



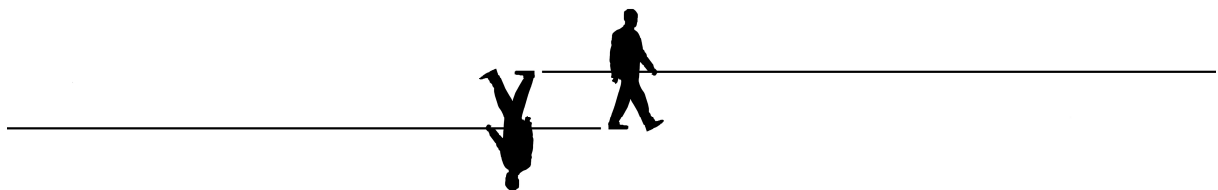
Chair of Art History and Culture Institute

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is honored to invite for
a conference entitled

The search for cultural identity in Central and Eastern Europe 1919-2009

which will take place on 10-11 May 2013
In the Center of Contemporary Art Znaki Czasu in Toruń
ul. Wały Gen. Sikorskiego 13
87-100 Toruń



The search for cultural identity in Central and Eastern Europe 1919-2009

The years of political-economic transformation in Europe after the Fall of Berlin Wall are characterized by a renewal of interest in the paradigm of national/regional/local identity and the return of traditions which were abandoned/lost during the Cold War as well as the time of worldwide globalization and cultural integration of the old continent. On the opposite side of social self-identity, feminism, Gender and Queer Studies have strengthened their positions, and the tension revolving around the aforementioned (autonomous) stances generates a wide field for discourse on the contemporary condition of a human being, their roles and functions, as well as the forms of their activity/contestation within the democratic society.

The chronological frame of the conference theme opens up with the year 1919, when France, Italy and Germany announced "the return to the order" being a reaction to the trauma of the Great War and the moral crisis it had caused. The norms of ideology which accentuated/stressed the significance of national tradition and one's cultural roots rapidly spread also in the newly established countries of the Central and Eastern Europe in a form of idiosyncratic nationalisms. The year 2009, on the other hand, is a turning point closing the first two decades of the political order changed after 1989 in the part of the continent, called the Eastern Block, now free from the Soviet Union's domination. It is the year that summarizes the cultural transformations taking place in the countries which were newly incorporated into the intellectual-artistic circuit of the European Union or the ones which aspire to such integration, it is a time of reflection and retrospection in the societies which (re)gained democracy, but were subject to pressure of the outside factors (economic, legal and cultural in the first place) that were different from the ones before 1989.

It is worth noting that the term Central and Eastern Europe is used here regardless of the fact that the geopolitical and geocultural area it refers to has not yet been precisely defined. Many times, in the period after the Fall of Berlin Wall, a question arose which concerned the right name for the region (which sometimes was meant to include also Russia): Eastern, Central or Central and Eastern Europe? Since there is lack of ultimate agreement, the terminological category of Central and Eastern Europe shall be applied in a flexible manner, without referring to strict cartographic borders of countries or cultures.

The conference will constitute an attempt to diagnose, on the one hand, the actions undertaken to regain or create national as well as local narrations, and on the other, the accentuating of sexual identity and individual experience relating to the Interwar period, the time of the Iron Curtain and the decades after 1989. The debate invites scholars searching examples of the aforementioned tendencies in the visual art (including new media and film), architecture, art criticism and theory. Considering the fact that any forms of reinterpreting the past are ideological in nature often being divergent or mutually exclusive, we shall seek the answer for the following question: Can art, art history and criticism create a platform for negotiations between different world views in the contemporary society?

The conference debate will revolve around a couple of theme blocks:

- Art as a catalyst for nationalistic nostalgias, an instrument for ideological propaganda or a sign of regional/ethnic/religious differentiations.
- Art canon(s) as an element of national identity creation and a reflection of the current cultural and extra-artistic problems.
- Supranational and transgressive art trends versus vernacular traditions in art.
- The phenomena of cultural convergence and independence from the Old Europe in the countries of the former Eastern Block.
- Subversive narrations: the role of art and critical discourse in questioning the old and creating new cultural identities, models and hierarchies in the post-communist societies.
- The cultural dimension of sexual self-identity as a form of questioning the norms governing the surrounding social/ethnic/national community.

Comments

- The talks will be in Polish and English with 20 minutes allocated for each presentation. Additionally, there will be time devoted to discussion before the breaks.
- Submissions with abstracts on the form enclosed (max. 1000 characters) should be sent no later than 10 March 2013.
- The conference fee is 300 PLN. Payment details:

Payee: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika Toruń, Bank name: Bank Millennium S.A. Warszawa, Poland. Account number: **45 1160 22020000 0000 31748579**, Reference (Pol. tytułem): **NAME + SURNAME + „poszukiwanie tożsamości”, SWIFT/BIC number: BLG B PL PW**, (required for international money transfers) IBAN: **PL 45 1160 2202 0000 0000 31748579**

In case of any questions feel free to email us at konferencja.tozsamosc.kultur@gmail.com

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