media and technology for developing the social and cultural sector.

relations in discussion

What added value is yielded by Kapital as a concept for the development of new models in international culture work?



Carl Michael von Hauswoll, "RedEmpty", installation, December 7 - 24, 2005. Photo: Sandro Lendler.



BADCo, "Solo Me," solo for two performers, featuring Pravan Devlahovic and Nikolina Bujas-Pristas

Anecdote Kapital

Take the time to get to know Zagreb and you will encounter a remarkable number of people who simply refuse to be dissuaded from initiating change and, indeed, have stuck to this attitude for a number of years now. This city of almost 700,000 residents lives from their vitality and engagement. To find for the first time a common and publicly visible space for this tremendous cultural diversity, but without centering it at one single location, for instance, at a cultural center, was the starting-point of your project. The plan has worked: beginning in 2005, a steady stream of events coordinated by you have taken place, covering such areas as the visual and performing arts, architecture, the new media, and contemporary philosophy. All of these events are recognizable as being connected with one another through their shared label, "Zagreb - Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000." With the principle of decentralized networking and labeling, you have created a platform that, although immaterial, is proving to be highly effective politically. Exerting political influence on actual cultural policy is of crucial importance to you - and accordingly, you set these alternative cultural initiatives and collaborations against an official cultural policy that is mostly geared towards catering to the nationalist and representative interests. And what is more, with your label "Zagreb - Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000," you raise the question as to what the connection is between (cultural) capital and those features

which make up, or could make up, a cultural capital city. By posing such a question, you create an explicit reference to Marx's main work, *Das Kapital*. With this (re)turn to Marx, and consequently the analysis of capitalist mechanisms of utility and exploitation, you are taking a step that is also unusual in eastern European countries, if not quite unpopular. Why? What is the (cultural) added value you are expecting to gain from this step?

Tomislav Medak

The reference to Marx's "Das Kapital" is rather accidental and anecdotal - we decided namely to use the expression "Kapital" instead of "Capital" in order to emphasize the disparity between the transversal trajectories of economic capital operating transnationally and the centralist proposition of capital cities representing and exchanging culture with a national mission. We still, however, want to hold true to an insight (not exclusively Marx's), one which has fallen into disrepute since the demise of "real-existing" socialism and the global reign of a reinvigorated neo-liberal consensus, namely that those processes of social transformation and integration cannot and indeed should not be undertaken without being accompanied by reforms ensuring social justice. Both the transition and globalization processes of the last decade and the recently instigated process of EU accession show the enormous power that economic transformation wields over social change. With less and less deliberative and normative influence being exerted on the process of transformation, the public sphere grows weaker. The failure of public agents to protect public interests and public resources, and the failure to resist the claims of particular economic interests, strengthens economic capital, while severely undermining the bonds of trust and accountability between social interactions and institutionalized actions that are at the heart of "social capital." Guided by the general consid-

eration that we live in a context begging for new social practices and actors capable of advocating the public vectors, as well as accounting for the transnationality of production and communication exchanges, our proposition was to bring together the emerging endeavors in such practices existing in Zagreb's independent cultural scene, to thereby create a joint project: "Zagreb - Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000." This project is based methodologically on the close-knit collaboration between (initially) four of the most prominent non-institutional cultural actors in Zagreb, representing four very different fields of engagement and expertise. Along with producing a number of events conceived and organized through transdisciplinary collaborations, the project proposes and initiates socio-cultural policies, strategies, and practices that work towards strengthening the independent cultural scene in Croatia, but - at the same time - advocate protection and the new articulation of public vectors within a social context expanding beyond the bounds of the nation-state. From this triangulation between the economic, cultural, and social capital, we intend to respond to the challenge of initiating new social reform movements.

Formats

Political platform, performances, exhibitions, lectures, debates, symposiums, website, publications

Project leadership

Damir Blažević (Platforma 9,81)
Tomislav Medak [mi2]
Goran Sergej Pristaš (CDU)
Sabina Sabolović (WHW)

Team

Dinko Peracić
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Emina Višnić [mi2]
Una Bauer, Ivana Ivković
Goran Sergej Pristaš (CDU)
Ivet Čurlin, Ana Dević,
Nataša Ilić, Sabina Sabolović (WHW)

Other partners

"Zagreb - Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000" takes place in the framework of relations in co-operation with Kontakt. Kontakt. The Arts and Civil Society Program of Erste Bank Group in Central Europe (www.kontakt.erste-bankgroup.net)

Other supporters

City of Zagreb
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia

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Zagreb - Cultural Kapital 3000





Rearranging.

Art, Text, and Everyday Life in Eastern European Countries

The book accompanying the relations project

Our initial considerations on the publication project resulted in a two-part question. Firstly, how can we document a process as a “movement” and not from the perspective of its end result? And secondly, how can we capture the dynamic that makes up the core of “relations”? A dynamic, namely, determined by a mutual coming together, by interest and also a touch of curiosity, by the necessity of translation, and by misses. Having decided to use the format of detailed interviews, in the fall of 2003 we traveled to Sofia together with the journalist and sociologist Mathias Greffrath, the cultural theoretician and editor of the art and cultural magazine “springerin”, Georg Schöllhammer, and the photographer Maria Ziegelböck to conduct interviews with the partners involved in the “Visual Seminar.” These numerous and extremely interesting interviews showed how many questions remain unanswered and how fragile such a communication process is, not the least when compressed into an interview format. Properly sustaining a publication requires far more time than we have at our disposal. We thus decided to turn the interviews into one part of an integrated publication, which also includes reports, essays, short stories, and artistic contributions. In discussions with the aforementioned interviewers Mathias Greffrath and Georg Schöllhammer, as well as Eda Čufer, Andrzej Przywara, and Joanna Mytkowska, the idea arose for a publication that combines insider insights with outsider perspectives and that plots thematic landscapes instead of locations. As a title we were considering “Rethinking.” While having dinner with Alexander Kiossev, he carefully asked why we were paying little attention to the spatial dimension of the “relations” project. Out of “Rethinking” emerged “Rearranging.”

stories of transition, of translating and of overcoming hurdles

Whenever things get difficult, a friend told us, his mother begins looking around for new places to put her old furniture. “It’s time to rearrange things again,” she then explains. Some things end up in the rubbish bin or are passed on to the neighbors; other things are taken down to the cellar, and sometimes other pieces are taken from there back up into the apartment. If all works out well, the atmosphere in the room changes – not fully new, still familiar, but very different. And with that she has reached her ideal goal: rearranging what’s there breaks old habits so that new perspectives can reclaim reality. As unique as this anecdote may appear to be, as quaint as it is, for the publication team it illustrates in a nutshell what is not talked about whenever Europe is at issue. It’s certainly true

that we are often confronted with claims that Europe, in general, and the countries and inhabitants of eastern Europe, in particular, must adjust and position themselves anew. The catchword evoked in this context is “transformation.” This set term supposedly succinctly defines the processes of change and signalizes a capacity for forging a future. Everything will be different, everything will be new – that is the urgent demand, a demand that all too easily loses sight of the present and rushes headlong into an unforeseeable future. What is lost, however, in the pragmatic meaning given to this concept is the ambiguity of the transition and its multifaceted ventures into past and future. Ultimately, awareness for the everyday nature of rearranging, the rearranging of everyday life, and its consequences for thought and action are lost. “Rearranging. Art, Text and Everyday Life in Eastern European Countries” tells these stories of transition and of reversal, of getting stuck, of being trapped and of translating, of overcoming hurdles and claiming new territory, of tilting against windmills. Space, the situation of the individual, and the location of a European “we” – these are the pivotal points of this publication project combining different formats and emerging out of cooperation between artists and authors from the Countries of Eastern Europe and Germany. As Gaston Bachelard remarked in his “Poetics of Space,” it is not just our memories that are “quartered” but also all that which has fallen into oblivion: our unconscious is quartered. Space stores time like honeycombs store honey. We should take on and look after this space. The authors thus take the title “Rearranging” literally, and yet also in its figurative sense, they look into the changes taking place in living rooms and bedrooms, in offices, shopping arcades and palaces of culture, and they inquire into (ideal) sites of retreat, into both newly achieved as well as newly lost freedoms in thinking. “Rearranging” mistrusts an impersonal ‘we’ and refuses to tell any national stories, stories of The Bulgarians, The Poles, or The Moldovans. Instead, the book accompanying “relations” presents the thematic landscapes of the independent cultural scenes and provides insights into their visions and concerns. Furthermore, the publication tells of journeys into “terra incognita”: literary figures and journalists from Germany and other countries travel to eastern Europe and enter into a dialogue that transgresses the national borders and the constraints of fixed religious and ideological beliefs. “Rearranging. Art, Text and Everyday Life in Eastern European Countries” interweaves insider and outsider perspectives in order to open up a transnational space, a space of reflection and rethinking in which objects and thoughts can be sorted anew so as to clarify one’s attitude towards oneself and to others, indeed, to rearrange.

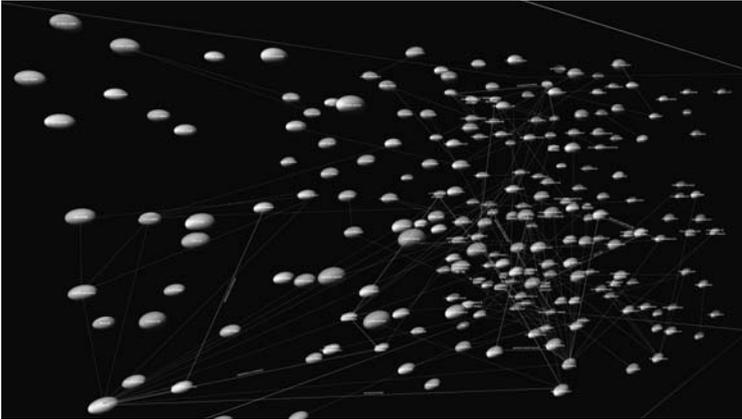
Ines Kappert & Katrin Klingan

Photo: Maria Ziegelböck, 2002. Courtesy of the artist.

East Art Map

A project by IRWIN (Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Borut Vogeljik), Croatia

“East Art Map” is to serve as an orientation aid for opening up still unknown areas of art in the east. The project plans a website, research and critical judgments by experts on the relationship between eastern and western art production, and research studies in cooperation with universities from both East and West.



“East Art Map”. Courtesy of IRWIN.

For eastern Europe – also known as the former Communist bloc, eastern and central Europe or the “new” Europe – the rule holds that there are no transparent structures in which events, works, and artists relevant to art history can be set in a reference system that would also find acceptance and be respected outside the borders of an individual country. Instead, we encounter systems which are valid only within national borders. The justification of these reference systems is often based on local needs. Comparisons with contemporary art and artists from the west are seldom drawn. Such a disjointed system hinders, above all, an overall deeper understanding of the art created in the epoch of Socialism. Secondly, this system presents the artists with a problem, for they lack not only adequate support for their work, but for the same reason they are forced to move back and forth between the regional and the international art scene. And thirdly, it blocks communication between artists, critics, and theoreticians from these countries.

EAM is to serve as an orientation aid for opening up still unknown areas of art in the east, an orientation aid that is no longer necessary for “west art.” If someone views a work by Joseph Beuys, for example, they will, insofar as they are in some way familiar with artistic production, quickly perceive its relationship to an entire complex of other artworks and artists. Almost everybody has, at least in basic contours, a map of the art mainly produced in the west in their mind’s eye. For art produced in the East, however, the exact opposite applies: in most cases viewers are left helpless whenever they try to place any work in a context. Instead of a transparent reference system that would allow comparisons on an international level, in our region we are dealing with historical representations set in local myths which defy translation into an internationally comprehensible art language. Responsible for the resolute persistence of this form is the fear of a shake-up of the entire value system. This is precisely why experts from one country do not normally intervene in the interpretations of art taking place in

another country. This tendency can only be overcome when the intervention of foreign experts is not only desired, but, indeed, organized. One goal of EAM is to transgress, within the scope of our possibilities, the borders of these art principalities concretely and on different levels.

“East Art Map I” – Art in Eastern Europe 1945 - 2000

As a first step (2001-2002), “East Art Map” wanted to present the art of the whole of eastern Europe, to detach individual artists from their national context and to bring them into a unified scheme that could serve as a clear and user-friendly map of eastern European art from 1945 to 2000. We invited twenty-four well-known art critics, museum directors, and artists to present ten important art projects of the last fifty years from their respective countries. No restrictions were placed on the artworks, the artists, or the happenings those invited might plan. The various selections were compiled into a whole, forming a map that answered such fundamental questions as “who? where? when?” The results were published in September 2002 in the 20th issue of the *New Moment* magazine. An “East Art Map” was also produced on CD-Rom and presented for the first time in June 2002 at the “Museutopia” exhibition held in the Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum in Hagen, Germany.

“East Art Map II” – Objectification and Democratization

While EAM I was slowly taking shape, a series of features became apparently characteristic of how the art system functioned in the countries of the so-called East. We would like to emphasize two of these features because they are connected to one

another and are of special significance for the further development of the project. Although we expressly asked the invited experts to base their selection of the artists and their works on their specific contribution to regional and international art production, only a few followed this request. As a result, the artists were selected according to varied criteria. We had actually expected this, but at the same time had hoped that the selection criteria would at least be more clearly defined. Only in a few cases was the art production of the east reflected on with reference to contemporary production in the West. This holds true, when for different reasons, not only the regional experts from the east, but also for the western experts, who as a rule restricted themselves to comparisons with western artists. Part II of EAM, currently in the process of being implemented, is for these reasons focused on reviewing and objectifying the results of EAM I. The project plans to build a website, to incorporate research and critical judgments by experts on the relationship between eastern and western art production, and to conduct research studies in cooperation with universities. We have asked experts from East and West to send us texts of between ten to fifteen pages which compare art from both regions using concrete examples. We allotted topics on the basis of our knowledge of the authors and their specialist areas. We do not expect that these texts will close the existing gaps in this area, but rather view them as role models for possible future research topics. We hope that this and our cooperation with universities will stimulate new research and further scholarly analysis. The “East Art Map” is also accessible on the internet as of September 2004. On the site, we have requested further information from the public which may possibly change the topography of the map. This approach will, firstly, accelerate the collection of data and democratize its processing; secondly, it will enable everyone to take part in shaping history as it gestates before our eyes and ensure that other artists and artworks are added; and thirdly, it will create the space and conditions for easier communication between theoreticians, critics, and other interested persons from the whole of eastern Europe. A multiplication of topics and discussions through this extended opening will hopefully bring EAM to a broader public and accelerate the setting up of a reference system for comparative studies of eastern European art.

IRWIN

*IRWIN:

The artist group from Ljubljana was one of the forerunners and co-founders of the “New Slovenian Art” movement that formed in the 1980s in the former Yugoslav republic. Since the 1990s, IRWIN has turned its attention to critically questioning the official art history of “western Modernism.”

*Bojana Pejić:

The art critic and curator was one of the editors of the art theoretical journal *Moment* in Belgrade in the 1970s. She has lived in Berlin since 1991. In 1999 she was head curator of the exhibition “After the Wall – Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe” staged at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm and the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. In the summer of 2005, she was Rudolf Arnheim guest professor at the Art History Institute of the Humboldt University, Berlin.

*Retro-avant-garde:

The reception of the avant-garde that began in eastern Europe with the onset of post-modernism in the early 1980s is characterized by a turn away from the previously dominant recourse to the (interrupted) classical avant-garde tradition. The totalitarian dimensions of the avant-garde, whose utopias are ostensibly realized in socialist realism, are placed under critical scrutiny. It is during this period that key concepts such as post-Utopianism (Boris Groys) and retro-avant-garde (Laibach, IRWIN) are developed, concepts which are also employed as a critical distinction from the postmodernism of the West.

*Appropriation Art:

As a collective term, Appropriation Art covers the artistic approaches, particularly from the 1980s, which take images and visual elements from different contexts (art history, mass media, advertising) and re-code them, that is, lend them a different meaning.

*Gorgona:

The artist group, active between 1959 and 1966 in Zagreb, affirmed the absurd, the void, and monotony as aesthetic categories, nihilism, and metaphysical irony. In this sense their *modus operandi* is comparable to that of Fluxus and Neo-Dada.



“East Art Map” presentation at the Cornerhouse, Manchester, 2004. Photo: courtesy of the Cornerhouse.

relations in discussion

How can artworks and artists evade being annexed under the label “eastern European”?

The expropriation of art

For the last 20 years, IRWIN has been working as an artist collective. In recent years, you have played a decisive role in the increasingly critical engagement with so-called “western” and “eastern” art. From within the “New Slovenian Art” movement, an eastern counterpart to western (post-)modernism was launched, albeit one which pursues a strategy of undermining these categories: the “retro-avant-garde.” This polarization of modern/post-modern versus retro-avant-garde is a playful and provocative way of calling into question how the tag of “eastern art” isolates art trends to the countries of eastern Europe, while also querying western (post-)modernism’s claim of being universal, and yet exclusively western. Again and again you have drawn attention to the absence of a reliable art history that neither views the contemporary visual arts in eastern European countries as an exotic “other” nor downgrades its peculiarities alternatively as communist, premodern, or folkloristic.

In line with your renowned provocative style, “East Art Map” now calls for the public to take part in creating an informed and intelligent map of artists from “the East.” What interests us is the following: how would you assess your own art of provocation? Is there, or more precisely, do you follow a central theme, one thread, so to speak, or perhaps even several?

Borut Vogelnik

Posed in such a way, the question assumes it to be self-evident that the art practiced by IRWIN is the art of provocation. What is this supposed to mean? I have to admit I am in a bit of quandary as to what such a characterization means in English- and German-speaking environments, to mention just two. But it is clear to me what it stands for in Slovenia and in the space of former Yugoslavia. Here, such a label means that art first and foremost

always focuses on provocation, while not having any central theme or themes, if I confine myself to the space delineated by the above question. For someone used to communicating in the Slovenian language, the correctly worded question would be: “How would you assess your own art of provocation? Is there, or more precisely, do you follow a certain theme, one thread, so to say, perhaps even several, or are you working without one?” If we do not wish to accept provocation as the principal designation of our activity, then the most practical of the three possibilities offered by your question is to call into question such a designation. The question is whether or not we really undermine these categories, modernism and post-modernism – this has definitely never been our intention, certainly not to do so in a playful way. But from the very beginning of our operation, we have had certain reservations about the functionalization and application of these terms to the art production of particular spaces. The principle established in the former Yugoslavia was the selective transfer of new “isms” into our space. Upon severing relations with Stalin’s Soviet Union, the Yugoslav communist party leadership also broke with the official social realism and replaced it with modernist art, thus obscuring its origins. What I have in mind is not that artists and theoreticians were not aware that these were imports, but that this fact did not play any role whatsoever in private and, particularly, in public discourses. The result was an absence of comparisons between international and contemporary local art production, an absence of attempts at positioning the latter within a framework that would have transcended national limits, a merely accidental collaboration in articulating and solving the problems of modern art production, and self-sufficiency. Even today, artistic achievements in this space are, almost without exception, not judged against contemporary international production. With this, I don’t want to deny the significance of maintaining a relationship with the international scene, but it must be admitted that such practice differs from this characteristic of modernism, that it hinders any public discourse which could bring about new results and that such systemic transfer of models contradicts the basic tenets of modernism. Bojana Pejić dubbed the production which has been organized into a system that perfectly resembles modernism “soc-modernism.” Appropriation raised into a system far ahead of appropriation art has a range of features that are closer to post-modernism than to modernism: how does one operate as an artist within an art system that is not only excluded from the symbolic order of “international” modern art but indeed excludes itself? How does one operate within a “post-modernist” art system at a time of modernism? This specific shift has been preserved till this day. But it has to be pointed out that, despite the characteristics of the local art system, quite a few artists have created extraordinary works of art; or inversely, some of them have produced relevant works precisely because of these characteristics. Their common ground lies in an interest in the logic behind the art system, an awareness of their own exclusion, and the inscription of the latter in their art production itself. With their practices, these artists establish communication with contemporaneous international avant-garde production precisely through this double shift – of being excluded from the excluded. The line of these artists, which runs through a period of some 50 years, is named and presented as the “retro-avant-garde.” The works (of at least some of them) are pioneering and far beyond mere comparison with simultaneous international production, although they have remained more or less unnoticed – with the exception of Braco Dimitrijević, who migrated to the United Kingdom very early. It is not without a certain amount of pride that the majority of other artists belonging to the “retro-avant-garde” have also been enjoying increasing international attention lately. A few years ago, when we presented the work of Gorgona, a Zagreb-based art group active in the 1950s and 1960s, to a well-known curator, he said: “If this were true, I would know about it.” Since it is

difficult to take his surprised response as cynical, his statement should be understood as: “If this artist group really existed, I would know about it. You are just provoking me.” It seems to me that the decision about who provoked whom depends on the cynicism of the art system. Under his presumption that he knows everything worth knowing, the work of Gorgona was transformed into fiction. Such presumptions are not so rare. And we are very amused that, though grounded in reality, particular formulations are perceived as fiction, as playful artifacts. The reality itself thus gains the qualities of virtual reality. The “retro-avant-garde” functions as if it were a work of art. And it is precisely this double inscription – as an act of mapping and an artifact – and, in this particular case, the sliding of perception it produces, which is the object of our interest.

And the conditions of artistic production provide the theme that has been present in the work of IRWIN ever since its inception 20 years ago – from the first texts published in 1984 through the articulation of the term “eastern modernism” in the text “The Ear behind the Painting from 1990”, to a series of projects and publications linked with this question throughout the 1990s: the organization of the “retro-avant-garde” and the current “East Art Map” project. As early as the beginning of the 1980s, we printed the following statement on the cover of our first catalogue: “We are artists, not politicians. When the Slav question is solved once and for all, we want to end our lives as artists.” What do we want to achieve with the East Art Map project? Several things, no doubt. But it is true that we were spurred on by our deep conviction of the sheer quality and value of a number of artists from the former Eastern bloc or their works of art. Despite this, or better, precisely because we are so convinced of the quality of some artists, we will have no problems agreeing with experts from the field of art history and theory, or indeed anyone who understands things better than we do, should they find that the “East Art Map” is somehow lacking or in many ways superficial and imprecise or that it does not reflect the image that in their opinion should be reflected. We do not intend to stubbornly insist on being right. Rather, just the opposite, since we are not only well aware of the complexities of the problem we are tackling, but also aware of our own limitations. Moreover, we do not think it wise, or even possible, to outline such a system once and for all, and we will, of course, be delighted if someone corrects our mistakes. Along with the distinct pleasure of creating such a system, this is also an opportunity rarely afforded artists, one grounded in the very deficiency of the art system in which we operate. In other words, although we love this specific “void,” at the same time we expect – indeed, we demand – that art historians and theoreticians do their jobs properly. Paradoxically, it is precisely such a demand that opens up this “void” – this still-living remnant of former times – in all its fullness. Local mythologies, which, as is typical of mythologies, do not support critical examination or comparison have become deeply interwoven in the social fabric of the individual countries. Interventions in such structures personally affect a range of people, raising questions about their work and credibility or the value of their property. But it is not merely for private and personal reasons that a network of individuals strive to preserve local mythologies; there are also many nobler and more general reasons. The long years of the isolation of national art systems have led to many “arrangements” (to put it mildly), so that when the local system is forced to confront the international system, various things can happen: certain pillars of national art might lose their shine; the symbolic order might be threatened; and, in smaller nations where culture plays an even more accentuated role in building national self-esteem, one of the props for the national pride might be shaken. The problem is not all that simple, squeezed as we are between a Scylla of local self-sufficiency and a Charybdis of risk to national pride. But if we do not want to place ourselves in the position of the peripheral and provincial, given that we are

expected to measure ourselves against the established measure, against what parades as general and canonical; if we do not want to be robbed of our own history and wish instead to participate in the construction of a future common history – then we choose Charybdis.

Formats

Interactive website, research studies, cooperation with universities, exhibition, publications

Project leadership

Miran Mohar,
Andrej Savski,
Borut Vogelnik
(IRWIN)

Team

Inke Arns
Vanessa Cvahte
Livia Páldi
Darko Pokorn

International jury for the

“East Art Map”-website

Ekaterina Bobrinskaia
(art historian, Moscow)
Jesa Denegri
(art historian, Belgrade)
Lia Perjovschi
(artist, Bucharest)
Georg Schöllhammer
(editor of the culture magazine
“springerin”, Vienna)
Christoph Tannert
(director of the Künstlerhauses
Bethanien, Berlin)

Other supporters

European Union’s Culture 2000
program
(<http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture>)

Slovenian Ministry of Culture
(www.kultura.gov.si)

“East Art Map”-exhibition will be organized in co-production with the Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum, Hagen
www.keom.de

“East Art Map”-website is supported by Renderspace Pristop Interactive
www.renderspace.si

“East Art Map”-Book will be published in collaboration with Afterall Publishing, first phase of “East Art Map” was produced by “New Moment Ideas Company”
(www.newmoment.com)

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Missing Identity

A project of the Contemporary Art Institute EXIT in cooperation with the Laboratory for Visual Arts and the Center for Humanistic Studies Gani Bobi, Kosovo

Missing Identity questions the omnipresent longing to establish a uniform national identity, actively supporting instead the safeguarding of difference. In free seminars and workshops, artists discuss with students various aspects of contemporary art and cultural work, produce a monthly art supplement "Arta" for the weekly newspaper "Java," curate exhibitions, and so contribute to creating an alternative public sphere.

The extent to which identity politics is such a formidable force in the contemporary world cannot be overestimated, especially in the Balkan region, where after the collapse of communism and the bloody decline of the former Yugoslav Federation, all the member republics and ethnicities decided to express their identities with violence and destruction instead of negotiating them through discourse. Indeed, in its attempt to overcome particular national identities, the Communist Party of former Yugoslavia did manage to reach a certain level of "brotherhood and unity." The Party promoted it as a general cohesive principle rather than one based on ethnicity. However, this attempt to forcefully impose a new Yugoslav identity "from above" has failed. This "Yugoslavism" was neither able to replace ethnic identities, nor to create a melting pot of identities, so as to produce the needed balance between ethnic and cultural traditions on the one hand and loyalty to "Yugoslavism" on the other. Misconceptions and misinterpretations of identity and identity politics in fact made it possible for the wars to happen among those republics and ethnicities. A drastic switch from 'brotherhoodness' as a principle to a supreme "ethnicity," ethnocentrism as an overall concept took place. That is to say, it

was assumed, or taken for granted that in this part of the world, culture and ethnicity or even culture and nationhood (or statehood) overlapped. Today the situation is different. Since the NATO intervention, Kosovo has been a United Nations protectorate. It must now seize with both hands the opportunity to rethink and re-conceptualize the general notion of identity and the prevailing identity politics in particular. Kosovo must work on distinguishing between culture and ethnicity, and most importantly, preserving this difference. With a joint effort, there is the opportunity to mould a common European identity; that is, to switch from an ethnocentric, monolithic, monolingual society towards a multilingual and multicultural society.

Proposing alternatives to a missing future

What is still "missing" nowadays in Kosovo though is the idea of Europe as a supranational structure that supports and sustains a wide range of different identities and cultures in Europe. There is a popular saying in Kosovo that "what is missing doesn't hurt." It is here that a crucial

point must be made. The "Missing Identity" project envisions to shape the virtual/artistic reality of that "which hurts" – because it is missing. To put it simply, the goal is to create that missing world of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity. It is a project that proposes alternatives to a missing future – "to make it hurt"! Our project is essentially based on three modules. First, we stage regular exhibitions and art projects, which are on show mainly in the recently opened gallery "Exit" in Peja. For example, the artists Maja Bajević and Emanuel Licha curated an exhibition entitled "Honeymoon in Kosovo." With the exhibition "Merry Ramadan," Erzen Shkololli and Sokol Beqiri provided insight into the current art scene and not just in Kosovo; works by Maja Bajević (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Sener Ozmen (Turkey) and Stefano Romano (Italy) were on view. Most recently, the German curator Inke Arns organized an exhibition entitled "Where Am I (and Who Are All These People)?" where works by Nina Fischer, Maroan el Sani, Christoph Keller, Daniel Pflumm and Heidi Specker were on show. The second, and decisive, module is educational work. Seminars and workshops are continually being held on topics dealing with contemporary culture and visual arts.

No fees are charged for taking part and all students may apply. In this way, an intellectually stimulating environment of creativity and innovation is to be created for as many (young) people as possible. During the last two years of the project, courses on contemporary visual arts and culture were organized, each of which lasted for four months. There were four courses per year. The last workshop focused on the alternative art and culture scene in Berlin, with special consideration being given to the historical context since 1989. The workshop was conducted by Inke Arns and Claudia Wahjodi. Every month we produce, under the direction of Shkelzen Maliqi and together with course students, a supplement to the weekly newspaper "Java." Titled "Arta", this supplement follows developments in the visual arts primarily from the Balkans, but also from other parts of Europe. An essay in English by a guest author is presented on the last page of every issue.

Mehmet Behluli



Course held at EXIT and the Laboratory for Visual Arts, Prishtina (in the middle Mehmet Behluli and Shkelzen Maliqi)

***Mehmet Behluli:**

Artist and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prishtina. Within the "Missing Identity" project he is responsible for the educational projects.

***Sokol Beqiri:**

The artist Sokol Beqiri has shown his work at numerous international exhibitions. Most recently his work could be seen at the exhibitions "Blood and Honey - Future is at the Balkans" (Sammlung Essl, Klosterneuburg/Vienna) and "In the Gorges of the Balkans" (Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel).

***Skëlzen Maliqi:**

Philosopher and Journalist. One of the leading intellectual voices in Kosovo. He is currently Director of the Center for Humanist Studies Gani Bobi in Prishtina.

***Erzen Shkololli:**

The internationally renowned artist Erzen Shkololli (*1976) from Peja/Kosovo is responsible for the area of art projects within the "Missing Identity" project.

***Migjen Kelmendi:**

Writer and Editor of "Java". One of the independent political-cultural weekly newspapers in Prishtina. In the 1980s, he was front man of the band Traces, well-known throughout Yugoslavia.

relations in discussion

What's missing doesn't hurt?



Course held at EXIT and the Laboratory for Visual Arts, Prishtina (far left Mehmet Behluli and Shkëlzen Maliqi)



Course held at EXIT and the Laboratory for Visual Arts, Prishtina

The trap of identity

In 1999, NATO intervened in Kosovo and since then the population of some two million has been a protectorate of the United Nations. Even a quick glance at the statistics reveals the special situation in which the small country finds itself: sixty per cent of Kosovars are under 30 years of age; 40 per cent are still minors. Added to this is an unemployment rate that according to official figures affects over half of all Kosovars. Children and youths are forced to go to school in three shifts because the necessary facilities are still not in place. The situation at the universities is hardly any better. In the meantime, at least the power supply now only breaks down about once a day.

“Missing Identity” opposes how the diverse problems thrown up by everyday life are charged with nationalist sentiment. With your alternative art academy, which is free of charge, with your newspaper project, and your gallery in Peja, which is, as you say, “the only shop for miles around that doesn’t sell anything,” you are fighting for an open society, a society in which people from different cultures and holding different views can live together and, instead of driving away minorities, take over responsibility for their protection. The central focus of your project is thus to turn on its head the Albanian saying, “What is missing doesn’t hurt.” Of course, and your logo points this out, Kosovo is missing a lot, and Cinderella’s second stiletto-heeled shoe

hasn’t been found yet. Kosovar society is, so to speak, hopping around on one leg. What do you think the second shoe looks like, the shoe that will turn Kosovo into a princess?

Mehmet Behluli, Valbona Shujaku

Even prior to 1999, a specific group of people from Kosovo were preoccupied with the “Missing Identity” issue. In fact, this has been a continuous conjunction between an array of very specific and delicate situations, each determined by the cultural, geographical, economical and political environment prevailing in Kosovo.

During the last century, Kosovo was in an “in-between” position: a very small place with “too much history,” a history that was always an obstacle to going out and discovering new things, a place where tradition was always stronger than the avant-garde. Even more so than in other parts of the Balkans, in Kosovo it was obvious that the interested groups insisted on becoming the owners of everything and not merely claiming what rightly belonged to them. If we look at the national historical aspect, Kosovo had an Albanian majority and was part of the Yugoslav state bordering Albania. This situation generated a conflict, the dynamic of which was greatly accelerated by the political systems of both sides, characterized by a total lack of democracy as well as the absence of direct communication. A new interesting situation appeared as a result, where the majority mystifies the “motherland” and all that comes from there, even its infamous dictatorial regime (that of Enver Hoxha). After 1999, a very different time was ushered in, one with very different conditions from those of the past. As the majority, Kosovar Albanians were able to experience their freedom, and they did so in a very euphoric way. Among other things, liberty brought with it a more liberal form of communication with the motherland, which was gradually demystified. Some people soon became aware of the realities of the situation, noticing that to those of Tirana, they were still Kosovars. This was the start of an ongoing debate on the Kosovar identity. Does it exist? Is it only a fiction? Should

Kosovo and Kosovars only be someone’s “appendage”? Do people working on the “Missing Identity” project think that they really have a missing identity? We think that what is missing is more of a force, a force that motivates us to search further without really needing to find anything specific. This impulse to embark on a search puts us in a position from which we must continually seek out different new relations (always in comparison with others). For us, this means always standing in front of some sort of “mirror” so as to try to see the real us. And it also entails asking others to describe the impression they have of us and what they think about our ambition to communicate with others just the way we are. What does the second shoe look like? The fact that we still haven’t found the second shoe, at least not yet, means that we don’t know what it looks like; but we are sure that it is nonetheless worth searching for, within us, around us, and far afield. We want to stress that the process of looking for the shoe is more important than finding it. (Imagine this: we find the shoe and we don’t like it because, instead of transforming us into a princess, it turns us into a frog.) So, for us, it is more important to undertake a “natural” way of communicating with our surroundings, whether this is within us, around us, or further afield. Offering a possible cultural model, we are striving for one that is able to coexist with other existing models, while also helping us to fill in the small missing pieces of our mosaic. Not only our mosaic, but also that of a wider context, let’s say, the European one, that has to accommodate great diversity and ensure its functioning within a single framework, while highlighting and safeguarding specific uniqueness.

Formats

Seminars for students, workshops, international artist programs, exhibitions, publications

Project leadership

Sokol Beqiri

Leadership of the art projects

Erzen Shkololli

Leadership of the educational projects

Mehmet Behluli

Team

Shkëlzen Maliqi
Valbona Shujaku

Advisory board

Ilir Bajri, head of the board
(composer, Prishtina)
Wolfgang Klotz
(director of the Central and Eastern European Online Library, Frankfurt/Main, www.ceool.com)
Astrit Salihu
(philosopher, Prishtina)
Jeta Xhara
(dramaturg, Prishtina)
Linda Gusia
(sociologist, Prishtina)

Contact

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Re:form

A project of the Foksal Gallery Foundation, Poland

“Re:form” poses questions about the forgotten and silenced aspects of Polish (art) history. The project organizes artist archives, curates and promotes art projects in public space, and edits and publishes monographs on selected artists from the 1950s onwards, who today have been all but forgotten.

Within the scope of “Re:form,” the Foksal Gallery Foundation has been able to extend and intensify the activity it began seven years ago as one of the most important Polish institutions supporting and spreading contemporary art. In existence since 1997, the work of the Foksal Gallery Foundation follows in the tradition of the Foksal Gallery, founded in 1966. Wiesław Borowski, one of the original gallery founders, was also instrumental in founding of the Foksal Gallery Foundation. The young curators of the Foksal Gallery, Adam Szymczyk, Andrzej Przywara, and Joanna Mytkowska, are responsible for elaborating the Foundation’s program.

Developing new models for spreading and enhancing the public presence of art

From the beginning, the Foksal Gallery Foundation has pursued the goal of carrying on the tra-

dition of the Foksal Gallery and altering its strategies to fit the changed circumstances: namely, to develop new models for spreading and enhancing the public presence of art, models which find both international acclaim and adapt to the new economic and social conditions in Poland. The themes of history and the archive, therefore, play an important role in many of the initiated projects: reformulating history, reading it anew, or reviewing it anew from the perspective of the present are the basic modes of our work. At the same time, the Foksal Gallery Foundation, operating independently of the Foksal Gallery since 2001, seeks to actively respond to the changing social conditions and find new ways of working with art which are in tune with the times. Accordingly, many of our projects work experimentally. We have chosen the title “Re:form” for the project jointly realized with “relations” for the following reasons: for us, “Re:form” means seeing processes of gradual change, of reforming, of redefining and reinterpreting, of re-signification or re-contextualization

in terms of their connection with the formulation of new forms. Returning to history with the goal of developing something new appears to us to be the best way of describing the general direction of the Foksal Gallery Foundation. A central project within “Re:form” is the digitalization of various private archives holding works of conceptual art, concrete poetry, sound poetry, Fluxus, video and network art, which is being undertaken in cooperation with the online art magazine RASTER and the University of Bremen. The scholar Piotr Rypson is responsible for its management. For Fluxus art, the research, cataloguing and translation for the bilingual (Polish/English) databank are completed. We are currently working on appraising the archives of the artists Jarosław Kozłowski and Edward Krasiński. In the near future we hope to be able to develop a model that provides the public with access to the studio of the recently deceased Krasiński, without following the usual path of turning his life and work into museum exhibits. Renovation work on his studio in Warsaw has already started and is being carried out by the young Polish architect Marcin Kwietowicz in cooperation with the BAR architect group from Rotterdam. Our other cooperation partners include the Mondriaan Foundation in Amsterdam. A further module of “Re:form” is the conceptualization and organization of the artistic program accompanying the annual film festival for young filmmakers in Cieszyn. Here we have succeeded in establishing a long-term cooperation with the city of Cieszyn. Our most important project in this segment of “Re:form” for 2004 was the placement of a mural by Monika Sosnowska on the facade of an urban apartment block in Cieszyn. The municipal authority has agreed to guarantee the preservation and care of the mural for the next ten years. In order to further extend our cooperation with the municipal authorities for promoting art projects in public spaces, we will present an artistic work for the urban space every year within the framework of the film festival in the city of Cieszyn. The third module of “Re:form” is the project “Local Modernism,” launched in 2005.

Here we are driving forward our plan to have a footbridge built across the Olza River, which marks the border between Poland and the Czech Republic. This shall contribute to reunifying the city of Cieszyn, currently divided into a Polish and a Czech section. We are working closely on this project, which, given the difficult circumstances, will naturally require some years to realize with both municipal authorities, who in the meantime are actively involved in procuring the necessary funds. For this project, the Foksal Gallery Foundation has taken on a consulting role. We have decided to commission the French architect François Roche with the design of the bridge. To get the residents of Cieszyn involved in our “bridge project,” during this year’s film festival we hired a firm that specializes in building rope bridges. This firm set up bridges at locations where footbridges are planned and yet to be realized. We also showed “The Boy From Mars” by Philippe Parreno. This film, made in Thailand, is a poetic documentation of a François Roche project. Roche designs a prototype for a public building where the power supply is generated by water buffalos. The challenge lay in developing a functional building for a village not connected to the power grid. We showed the film in Cieszyn’s oldest cinema, called “The Electric Theatre,” built during the pioneer age of filmmaking. We liked the symbolic allusion. For the theoretical elaboration of “Local Modernism,” we have once again invited artists and scholars to apply for grants. Finally, we have been continuously working on the edition of artist monographs. The publication on Cezary Bodzianowski is already in the bookstores. A book on Henryk Stazewski will go to press shortly. Two further monographs on the artists Oskar Hansen and Tadeusz Rolke are in preparation. The latter, under the joint editorship of Adam Szymczyk and Rolke, is expected to be published in March 2005. All of the works will be published by “Revolver – Archiv für aktuelle Kunst“ in Frankfurt/Main.

Joanna Mytkowska



François Roche, design for a future bridge, Cieszyn, 2004. Courtesy Foksal Gallery Foundation.

*RASTER:

Since its founding in 2001, the Warsaw gallery RASTER has sought to help establish contemporary artists from Poland. RASTER also publishes an online art magazine of the same name (<http://raster.art.pl>).

*Filmfestival in Cieszyn:

The international film festival, held in the southern Polish city of Cieszyn, focuses mainly on innovative art film projects which transcend the borders of conventional cinema. The festival was held for the fourth time in the summer of this year.

*Alogia:

In psychology, the concept of “alogia” indicates a general lack of additional, unprompted content evident in normal speech. As a sociological phenomenon, “alogia” illustrates the impoverishment of language and the inability of the speaker to formulate clearly.

*Piotr Rypson:

Literature specialist, art critic, and theoretician. Between 1993 and 1996, he was head curator at the Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw. Within the Re:form project, he is responsible for the archive project “Baza sztuki,” an online archive on Polish contemporary art.

relations in discussion

How can art lend eloquence to those fields suffering a loss of language (alogia)?

Memory as a model for the future

Democracy is young in Poland though they have been accepted as members of the EU. Without the Pope's strong recommendation, membership might never have come about. For in an age when national self-understanding is being reformulated, there is a grave fear of renewed ideological and economic absorption, this time by the European Union. Dwelling for a moment on the threatening aspects, we should also add that the labor market is unstable and a parliamentary crisis is currently plaguing the government. In this uncertain situation one question is as explosive as it is forward-looking: what should be remembered and what will be allowed to sink into oblivion? The "Re:form" project circles around the current politics of memory in various ways. Your activities are focused on collecting and circulating knowledge about art trends of the 1960s and 1970s, which have almost completely vanished from public consciousness. It is striking how important the "salvaging" of memory and (hi-)story is for you, as members of a young generation of art historians and gallery owners. In the course of events, the project "alogia" has become one of the central concepts. This philosophical concept, which the intellectual scene in Poland has recently adopted as its own, sharply defines the phenomenon of blank areas and blind spots in the public discourse. One of the questions it raises is why today nobody talks about the Solidarity movement anymore or indeed cannot talk about it. How is "alogia" – understood as the phenomenon of absence and the fading-out of metaphorical language and fields of knowledge – connected to the "image and art work" you are carrying out?

Joanna Mytkowska

There exists a connection between the question of "alogia," of a-logos, the lack of comprehensible speech (and in this sense speechlessness), and the problem as to how social identity, including national identification, is negotiated. At times of transformation and of historical repositioning, the main reference points and parameters of social discourse change. A lack of adequate linguistic tools which can grasp and articulate the new situation becomes a fundamental issue. Presently in Poland, the new situation is described with the help of antiquated terms and outdated clichés, and by recalling stories and incidents that are no longer pertinent. In the face of new challenges, such an unsatisfactorily led social discourse seems to have lost touch with reality; language detaches itself from reality. Only certain issues enter the discursive circuit, while others, particularly those more complicated or painful, have no chance of being discussed. In addition, the collective memory, always subject to arbitrary selection, becomes subject to acute manipulation in times of fundamental transformation. A linguistic incapacity or a linguistic impotence results (particularly, in the latter) in an inability to communicate – an inability to create socially effective metaphors which allow for the productive interaction with anxieties and fears.

reforming, reinterpreting, re-contextualization

Such a deficient communicative competence can have different consequences. In his book "Democracy of the Peripheries" (2004), Zdzisław Krasnodebski offers a compelling description of the condition of the Polish psyche. He explains how the myth of Solidarity, Polish democracy's main formative power in the 1980s, has been completely ignored in the subsequent construction of the country's new democratic vision. The lack of a language that would have been capable of absorbing the revolutionary-founding myth means, according to Krasnodebski, that the Polish understanding of democracy was developed using a liberal theory imported from the west – a theory which was reduced to a tenet of economic efficiency and implemented with great pains in Poland, thus depriving the Polish public of any social vision that would have led to a mediating of (individual) interests. The lack of intellectual or emotional propositions to identify with is one of the main reasons why loss and apathy are the dominant feelings in Polish society. "Alogia" interests us above all as a theoretical construct. Two experiences have been instrumental in "alogia" becoming one of our main points of interest. First, thanks to the determination of the artists involved and the unique institution that the Foksal Gallery has been since the 1960s, long-standing work on artists' archives has made possible the survival of an artistic tradition that otherwise would have been doomed to sink into oblivion. The archives and the perseverance of the institution, which have preserved the ideas of the art of the 1960s and 1970s, have lent many contemporary artistic activities credibility, energy, and inspiration. They make it easier to construct a



Wojtek Kucharczyk, Untitled, music installation, Cieszyn 2004. Courtesy Foksal Gallery Foundation.

common language and develop understanding with the international art world. This explains the strong focus in our work on rediscovering the traditions that are behind the contemporary language of artistic statements, on the upkeep of the archives, which still remain in private hands, and on the belief that studying and storing them can be inspiring, particularly when those traditions have yet to be fully heard of in the public domain. Secondly, working with artists is often a transgressive experience. In many cases artists formulate statements which transgress the boundaries conditioned by the impotence of public discourse and move in a domain beyond stereotypes. Such an experience is conveyed, for instance, in Artur Z. mijewski's work "Our Songbook" – a quasi-documentary shot in Tel Aviv. The film shows interviews with elderly people who fled from Poland shortly before, or shortly after, the Second World War. Many of them don't remember Polish anymore and have bad memories of Poland. Yet, responding to the artist's plea to sing something in Polish, they sing the Polish national anthem, or some other patriotic song – whatever they remember the best. Z. mijewski's very moving film is currently one of the very few works that aims at shifting the issue of national identity, typically discussed using a language of clichés and stereotypes, to more universal and human questions. The film translates the question of national identity into the areas of individual memory or personal, sometimes accidentally recalled stories and histories and their interpretation.

Formats

Digitalization of artist archives from the 1950s onwards, research project Local Modernism, international art exhibitions, art in public space, cooperation with the Gallery RASTER, fellowship program, publications

Project leadership

Joanna Mytkowska
Andrzej Przywara

Team

Piotr Rypson
Joanna Diem

Fellows

Cezary Bodzianowski
Sebastian Cichocki
Agata Jakubowska
Wojtek Kucharczyk
Robert Kuśmirowski
Dorota Monkiewicz
Artur Żmijewski
Jakub Ziółkowska

Partners

Gallery RASTER, Warsaw
(<http://raster.art.pl>)
Filmfestival Era New Horizons, Cieszyn
(www.eranowehoryzonty.pl)
Eastern Europe Research Center, Bremen
(www.forschungstelle.uni-bremen.de)
Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen (www.nmbw.de)

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Philipp Pareno, "The Boy from Mars", 2005. Courtesy Foksal Gallery Foundation.



Generation- a film project

A co-production of ICON FILM and relations

Six filmmakers from six countries tell six stories about common ground, differences, and new forms of self-understanding.

A film project with: Stefan Arsenijević (Serbia-Montenegro), Nadejda Koseva (Bulgaria), Mait Laas (Estonia), Kornél Mundruczó (Hungary), Cristian Mungiu (Romania), Jasmila Žbanić (Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Stefan Arsenijević

The short film contribution "Fabulous Vera is about flying, even when the only aircraft available is an old tram." (Arsenijević). Stefan Arsenijević was born in Belgrade in 1977. He studied both philosophy and film and television direction in Belgrade. At the end of the 1990s, Arsenijević directed his first short films. His short film "The Plum Tree" (2000) won the award for best debut at the Yugoslavian Documentary and Short-Film Festival and the special prize of the jury for artistic excellence at the Golden Knight Film Festival in Moscow. That same year he also directed the award-winning documentary "Landscapes." Last year Stefan Arsenijević presented his film "(A)tor-sion" at the Berlin Film Festival, winning a Golden Bear in the short-film category. "(A)tor-sion is set in Sarajevo during the siege. The film revolves around a tunnel secretly dug under the runway of the airport, for many people the only connection to the outside world. With "(A)tor-sion," said the Berlin jury in its judgment, the director succeeded in presenting "a great emotional image for survival and the power of art in times of war." The film was nominated for an Oscar in the short-film category in 2005.

Nadejda Koseva

"The Ritual" by Nadejda Koseva centers around a mother's wedding preparations for her son. A large group of guests turns out for the wedding and a brass band is there. Once the celebrations are underway only the bride and groom are missing. "Life in post-communist Bulgaria has led many young Bulgarians to try their luck in Europe and America. The country has lost this generation; it simply no longer exists. The parents are proud of their children and what they have achieved elsewhere. But, nevertheless, it is difficult to fill their absence in everyday life. Can a telephone conversation take the place of celebrating a wedding with family, relatives, and friends?" (Koseva) Nadejda Koseva was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. She studied film direction at the State Theater and Film School in Sofia. During her studies, Koseva worked as assistant director to the famous Bulgarian director Georgi Djulgerov (in 1996, on the film "Miracle" and again in 1999, on the film Sand Watch). Djulgerov achieved prominence in the west with a number of films, including "Avant-garde," for which he received the Silver Bear at the Berlin Festival in 1978. His film "Measure for Measure" (1980) enjoys the status of a cult film in Bulgarian film history. Koseva's first short film, "CAKE," was shown at the Golden Rose Festival in Varna and the Eurounderground in Sofia. In 1999, she made the documentary "That's It," whose show-

ings included the Golden Rithon Festival in Plovdiv. The film she submitted for her diploma in 2002, "Veronyka's Destiny," was invited to numerous festivals in Bulgaria and abroad. Nadejda Koseva accompanies a group of voluntary helpers as they visit an orphanage: the children are encouraged to script, film, and act in their own soap opera, during which they themselves are filmed.

Mait Laas

For "Generation - a film project" the artist brings match figures to life. Laas sees his story as one about a mystical relationship between man and woman, which he poetically narrates using various animation techniques such as puppets, 3D computer animation, and music. The at times comical world created by Mait Laas not only forms the beginning and the end of the omnibus film: the various sequences of the animation film act also as the transitions between the short films of the other five directors by joining them together. Mait Laas was born in Tallinn, Estonia, in 1970. He graduated from Tallinn University with a degree in teaching art and drawing and studied visual communication at the Vienna Art Academy and fine arts at Tallinn University. In 1995, Mait Laas began working as a director for the successful animation film studio Nukufilm. He is also a lecturer for animation at the Estonian Academy of Fine Arts and holds a chair for film at the University of Tallinn. Laas made his first animation film, "And it Bloomed" (1995), during his studies, followed by "Somebody Else" in 1997. For his 1998 film "Daylight", Mait Laas won first prize at the Blue Sea Herring Film Festival in Rauma, Finland. His animation film "The Way to Nirvana" (2000) has received numerous awards, including the Grand Award at the Oberhausen International Short-Film Festival. The film tells the story of a young man who wants to find out what lies beyond the horizon. With their choice, the jury wanted to "acknowledge Mait Laas's virtuosity in dealing with different film techniques, in particular the well-thought out use of complex sound and image techniques."

Kornél Mundruczó

"Short-Lasting Silence" by the Hungarian film director Kornél Mundruczó tells the story of two siblings who meet up again after a long separation on the occasion of their mother's death. Here they go through a painful confrontation with their shared past. Kornél Mundruczó was born in Hungary in 1975. He attended the director's class at the Hungarian University for Film

and Drama. As early as his short-film debut 20 "Afta - Day after Day" (2001), Mundruczó received numerous international awards, including the short-film category prize at the International Film Festival in Cottbus, the Hungarian Critics' Award, and the Arte Award for European Short Film at the Oberhausen International Film Festival. In "Afta", Kornél Mundruczó handles universal themes like growing up and the banality of everyday life for a young boy, which leads to aggression and suppressed rage. In 2002, Kornél Mundruczó directed his first feature film "Pleasant Days". The title is misleading. At the center of this dark story, which is set in the Hungarian backwaters, is the unemployed mechanic Peter. Two women play a role in his life: his sister Maria, who works in a laundrymat, and the young Maya, who has sold her baby to Maria. In this desperate environment a conflict between desire and frustration gradually poisons the relationships between the protagonists. This film also received numerous awards, including a prize at Rotterdam and in the international film festivals in Sofia and Brussels.

Cristian Mungiu

The center of the short film "The Turkey Girl", there are a young girl and her turkey whom she tries to train to distinguish between a circle and a square. Meanwhile, her father finds out that the seriously ill mother requires an urgent operation. The father entrusts his daughter with the task of bringing the payment for the operation to the doctor - which, however, also includes her beloved turkey. The author and director Cristian Mungiu was born in Romania in 1968 and studied English and American literature and film direction at the Academy for Film and Theater in Bucharest. His short films have received numerous awards. In 2000, Mungiu directed "Occident", his first feature film, a bitter and absurd comedy about life in Romania for which he was also responsible for the script and co-production. "Occident" was selected for Cannes 2002 (Quinzaine des Réalisateurs) and has received many awards. "That in eastern Europe the West is made a fetish of is already stated by the Romanian Cristian Mungiu in the title of his comedy. Stay here or go away, the figures continually come across this alleged fateful question about a better life, whereby Mungiu also clearly shows that these dreams of the west often have nothing to do with the reality there" (Freitag). In October 2005 "Occident" was shown in the ZDF - Kleines Fernsehspiel series "New Europeans." In the meantime the film was presented at many other international festivals, including Cannes, Rotterdam, and New York.

Jasmila Žbanić

Jasmila Žbanić's film "Birthday" is about two girls born on the same day in Mostar. On this day, November 9 1995, the Stari Most was destroyed: the historic bridge that was the architectural symbol for the connection between two parts of the town in which different ethnic groups live. Growing up on different sides of the divided city, the girls do not know one another. The film director accompanies the two girls till 25 July 2004, the day of the bridge's official reopening. Jasmila Žbanić was born in Sarajevo in 1974. She studied film and theater direction and worked as a puppeteer and clown in numerous performances, including tours abroad. Žbanić wrote theater scripts and short stories at the same time that she began her first film work. In 1995, she made the 5-minute video "Autobiography", with which she won the first prize of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Sarajevo. Her first documentary was "After, After" (1997). In 1998, she directed the short film "Love Is..." and the documentary "We Light the Night", which was awarded the FIPRESCI at the Sarajevo Film Festival and the prize of the jury at the New York Expo Film Festival. In 2000, Jasmila Žbanić's award-winning documentary "Red Rubber Boots" was shown on ZDF/3 Sat: the film is a calm portrait of a mother who, together with the "commission for finding missing persons," is searching for her daughter who was kidnapped and murdered in the war. The 2005 documentary "Images from a Corner" premiered in Berlin and was a commissioned work for ZDF/ARTE. Here Žbanić tries to describe her relationship to the traumatic aspects of her own war experience, using the fate of her friend Biljana as a foil. A comprehensive show of works by Jasmila Žbanić entitled "We Light the Night" has just finished its run at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel.



The six Generation directors met during the goEast Film Festival held in Wiesbaden, April 25 - 25, 2004. Photo: Claudia Rorarius

relations in discussion

What are the selection criteria for a film project that brings together six directors from six countries?

Generation: a counter-blueprint

Contrary to the widespread method of reinforcing a sense of self through the constructs of national identity, the film project attempts to promote transnational cooperation among artists of the same age. Accordingly, the directors are not just engaged in realizing their own films, but also discuss the work of their colleagues in regularly held workshops.

Whenever the need arises, film production professionals are there to offer their assistance. The task set is to produce a film on the theme "generation." The idea of the "young generation" as society's continuous fountain of youth is especially subject to an inflationary use today. How can we resist such clichéd categorization? What artistic approaches and cinematic languages can we mobilize against such stereotypes?

Nikolaj Nikitin

The goal of the project is to bring together filmmakers from smaller central and eastern European countries, to set up independent production structures in this region, and to forge new links or reinforce already existing ones with western European and German production partners. This co-operation creates a joint international platform for the young directors that will enable them to present their work. At the same time, follow-up contacts will be established between film producers in Germany and production firms in central and eastern Europe. As for the respective countries, the project strengthens their production structures, which have only recently been put in place again and are, in part, yet to be fully developed. Of central importance for us is that the working relationships currently being generated will continue to exist after the end of the project. One important prerequisite in selecting the six filmmakers was that the candidates must have already realized several short films or one long film. The dramaturgical and technical quality of their previous work must be convincing, and also the candidates must show a willingness to work and critically engage with the other involved directors. In the end, this project gave me the opportunity to support directors who have fascinated me for some time and whose work I have followed for a number of years in my capacity as a delegate of the Berlin Film Festival. In terms of its content, the project takes up and fosters a sense of co-operation and belonging transcending narrow national cultural boundaries, the gestation of which is currently observ-

able in the post-Soviet countries. The idea of "generation breaks" opens up the (once) self-enclosed unity of cultural identities. Thus, the young filmmakers often feel a greater closeness to their peers than to the country in which they live. Such self-understanding amongst a generation opens up a new perspective on traditions and national history. And what is more, the generation change for those living in the countries of eastern Europe also represents a change in the system: from communism to capitalism. In the countries of eastern Europe this experience of radical change is one of the most topical themes. The lack of orientation and the insecurity that comes with it, as well as the transition into a new epoch, provide a great store of material for exciting film ideas. Another exciting aspect of the "generation" theme is that it almost automatically sets off a diverse array of personal associations: one's own family, circle of friends, and school class are all themes inextricably tied to a reflection on generation. The filmic episodes being created, and this is already clearly evident today, are characterized by a certain "happy sadness." A feeling of "lost and found" pervades them, like a kind of keynote. For me, this reflects an experience quite a few directors have had to go through, namely that in their country, due to the system change, a generation has in part been "lost," a generation that has either left the country or, at the very least, lost its orientation, and which they, as the following generation, must once again find. In this search, sometimes successful, sometimes not, humor plays a decisive role. To counter the common cliché that central and eastern Europe is a dark and somber space – one from which so many people try to flee, and where a rather depressing atmosphere often prevails – to tell unexpected stories from the respective countries in an interesting and exciting way – this was and is a central concern of the project.



Stefan Arsenijevic, "Fabulous Vera": Milica Mihajlovic



Nadejda Koseva, "The Ritual": Krasimir Dokov, Svetlana Yancheva



Mait Laas' match figures



Kornél Mundruczó



Jasmila Žbanić



Cristian Mungiu, "The Turkey Girl": Valentin Popescu, Ana Ularu

Artistic leadership
Nikolaj Nikitin

Executive production company
ICON FILM

Herbert Schwing
(executive producer and project leadership)
Christine Kiauk
(production management)
Elena von Saucken
(production assistant)

Producers of the individual films
in the participating countries

Hanno Höfer
(MOBRA Films/Romania)
Damir Ibrahimović
(Deblokada/Bosnien)
Stefan Kitanov
(Bulgaria)
Miroslav Mogorović
(Art & Popcorns/Serbia-Montenegro)
Arvo Nuut
(Nukufilm puppetfilm studio/
Estonia)
Viktória Petrányi
(proton-cinema/Hungary)

Expert advisory board

Gabriele Brunnenmeyer
(director of Media Antenne Berlin-
Brandenburg, Berlin)
Didi Danquart
(scriptwriter, director and producer,
Freiburg)
Sibylle Kurz
(dramaturge, script consultant,
consultant to EAVE and pitch expert,
Erbach)

World sales

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(www.bavaria-film-international.de)

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relations – a project of the Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany

picked up and developed further, what is to remain at the respective locations, and from what must we detach ourselves? These are the questions we persistently pose ourselves and others. For us, exchange only functions when a third space is created, the space shaped jointly by “relations,” the initiated projects, and their German partners. This space must be thought up, felt for, fought for, and defended – we are not shy of confrontation and we welcome resistance, even if it does not always suit us. The prerequisite for these projects, which cross borders in many directions in their work, is the possibility to engage in exchange with other actors in both similar as well as completely different environments. This is the reason why the encounters between engaged artists and intellectuals from and within the countries of eastern Europe and Germany are so important to us. While “cultural exchange” is the official label for this, we prefer to avoid this term, for “relations” attempts to keep the bureaucratic red tape to a minimum. We want to create a mobile and agile platform, one that makes encounters worth repeating and discussions worth extending, enabling in this way a co-operation which finds its very own rhythm. Only when insider and outsider perspectives enter into a dialogue with one another, intermingle with one another, intersect with one another, interrupt one another, and reach out beyond themselves can the “relations” project function properly. The “relations” logo designed by Boris Ondreicka gives this idea its image. “It belongs to morality not to be at home with oneself,” Theodor W. Adorno implored, and likewise we demand. Not to settle down comfortably with how things are (just getting by), but to go out beyond oneself, out into the open, to become a bit estranged from oneself, so as then to be able to come closer to oneself and others once more, to extend horizons, and to allow both unexpected as well as grand old questions to surface, so as to again translate them back into one’s own context and what one demands of oneself – this is what we want and this is what we are trying to do. We can only achieve this through co-operation with our many project partners and our advisory board – their constant engagement, their listening, their ability to resist, their clear statements. We rely on this – and until now we have been right to do so in every case.

The “relations” team

What’s behind “relations”?

In July 2002, the Federal Cultural Foundation decided to initiate a project within the framework of its Central and Eastern European program. The project set itself the dual goal of supporting various local cultural scenes in eastern Europe as well as networking them with and presenting them in Germany. Katrin Klingan was invited to plan a corresponding project, and it was given the name “relations.” On the basis of her conception, the Federal Cultural Foundation agreed to provide “relations” with the necessary support. In February 2005, “relations e.V.” was founded in Berlin, and a month later the members of the “relations” international advisory board met for the first time. “relations” began initiating projects in eastern Europe and in Germany in March 2005. Since mid-2005, several projects have been realized in seven eastern European countries within the framework of “relations” such as “ALTE ARTE,” “De/construction of Monument,” “East Art Map,” “Missing Identity,” “Re:form,” “Visual Seminar,” and “Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 5000,” as well as “Generation - a film project”, and the publication “Rearranging”. In 2004, the different cooperation partners are in the process of being networked and the projects will be presented in Germany. The “relations” project will come to a close at the end of 2005.

“relations” is assisted by an advisory board that accompanies the projects with its expertise by playing a constructive role in their realization. Most importantly, the advisory board acts as a translator and international liaison, as well as an advocate on behalf of the various projects. Its members are: Eda Čufer (dramaturge and culture theorist, Ljubljana), Silvia Eiblmayr (Director of the Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck), Migjen Kelmendi (author and editor of the weekly newspaper “Java”, Prishtina), Marek Krajewski (sociologist, Adam Mickiewicz University, Posen), Thomas Krüger (President of the Federal Agency for Civic Education, Bonn), Hortensia Völckers (Artistic Director of the Federal Cultural Foundation, Halle/Saale), Gottfried Wagner (General Secretary of the European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam)

Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany

The Federal Cultural Foundation was established in 2002 by the German government with the aim of promoting and funding art and culture. It focuses on the promotion of innovative programs and projects in an international context. Its seat is in the historic town of Halle on the Saale River in the eastern part of Germany. The Foundation invests in the development of new procedures that maintain the national heritage and explores the knowledge of artists and cultural activists who debate social issues. In addition, the Federal Cultural Foundation supports cultural exchange and cross-border cooperation. Apart from its General Project Section – also open to applicants from international countries – the Federal Cultural Foundation initiates projects in four different programs: “Art and the City,” “Cultural Aspects of German Unification,” “The Cultural Challenge of September 11th 2001,” and “Eastern and Central European Program.” With its European program, the Cultural Foundation has initiated a program that does justice to both the historical dimension of the dialogue between East and West and the contemporary cultural exchange between the different cultural territories. For more information please see www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de.

What do you do, who are you, and what do you want?

We often hear these kinds of questions, and we also ask ourselves the same over and over again. Whoever wants to forge new paths, must explain themselves. Therefore, “relations” wants to set up the framework conditions required by engaged and ambitious cultural projects which – in difficult situations – dare to posit socially relevant statements through artistic creativity (and with the necessary humor). It is only when we start with what is intrinsically our own and think beyond it that we reach the basic position upheld by “relations”: things could be different here, now. The basic modus of the work performed by “relations” is to move out of our own environment and seek out those locations where the projects originate and from where continuing international co-operation should be launched. To expose ourselves to alien, sometimes imponderable situations and discussions, to walk into these imponderables with our eyes open, and then based on this experience, to move on to developing themes and projects was always the starting point for “relations.” We then inquired into the possibility of translation: how can one translate into one’s own familiar local context – in our case, into German – the experiences gained and the knowledge collected at unfamiliar locations, and from that point develop something new? What is to be conveyed, what can be

about relations

Our relatives in new Europe – we know them as little as we are familiar with distant members of the family who have emigrated. Or shall we say: They are as foreign to us as lost relatives who turn up on the doorstep one day? Andrei Plesu tells it, “When he meets an official in Brussels, he presents himself in the following way: ‘Allow me to introduce myself, I am your past.’” At the same time we are resolved to enter a common future. Yet, the public spheres in the East and the West are still approaching the past and the future in a very cautious way. Distorted and twisted images of illusions, so it seems, are supposed to protect against disillusionment. The “old” and the “new” Europe, however, will have to learn to share the same house. Question: Do we have any conception of the relational work that will confront us? Of the envy and the necessity of a new kind of solidarity? Demand: What we will need, by contrast, are dis-illusions, dis-estrangements, the construction of relations among relatives, the birth of a shared language from the polyphony of history and artifact. Without doubt, we share more than we are aware of by way of shared cultures, though our continent is still separated, at least, into two halves. Art as an artifact of the construction of “relations”: this is a compelling initiative of the Federal Cultural Foundation. After fourteen years of “opening the East” which I have been able to help shape – in part, as head of the institution “Kulturkontakt Austria”, to specializing in cultural relations between East and West – changes of paradigm have become urgent. First of all, because the enlargement of the European Union “internalizes” a hitherto unknown acceleration of the dialectic between what is one’s own and what is foreign, and just barely allows “externalization.” And secondly, because the national, bilateral models of co-operation have come to an “end.” In return relations, in general, have become a European question, even though this does not seem to have happened in the reflection and reflexes of national politics. Here is not the place to give more precise reasons. Here I will assert rather than prove, namely, that the unimagined complexities of a shared future require the seismograph of art, and to view it the other way around, that the avant-garde, the laboratory of words, images, experiments will drown in materialism if they are not anchored in society. Paradox: a national (German) cultural foundation transcends the frame of national cultural diplomacy. Non-paradoxical: a new institution acts daringly as an incubator for risk-taking. I gladly accepted “relations” invitation to join the international advisory board. My work at the European Cultural Foundation is oriented toward similar parameters. Here there are partners who are also developing European projects and promoting transnational innovation, but not very many. “relations” invests in the partner countries, in the freedom of artistic dis-estrangement – admirable and generous and rare. “relations” does not negate the origin of the means and the initial idea – realistic and not covering-up. “relations” ties together projects in the enlargement countries and the countries still waiting for accession to the European Union. That, too, is an advantage of the program, when also considering the “exclusions”, such as the Balkan countries, while proceeding with the approach of “inclusion”. “relations” ties the projects, the products, and the people to Germany. Europe emerges only in a local context – civil society and globalization – in the cities, galleries, i.e. in the workshops of local appropriation. “relations” communicates horizontally: the regions which are “inside”, with those which are “soon to be inside”, and the “still-outside” all interact on a European plane, through probing artifacts, through the art of free play in the realm of necessity. “relations” is work on relations among “relatives”, and it is a joyful experiment.

Gottfried Wagner
Secretary General of the European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam

Since 1989, a substantial discourse has emerged around the question of how to establish new relations between the west and the east of Europe. One can look back at many specific projects that have spawned out of conceptual, financial, and philanthropic initiatives in the last 15 years. Their shared goal was to make the relations between the east and west of Europe something more than an enthusiastic adventure between a bunch of artists, curators, and activists. It is important to note, that most of these initiatives were started in the west, both in the United States of America and Europe. The discussions on this subject which took place in international art circles quickly became a kind of cliché, providing an opportunity for expressing all kinds of complaints and frustrations. On the other hand, one must say, that given how important the questions raised are, there have been very few concrete tools or critical methodologies available to further these exchanges. At the same time, the delineation of new relations between east and west has created many opportunities for the culture industry. Connected to the above I have some questions I would like to address to my own community, even to my own government: Why do these initiatives and the financial support they provide always have to come from the West? Do we (in the East) have such a lack of imagination and intellectual resourcefulness, or is it simply that we are just so poor? Or maybe it is our ignorance or lack of confidence that inhibits us from sponsoring such initiatives? Is our deference to the West the result of submissiveness, or is it just an absence of any vision or a lack of faith that things can change? Is it just about desire, a blind desire to be what we are not? A desire to be politically united with western Europe, and to have “them” tell us what we should do before we start acting? Or maybe the reason we do not lead these efforts has less to do with contemporary pathologies than with historical events and structural patterns which cannot be changed in a decade, but only over generations? Or is there a positive way of viewing our passivity? Is there a healthy cynicism that should be directed at the projects coming from the West? How can I as a member of the “relations” advisory board address such questions most constructively? “relations” does not want to hide the aforementioned conflicts and differences. By acknowledging the transparent and insurmountable borders that separate Ljubljana and Chisinau on the one hand, and Ljubljana and Berlin on the other, this project faces up to the complexity of the borderline situations in the new Europe. These situations not only challenge us to reconsider how boundaries are drawn between West and East, but they also force us to look at the different “East’s” within the East itself – as well as the many other borders and communication obstacles involved in surveying this territory. Let me end this statement with a response to the editors of this publication, who invited me to express any possible irritations I have as a member of the “relations” board: As members of the “relations” board, we – people of very different profiles and functions and social status – find ourselves in a situation that requires a lot of tolerance, patience, and introspection. There is no roadmap. And so, all that is “wrong” with our discussions – all the misunderstandings and wrong turns – are exactly the things that make them really good discussions.

Eda Čufer
Dramaturge and Culture Theorist,
Ljubljana

The word “relations” means relationships and initially nothing more than that: the character of the intended relationship remains open. They can be based on love as well as hate, on the wish to get to know the other person, or the desire to exploit them. They can promote democracy or generate acts of xenophobic violence. It would appear that whatever is polysemous is always dangerous, for it shatters a reality structured by simple opposites and eludes the safety and certainty which as a rule underpin our experiences. Nevertheless, I prefer ambiguity to what is allegedly straightforward or definite. The latter always means that force is used openly or symbolically with a view to establishing clearly visible divisions through a clear incision. It is precisely the ambiguity that the “relations” project allows to emerge which interests me – beginning with the political implications, the economic and cultural effects, and continuing on with the ambivalences on the individual and purely human levels. “relations” refuses to bow to the straightforward on all these levels. The project was initiated by the Federal Cultural Foundation. This foundation is the federal government’s first supra-regional foundation. The cultural and artistic intentions to be pursued were formulated with great clarity: and it is indisputable that they are as meaningful as they are remarkable and exemplary. But it is seldom that the political goals of a central cultural foundation are discussed in Germany. At a first glance, this lack of a clear political positioning is unsettling. Take a second look, however, and one soon recognizes the productive force of such reserve. The yawning gap in the official self-positioning produces, for instance, the simple question: what’s the purpose of it all? It is incumbent upon the foundation’s decision-makers to ensure that a comparatively high level of transparency is put in place and maintained. It is their responsibility to disclose their relationship to others and the extent of the trust shown. Further ambiguities are to be found in the relationships between Germany and the countries of central and eastern Europe. Here I find the perpetually exercised judging of others extremely interesting. These evaluations trigger varying emotions; the entire spectrum of human feelings comes into play. In the context of these habitual and, hence, everyday orgies of judgment, “relations” assumes a special position. The project not only destroys the simple oppositions based on “us and them,” but also unmasks the frailties of the currently circulating identifications and the lack of bonds where they, according to the cliché we have of ourselves, should be. In addition, the “relations” project touches on the sensitive issue of cultural dominance. The self-definition as initiators of cultural processes, as mediators between communities who cannot

communicate with one another on their own, demands an almost ethnocentric belief in the value of one’s culture, in the universal claims of the ideas standing behind the project. The ideas I mean are those such as democracy, debate, dialogue, the overcoming of borders, or transnational co-operation. Such a hegemonic positioning doubtlessly contradicts the aforementioned convictions, and it raises the following questions: is ethnocentrism necessarily false? Does it not produce interesting thoughts and events? Is not the frantic adherence to principles of cultural relativism a utopia? The next level of ambiguity in the project is that of the relationships between the supported artists and the societies in which they work. Although in today’s art world identifications are not marked out by national but rather global communities, “relations” defines the artists as representatives of a national society, in order to then, in a second step, form trans-local relationships between the artists. Although, on the one hand, the project produces an idiosyncratic dissonance, it shows on the other that today identity is not based on a definite, immutable core. Rather, identity is the ability to weave together an interrelated narration from contradictory stories. Ambiguities not only fundamentally attack self-confidence, but also heal us of dogmatism and compel us to enter into self-reflection. Can we imagine a better basis for dialogue with others?

Marek Krajewski
Sociologist, Adam Mickiewicz University, Posen



Visual Seminar, Sofia

November 2004

On the Tracks of the Bright Future: exhibition, ATA Center/ICA-Sofia

The artists Boris Missirkov and Georgi Bogdanov present 15 large format photographs on the theme of future visions of Bulgarian youths. In response to the harmless question "what do you want to be", dreams emerge which strike at the heart of prevailing clichés of Bulgaria.

The project "East Art Map" calls upon interested persons to take part in constructing the history of and sketching an art map of eastern Europe. The system is extremely simple: a new project or a new artist can only then be included in the map when an already captured data set is deleted at the same time. The visitor to the website must justify this decision.

The changes made to the databank and the reasons given are to be archived and made available on the website for discussion until an international jury settles the final topography of the "East Art Map".
www.eastartmap.org

Rē:form, Poland

November 2004

Local Modernism: discussion, Edward Krasiński Studio, Warsaw

The renowned Polish artist Edward Krasiński, who died in April of this year, bequeathed his studio and archive to the Foksal Gallery Foundation. Parallel to the renovation, discussions are being held on Krasiński's work and the challenges facing the future use of the studio as a "living archive." Local Modernism is a research project that, in connection with historical studies and archival work, explores selected buildings (complexes) and the respective architectural theories between the 1950s and the 1970s. The project also takes into consideration the history of their reception and the influence these buildings and theories have exerted on urban development.

Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000, Croatia

November 2004

OutInOpen: presentations and workshops, Zagreb

In the presentations and workshops, alternatives to individual possession of intellectual property are to be shown, strategies for hacking into systems of social control discussed, and the hybridization of spaces through new technologies illustrated. Guests: Subsignal, Blast Theory, Dražen Pantić, Ted Byfield, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Felix Stadler, Paper Tiger und Xiph.Org

Low Intensity High Frequency: visual studies seminar with film showings, Zagreb

How do complex relations emerge suddenly from the normal behavior of individuals within a collective which were not foreseeable in this particular form? This is the question discussed in the seminar series "Low Intensity High Frequency", held twice monthly. Films and videos are shown, followed by lectures and discussions.

3D Journal: discussions, Zagreb

In four sessions, urbanists, city planners and architects discuss the consequences of a neo-liberal economic policy for urban and architectural developments – with the goal of influencing existing urban planning and cultural policy.

Missing Identity, Kosovo

November 2004

Anri Sala/Paris: one person exhibition, Gallery EXIT, Peja

Exhibition on Nature and Society: Gallery EXIT, Peja
The "Exhibition on Nature and Society", curated by "What, How and for Whom" (Zagreb), presents a generation of young Croatian artists whose "nature" and view of society have been decisively marked by the experiences of transition, war, and the traumatic postwar situation of the 1990s. Employing videos, slides, photographs and drawings, the artists Goran Devic, Vlatka Horvat, David Maljkovic, Mario Miškovic, the architect group "Platforma 9,81" and Marko Tadic reconstruct what appears to have been lost, forgotten or past.

De/construction of Monument, Bosnia-Herzegovina

November 2004

Dealing with the Past: conference, Sarajevo

A conference on the controversies ignited by dealing with history:
"History/pseudo-history/counter-history.
forgotten past/imagined past. revived myths – new myths – consequences.extinguished memory – destruction of the remains of national cultures and historical epochs – consequences. Corrected history – fascism – anti-fascism.
Force of idols – character and mythologizing the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ethno-nationalism – national socialism.
..."

Positive/Negative: exhibition, Sarajevo

The exhibition is devoted to projects by artists whose initial research or inspiration are monuments or their ruins, national or ideological symbols, patriotic and new collective icons or personalities of the more recent or more distant past.
Artistic interventions in this thematic bring about a shift in the meaning and thus inquire into contemporary positioning in relationship to the past.
The exhibited works serve as the basis for the conference to be held parallel to it.

ALTE ARTE, Moldova

December 2004

Pilot program: premier, TV Moldova

"ALTE ARTE" airs for the first time in November. The pilot program includes a look back at the development of contemporary Moldovan art, a contribution on vj-ing, and a preview of the first Moscow Biennale for contemporary art in January 2005. Also featured are the artist Mark Verlan from Chisinau, who shows us how soup is eaten, and Veaceslav Mizin, who presents his video "Firework."

Beginning in December, "ALTE ARTE" will air twice a month during prime time.

For more information:

www.projekt-relations.de

Generation – a film project

November 2004

Post-production: workshops, Cologne

After intensive workshops in Berlin, Sofia, and Wiesbaden and the subsequent shooting of the episodes in the summer, the production of the omnibus film enters the final phase. The last decisive workshop is to be held in Cologne during post-production. Here, under the overall guidance of Nikolaj Nikitin, the six directors and their local producers, ICON FILM, relations as co-producer and its expert advisory board – made up of Sibylle Kurz, Gabriele Brunnenmeyer, and Didi Danquart – will work together to fuse the episodes into a full-length film.

East Art Map, Ljubljana

October/November 2004

"East Art Map" Website: launch, Ljubljana

"East Art Map" is going online. In the past few years, IRWIN, supported by "New Moment" and working together with critics, curators, and artists, has compiled a databank with information on more than 200 artists and projects from eastern Europe.