

Roles of the Visual in Overcoming Dictatorships - Conference -

9 Oct. 2008, 9-4

University of Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
Birmingham

Wed., 8 Oct. 2008

Venue: **Ikon Gallery, Birmingham**

The gallery remains open until 18.30. The Ikon Gallery will show works by Martin Creed at the time (<http://www.ikon-gallery.co.uk/>)

Art groups in the 1990s and 2000s in Eastern Europe. Round-Table discussion (which will feed into the paper on Russian art presented by Dr. Rose Whyman on the following day) at the Ikon Gallery with artists whose works will be shown in *Overcoming Dictatorships* (chaired by Helen Legg, off-site curator, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham)

Th., 9 Oct. 2008

Roles of the visual in overcoming dictatorships (conference)

(Venue: University of Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts)

- 9.00 Registration
- 9.30 Opening of conference and session convener by Dr. Jutta Vinzent (University of Birmingham)
- 9.35 *Counter-cultural Art and Performance in Russia since Perestroika* (Dr. Rose Whyman, University of Birmingham)
- 10.00 *Supported, Tolerated or Forbidden: Contemporary Art and Memory Politics through the case of the 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and Csaba Nemes's REMAKE* (Maja Fowkes, University College London and Dr. Reuben Fowkes, Manchester Metropolitan University and initiator of SocialEast Forum; see www.translocal.org):
- 10.30 Coffee BREAK
Session convener: Dr. Nick Martin (University of Birmingham)
- 11.00 *The Spoils of Freedom: Feminism and art after the fall of socialism* (Dr. Sue Malvern, University of Reading)
- 11.30 *The Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie* (Prof. Brandon Taylor, University of Southampton) (until 12.00)

- 12.30 Opening of the exhibition (including a buffet lunch) with speeches by Professor Michael Sterling (VC of the University of Birmingham), Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock (Leader of the Opposition, 1983-92 and UK Commissioner of the EU, 1995-2004) and Professor Dr. Dr. Gerhard Besier (Professor of European Studies, Technische Universität, Dresden and main investigator of the project of which this exhibition is part)

- 3-4 Panel discussion with speakers of conference and participants of the EU-project (chaired by Prof. Cillian Ryan, former Director of the European Research Institute, University of Birmingham)



CRN
(Heritage, Cultural Production and
Interpretation Collaborative Research
Network of the University of Birmingham)

ABSTRACTs of the papers:

Dr. Rose Whyman (University of Birmingham): Counter-cultural Art and Performance in Russia since Perestroika

This paper considers some trends in counter-cultural art since the 1990s in Russia. Various forms of 'unofficial art' existed in Soviet times, fuelled partly the desire to pursue links with the pre-Soviet past. Conversely, new freedoms have sometimes resulted in the expression of irreverent attitudes to the Russian classics and at other times a desire on the part of artists to be considered as part of international art movements rather than specifically Russian ones. Notions of cultural democracy, so intrinsic to British counter-cultural art are at great variance to Russian ideas of art and empowerment, though for many Russians the link is intrinsic. I will also discuss some of my own experiences of working on community arts projects in Russia and this paper will present as case studies the work of the Blue Noses, a Siberian art collective, German Vinogradov, a performance artist based in Moscow and Vladimir Logutov, a video artist from Samara. The work of all these artists remains subject to censorship of various kinds.

Maia Fowkes (University College London) and Dr. Reuben Fowkes (Manchester Metropolitan University and initiator of SocialEast Forum; see www.translocal.org): Supported, Tolerated or Forbidden: Contemporary Art and Memory Politics through the case of the 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and Csaba Nemes's REMAKE

The relationship of art and politics in contemporary Eastern Europe has a complex pre-history. During the later period of Communist rule, and specifically since the relaxation of the dictates of Socialist Realism following de-Stalinisation, stylistic experimentation in art was generally tolerated by the authorities, as long as artists avoided direct reference to politics in their work. Artists who declined to engage in self-censorship, and directly challenged the political system, or dealt with taboo subjects in recent history, were faced with the banning of their work, the closure of exhibitions, and even personal harassment. At the same time a well-supported network of state artists benefited from regular commissions, prizes and other institutional perks, as a reward for artistic and political conformism. This divisive situation was famously described as the system of the 'Three T's', referring to the categories (in Hungarian) of the Supported, the Tolerated and the Forbidden. This paper looks at the relationship of art and politics in Eastern Europe since 1989 and examines the readiness of contemporary art to address controversial issues around the memory of past political upheavals. It asks whether the overall reluctance to deal with live political questions reflects more the legacy of local (art) histories or the newly-adopted rules of a politically-acquiescent international art system. These wider issues will be discussed through the case of Hungarian artist Csaba Nemes's REMAKE (2007), a series of ten animated films dealing with the riots in Budapest that broke out on the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. REMAKE is significant both for its treatment of the manipulation of popular memories of 1956 by the media and politicians during the anniversary and for the strong reactions that the work provoked in both the art world and Hungarian society.

Dr. Sue Malvern (University of Reading): The Spoils of Freedom: feminism and art after the fall of socialism

Between 1997 and 2001, Croatian artist Sanja Ivekovic made a series of photoworks, *Gen XX*, in which advertisements from women's magazines were annotated with texts remembering women active in anti-fascism and once known as national heroes in socialist former Yugoslavia but forgotten by consumerist society. In 2001, the Belgrade lifestyle magazine *Prestup*, invited Milica Tomic to be photographed for its October issue cover. She posed as one of five members of the Peoples Liberation Movement publicly hanged in 1941 for anti-fascist resistance. Both Tomic and Ivekovic produce works

which examine the implications for women of forgetfulness in the new economic order following the fall of dictatorships. This paper will examine works by women artists from Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia which have examined legacies of feminism and dissidence in post-Communist Europe revealing what sociologist Renata Salecl in her book *The Spoils of Freedom* 1999 has called 'the 'dark-side' of post-socialism'.

Prof. Brandon Taylor (University of Southampton): The Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie

The oppressive tastes of the modern European bourgeoisie are characterised by secrecy, convention, a desire for tradition, and a slavish adherence to various signifiers of reassurance: landscape, the bourgeois family, animals, and accumulated wealth. The epitome of bourgeois taste in contemporary Europe is to be located in the remaining monarchies and their households, that in many cases have resonated with the trappings of the authoritarian dictators. This paper looks a little more closely at the stupefying artistic culture of the British monarchy in recent decades, its attempts and failures to adapt, and finally the prospects for the overcoming of its depthless and philistine ways.

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University of Birmingham (The Barber Institute of Fine Arts)

All bookings will be acknowledged with receipt and confirmation of a place. Please ensure you provide your full details below and return to Dr. Jutta Vinzent or Deborah Clements (address below) no later than 5 October 2008.

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Title and name:	
Institution:	
Mailing Address:	
Telephone:	
Mobile:	
<u>Email:</u>	

CONFERENCE FEES: £15,- (reduced conference fee £10,-)

The conference fee includes:

- All conference sessions and the Ikon Gallery event
- Coffee and tea during the conference
- Opening of the exhibition *Overcoming Dictatorships* (with buffet lunch)

I wish to attend the full programme (including the Ikon Gallery event): YES/NO

BOOKING FORM

Please reserve place (s) at this conference at cost (include proof for reduced fee)

Cheque payments:

I enclose a cheque to a total of £ _____

*(Cheques must be in sterling and drawn on a UK bank. Please make payable to **The University of Birmingham**)*

Credit/debit card payments:

Please debit my card with £ _____

Card type: VISA/MASTERCARD/SWITCH/SOLO (delete as appropriate)

Card no: _____

Expiry Date: ___/___

Card security code (last 3 numbers on back of card): _____

Issue no: (debit cards only) _____

Start date (if applicable): _____

Please note that there can be no refunds 4 weeks after receipt of your payment.

Please send this form by **post for both cheques and credit/debit cards, as it is not secure to send credit card data by any other electronic means including email.**

To:

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