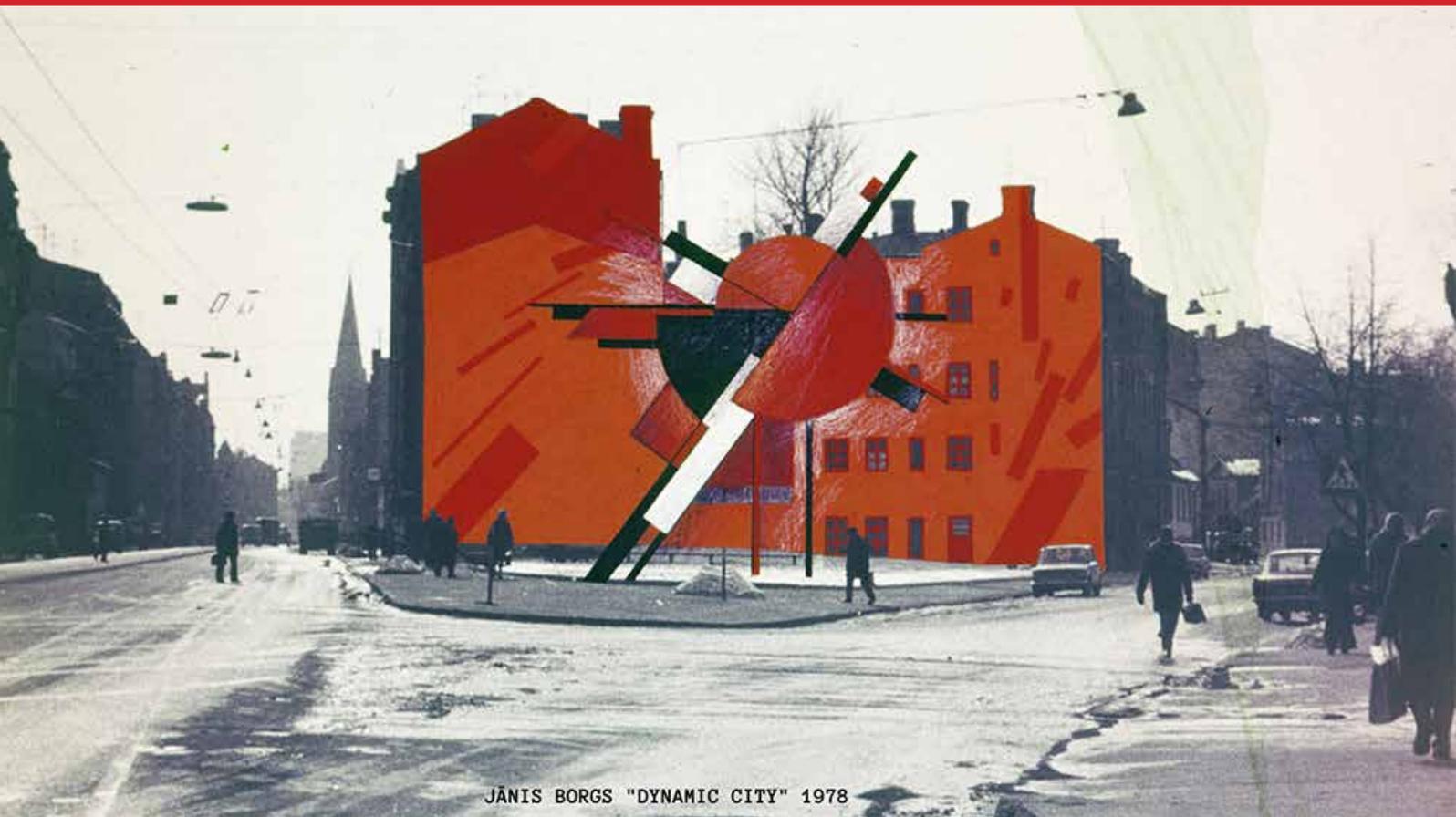


# To the Left of Power? Radical Culture in Eastern Europe in the 1960s and 1970s



JĀNIS BORGS "DYNAMIC CITY" 1978

**Abstracts and Programme**  
Online workshop, 27 Sept & 4 Oct 2021

**Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art**  
**Nep4Dissent Research Network**



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## Programme

Monday 27 September 2021 - 14.00-17.30 CEST

Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81432061082?pwd=RGlyN3o1RXdqVCtaL1hqVVJEZE9KZz09>

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Monday 4th October 2021 - 12.00-17.00 CEST

Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87409330257?pwd=QzBQVEI1WURuZzVpdnNRamF2cEx1QT09>

Password 044489

Monday 27th September 2021

**Session 1 - chaired by Mari Laanemets and Ieva Astahovska**

14.00-14.30 CEST

**Gabriela Świtek**

***Against War and Fascism - The 1970 International Exhibition in Warsaw and the Pacifism of the Counterculture***

14.30-15.00 CEST

**Marko Zubak**

***US Counterculture and the Yugoslav Youth Press***

15.00-15.30 CEST

**Dorota Jarecka and Paulina Olszewska**  
***Decolonizations from a Socialist Perspective***

15.30-16.00 CEST

**Magdalena Radomska**

***Was the Cobblestone a Weapon of the Proletariat in Hungarian Art of the 1970s?***

16.00-16.30 CEST

**Wiktoria Szczupacka**

***Art Workers Between Avant-Garde Art Circles and the Cultural Policy of the Late Communist State - KwieKulik's Artistic Practice and the Issue of Work during the 1970s in the People's Republic of Poland***

16.30-17.00 CEST

**David Crowley**

***'New Art of the Times of the October Revolution' or 'Avant-garde and Revolution'?***

17.00 CEST

**Discussion**

Monday 4th October 2021

**Keynote talk and conversation**

12.00-13.00

**Keti Chukrov on *Practicing the Good: Desire and Boredom in Soviet Socialism***

**Session 2 - chaired by David Crowley**

14.00-14.30 CEST

**Alessandra Franetovich**

***'Cosmic Thoughts' in Moscow Conceptualism during the 1970s***

14.30-15.00 CEST

**Christian Nae**

***Eclectic Spiritualism in Romanian Experimental Art during the 1970s***

15.00-15.30 CEST

**Ana Peraica**

***Between National Upheavals and the Culture of Drugs - On Some New Photographs of Red Peristyle (Split, Yugoslavia, 1968)***

15.30-16.00 CEST

**Samo Oleami**

***Slovene Neo-avantgardes 1964-75 - OHO and 442 / Pupilija Ferkeverk***

16.00-16.30 CEST

**Agata Jakubowska**

***Between Science of Desire and Free Love - Maria Pinińska-Bereś and Jana Želibská on female sexuality***

16.30 CEST

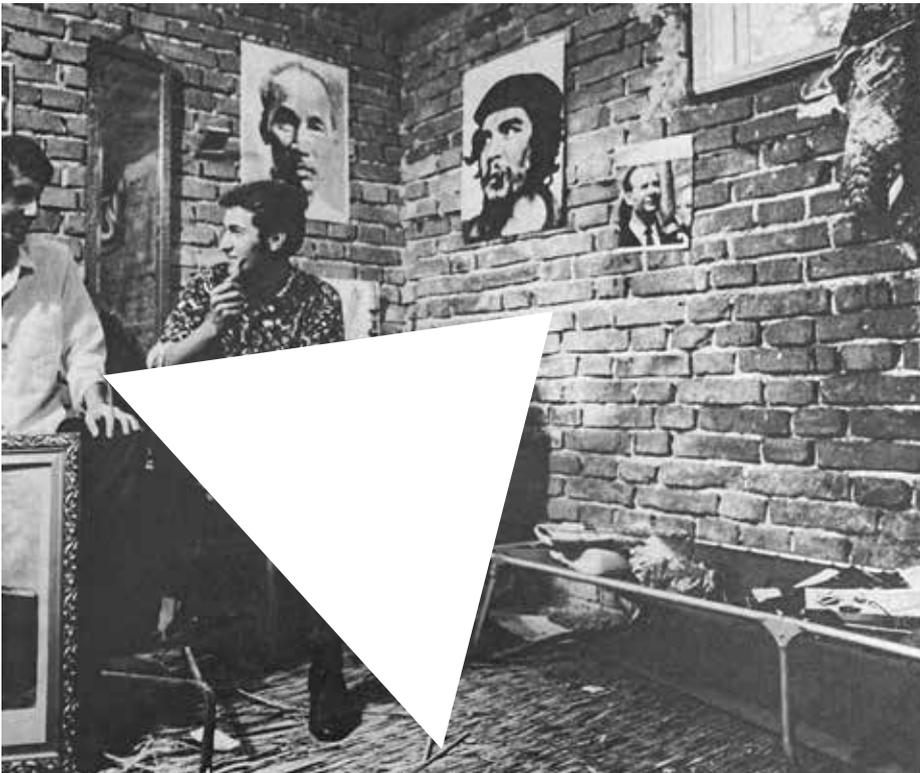
**Concluding discussion**

## To the Left of Power? Radical Culture in Eastern Europe in the 1960s and 1970s

New research has put attention on the different faces of the Counterculture that emerged and spread in Eastern Europe under communist rule in the late 1960s and 1970s. Communes, psychedelics and other aspects of the hippie lifestyle were embraced as alternatives both to conservative 'bourgeois' life and the hollow revolutionary rhetoric of Soviet power. Some took a more ideological approach by aligning themselves to the Civil Rights and the Anti-Vietnam War movements in the West, or by drawing inspiration from the liberation movements in Cuba and Africa or even the Cultural Revolution in Mao's China. Sexuality and gender also formed new fronts of political action and thinking.

In this workshop, contributors will explore the ways in which Counter-Cultural affinities and New Left politics - defined broadly - were channelled by artists, theatre, film-makers, writers, musicians and others in Eastern Europe in the 1960s and 1970s.

This event is free and open to all.



Romanian 'Beatniks' in *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, November 22 1968.

This workshop is organised by Ieva Astahovska, Mari Laanemets and David Crowley, with the support of the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art and the Nep4Dissent Research Network, an EU COST Action Association - <https://nep4dissent.eu/>

Keti Chukrov's *Practicing the Good: Desire and Boredom in Soviet Socialism* was published by e-flux in 2020. It is described as 'a philosophical consideration of Soviet Socialism that reveals the hidden desire for capitalism in contemporary anticapitalist discourse and theory. By means of the philosophical and politico-economical consideration of Soviet socialism of the 1960 and 1970s, this book manages to reveal the hidden desire for capitalism in contemporaneous anti-capitalist discourse and theory. The research is marked by a broad cross-disciplinary approach based on political economy, philosophy, art theory, and cultural theory.'

At 12.00 midday on the second day of the workshop, Chukrov will present a short discussion of some of the key ideas in the book and engage in conversation with the workshop convenors.

## **Keti Chukrov**

### **Reflections on *Practicing the Good: Desire and Boredom in Soviet Socialism***

**Keti Chukhrov** is ScD in philosophy and an associate professor at the Department of Cultural Studies at the Higher School of Economics (Moscow). From 2017 to 2019, she was a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow at the University of Wolverhampton in the UK. She has authored numerous texts on art theory and philosophy. Her full-length books include: *To Be—To Perform. 'Theatre' in Philosophic Critique of Art* (European Un-ty, 2011) and *Pound &£* (Logos, 1999), as well as a volume of dramatic writing: *Merely Humans* (2010). Her book *Practicing the Good. Desire and Boredom in Soviet Socialism* (University of Minnesota Press, 2020) deals with the impact of socialist political economy on the epistemes of historical socialism.

***Against War and Fascism***, an exhibition organized by the Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions in Warsaw, gathered some 600 works by artists from seven socialist countries: Poland, USSR, GDR, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania. It opened on 1 September 1970 and was intended to commemorate the 31st anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. Its title was a deliberate allusion to the Arsenal Exhibition held in Warsaw in 1955 as part of the Fifth International Festival of Youth and Students. The press reviews included anti-war slogans such as 'fighting for peace'.

This paper offers a 're-framing' of the political and cultural context of the 1970 exhibition, an event that coincided with a period of intense surveillance of the Polish hippie movement, which promoted pacifist ideas. In 1970, the Security Service initiated an anti-hippie operation codenamed 'Mop-heads' ('Kudłacze'). While the hippies evaded conscription (actions against them included conscription into Polish People's Army), the reviewers of the exhibition *Against War and Fascism* attacked the 'cosmopolitan pacifism permeating the bourgeois milieu.' Using this case study, this paper explores the moments of a clash between official anti-war rhetoric and counterculture pacifism as manifested in the visual culture of the 1960s and 1970s.

## Gabriela Świtek

# ***Against War and Fascism - The 1970 International Exhibition in Warsaw and the Pacifism of the Counterculture***

**Dr. habil. Gabriela Świtek**, Head of Art Theory, Institute of Art History, University of Warsaw. Graduate of the University of Cambridge (PhD 1999, MPhil 1996) and the University of Warsaw (MA 1992). Author of books and edited volumes, including *Grunt i horyzont: Interpretacje nowoczesnej architektury i sztuki* [The Ground and the Horizon: Interpretations of Modern Architecture and Art] (2020). Curator of Polish Pavilion for the 10th International Exhibition of Architecture in Venice (2006). In 2014–2018 she was coordinator of the project on the 'History of Exhibitions in Zachęta – Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions in 1949–1970' funded by the National Program for the Development of the Humanities. Research interests: modern and contemporary architecture and art, history and philosophy of architecture, contemporary visual culture, exhibition histories.

**In the summer of 1968**, in the midst of the global student uprising, British poet Christopher Logue published his legendary poem 'Know Thy Enemy' in the second issue of *The Black Dwarf*, a newly started London underground journal edited by Tariq Ali. Logue's anti-capitalist cry was printed on a poster next to a montage of a fist with a seal ring featuring the iconic image of Che Guevara. His poster poetry reflected a moment when a revolutionary change of both society and media was being called for. A few months later, the same fist reappeared on the cover of *Omladinski tjednik (Youth Weekly)*, the official journal of the Zagreb socialist youth union – with insignia adjusted to the local context. Logue's verses were replaced by the new journal's motto 'Radical or not at all'; in place of Che Guevara, a stylized sickle and hammer looked at the readers. The message, if watered down, stayed the same: the journal demand changes.

This adaptation illustrates the uncanny connection between the two media developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s in completely different settings, namely, Yugoslav youth press and Western underground press. The former was a common name for a range of youth publications, like *Omladinski tjednik*, produced under the auspices of a network of socialist youth unions. Originally devised to be part of the state propaganda apparatus, with the goal of steering the youth onto the righteous communist course, the Yugoslav youth press from the late 1960s adjusted its original propagandistic tasks, trying to install the youth as an active agent. Acting in the unorthodox socialist milieu, marked by the new self-management ideology and increasingly opened towards Western influence, the youth press began to transmit fresh and subversive messages. The British and American underground press and rising counter-culture served as an unexpected role model: journals like *Rat*, *Oz* or *It* which emerged in the opposition to the mainstream media and experimented in both content and form, promoting radical ideas of the 1960s student movements and the new, sex & drugs & rock'n'roll worldview.

Yugoslav youth journalists acquired these journals through various channels and became fascinated with their messages, manner of presentation and perception of journalism. Led by the similar leftist pathos and inspired by the era's revolutionary climate, they adapted many of their themes and heroes. Amidst the

## Marko Zubak

# US Counterculture and the Yugoslav Youth Press

similar working conditions, they reached for similar solutions. Just like their US underground counterparts, Yugoslav youth journals became an organ of the local student movements from the late 1960s and early 1970s, giving voice to the rebellious students and at times organizing their actions. They celebrated iconic leaders of the global uprisings, from Rudi Dutschke to the Black Panthers. Western counterculture presented youth journalists with the ideal combination of emerging rock culture and progressive political ideas. Jerry Rubin's Yippie manifesto 'Do it: Scenarios for Revolution' appeared across the youth journals as if it were some sort of a Marxist classic. Canonical countercultural works like Jeff Nuttall's *Bomb Culture* or Richard Neville's *Play Power* were printed in sequels. New York anarchist poet Tuli Kupferberg, who would later appear in Dušan Makavejev's cinematic classic 'W.R. Mysteries of the Organism', first gave his satirical advice on the pages of the youth press (101 Ways to Make Love). Youth journalists joined Kupferberg in advocating sexual freedoms, as an integral part of political emancipation, yet their revolution, like the American prototype, remained male chauvinist and rarely reached beyond the de-tabooization of the sexual jargon.

Finally, the youth press turned into a platform for visual experiments, in line with the underground aesthetics. Local art directors turned the existing technical limitations to their advantage, deconstructing the standard visual patterns. Graphic designers introduced the psychedelic flower-power aesthetics through the unusual use of typography and fluorescent ink. Just like the underground press, the youth journals became a birthplace of alternative comics (comix), printing first translations of Robert Crumb, as well as original works of local comic authors such as Kostja Gatnik.

**Marko Zubak** is a historian and occasional curator. He holds a doctorate in history from the Central European University in Budapest. His main research areas are popular, youth and nocturnal cultures, popular music and media under (late) socialism on which he published profusely and curated several exhibitions. He is a research associate at the Croatian Historical Institute in Zagreb and for the past three years a visiting lecturer at the Institute for Visual Culture at Alpen-Adria University in Klagenfurt. He has published a monograph *The Yugoslav Youth Press (1968-1980): Student movements, Youth Subcultures and Alternative Communist Media* (2018, Srednja Europa) and his edited collection *Disco Heterotopias: Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s* (co-edited with Flora Pitrolo) is forthcoming later this year with Palgrave Macmillan.

**The American invasion of Vietnam** in 1964 sparked the world-wide protests. The culture of dissent that emerged in the Western liberal democracies in the aftermath of the event, and which led to the revolt of May 1968, has been a subject of a broad research. However, the impact of the Vietnam War and the global decolonization process on the artistic circles in socialist countries is not widely known. Since 1945, the conflict in Indochina was closely observed in the Eastern Bloc. In Poland, the official line of the anti-colonial policy was manifested at the Wrocław Peace Congress in 1948. This policy was based on a binary difference between East and West, socialism and imperialism (often equated with fascism). In our presentation we will turn the attention to the 1960s, when artists in Poland started to look for a common platform with their Western counterparts, and confronting the theme of decolonization they used Pop-Art and Conceptual Art as a medium of communication. We will demonstrate the left-wing anti-war and anti-colonial positions taken in the 1960s and 1970s by such artist as Jarosław Kozłowski, Andrzej Strumiłło, and SAB group. Our contribution is connected to an exhibition planned for 2022.

## **Dorota Jarecka and Paulina Olszewska**

### **Decolonizations from a Socialist Perspective**

**Dorota Jarecka** is an art historian and art critic based in Warsaw. She is a program director at the Galeria Studio in Warsaw, and as a scholar she is associated with the Institute of Literary Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. She co-authored the book *Erna Rosenstein. Mogę powtarzać tylko nieświadomie / I Can Repeat Only Unconsciously* (2014). She co-edited the following publications on women artists: *Krystiana Robb-Narbutt. Drawings, Objects, Studio* (2012), *Natalia LL. Doing Gender* (2013), *Ewa Zarzycka. Heyday* (2016). Her book on the relations of the left-wing policy and the art in Poland between 1944–48 will be published in 2021.

**Paulina Olszewska** is a curator, writer and project producer based in Warsaw and Berlin. She studied Art History at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland and at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Since 2019 she has been working as a curator at the Galeria Studio in Warsaw. In her curatorial practice she focuses on rediscovering female artists and putting them in contemporary contexts as well as on the artistic legacy of Bauhaus, its redefinition and reinterpretation.

**My paper will focus on the motif of the cobblestone** in works of East-Central European artists, especially a set of works created as a response to the call of Hungarian art historian - Laszlo Beke for artist to react to the theme of Cobblestones and Gravestones, inspired by Gyula Gazdag's cult film 'The Whistling Cobblestone' (1971). Thus, I aim to investigate the compound status of the language of artistic revolt of 1968 in communist Europe- stimulated both by the Paris May and Marxist background of those artists, which was of particular relevance in Hungarian neo-avant-garde art, familiar both with the thought of György Lukács and with the radical art of Latin American artists. The title of my text is derived from provocative works by Attila Csáji and Sándor Pinczehelyi, both entitled 'Cobblestone is the weapon of proletariat' (after Ivan Shadr -respectively from 1970 and 1973), which address both commodification of the language of 1968 and possibility of appropriation of Marxism by Hungarian art workers. I would like to trace back, what can be seen as a mere reception of Flower Power in Hungarian art (works by Dóra Maurer and Tibor Gáyor) and what in fact functioned as insightful critical stance both towards authoritarian regime in Hungary and Western narrative, forcing a re-evaluation of the 1968 narrative. Narrated as anti-systemic revolts, '1968s' in the West, Latin America and East-Central Europe appear as cracked due to underestimation of the impact of Marxism in Communist Europe as a tool of resistance towards authoritarian regime. Works by numerous Hungarian artists working with cobblestone (by Gyula Gulyás, János Major, etc.) reveal the presence of a leftist narrative with a strong Marxist background and experience of the communist project.

## Magdalena Radomska

### Was the Cobblestone a Weapon of the Proletariat in Hungarian Art of the 1970s?

**Magdalena Radomska** is a Post-Marxist art historian and historian of philosophy, Assistant Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. She holds a PhD in art history, and has received scholarships at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest and at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. She was a director and lecturer of the course Writing Humanities after the Fall of Communism in 2009 at Central European University in Budapest. In 2013 her book *The Politics of Movements of Hungarian Neoavantgarde (1966-80)* was published. Currently Radomska is engaged in research on Post-Communist art in Post-Communist Europe (grant from the National Science Center) and criticism of capitalism in art (appearing in book *The Plural Subject: Art and Crisis after 2008*).

'The best example of hippies' collaboration with artists [in Poland] in the 1970s is the film, 'Activities'. The hippies, that is, the musicians of Grupa w Składzie and myself, were interested in intuitive activities (...), from a desire to oppose the stereotypical faces and absurd language of gestures forced upon society by the regime. (...) Zofia Kulik and Przemysław Kwiek, (...) had a similar goal of transgressing the regime-imposed façade and went out to meet us. The difference was that as 'art workers', they were more ideologized than we were'.

**So wrote Jacek Dobrowolski** in his essay published in the monographic book about KwieKulik. Indeed, in their artistic practice during the 1970s, KwieKulik identified themselves as art workers, alluding to this issue in various ways: through their interest in Tadeusz Kotarbiński's *Praxeology*, in their own artistic works ('Together We Will Do More', 1977, 'Performance, a Minimum', 1978), or by revealing their potboiler jobs. In my presentation, I analyze KwieKulik's interests in the theme of work, in relation to the context of the communist Poland of the 1970s. In fact, this period in the history of the People's Republic of Poland marked a departure from the promotion of workers. Showing interest in this topic at a time when the communist state itself was abandoning it, points to the radical attitude of artists.

In my presentation, I analyze KwieKulik's interests in the theme of work, in relation to the context of the avant-garde art circles and the cultural policy of the communist Poland during the 1970s. In both areas, self-identification as art workers was increasingly unpopular. I argue that showing interest in this topic at that time, points to the radical attitude of the artists.

## **Wiktoria Szczupacka**

# **Art Workers Between Avant-Garde Art Circles and the Cultural Policy of the Late Communist State - KwieKulik's Artistic Practice and the Issue of Work during the 1970s in the People's Republic of Poland**

**Wiktoria Szczupacka** is an art historian, PhD candidate at the Institute of Art at Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw where her research focuses on the Polish avant-garde of the 1970s, institutional criticism and women's work. Her recent published work includes 'About Artistic Collaboration on the Margins of Barbara Kozłowska's Art Practice' in *Barbara Kozłowska*, ed. Marika Kuźmich, Warszawa - Wrocław 2020 and 'Responsibility Is an Action, Never Simply a Feeling: Zofia Kulik's Alice's Adventures in Fucked Wonderland, or, Cleaning Instead of Talking in the Context of the Polish Neo-Avant-Garde of the 1970s' in *Zofia Kulik: Methodology, My Love*, ed. Agata Jakubowska, Warszawa 2019. Szczupacka has led the Kulik-KwieKulik Foundation since 2016.

**In 1967 the Galeria Współczesna** (Contemporary Gallery) in Warsaw's National Theatre mounted an exhibition commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. This was a pioneering exhibition, prefiguring major displays of Soviet modernism in London and Paris. In Warsaw, blow ups and models of Soviet architectural schemes - including 'Tatlin's Tower' - were exhibited alongside journals and magazines published in the 1910s and 1920s in the gallery. Outside the National Theatre, an agitprop-tram decorated with revolutionary slogans and banners stood on the street.

The curators were a team of poets and art critics - including Anatol Stern, then 68 years old - who had strong personal links to the pre-war avant-garde in Poland and the USSR. The exhibition was an important and somewhat poignant act of rehabilitation by a generation of left-wing modernists who had suffered, often personally, during the Stalin years. At the same moment and in the same building, Adam Mickiewicz's nineteenth century poetic drama, *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve) opened. It too had been programmed to mark the fiftieth anniversary. But the Polish audience read the performance as allegory for the present, jeering the imperial characters and applauding anti-Russian sentiment. The early closure of the play in late January 1968 marked the beginning of a period of considerable turmoil in Poland.

In this talk, David Crowley will explore how the New Art of the Times of the October Revolution and other commemorative acts triggered deep anxieties of the Polish authorities of any public representation of revolutionary culture.

## David Crowley

### ‘New Art of the Times of the October Revolution’ or ‘Avant-garde and Revolution’?

**David Crowley** is a historian interested in Eastern Europe under communist rule. His authored books include *National Style and Nation-State. Design in Poland* (1992) and *Warsaw* (2003) and he is the editor – with Susan Reid – of three volumes: *Socialism and Style. Material Culture in Post-war Eastern Europe* (2000); *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (2003); and *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (2010). His edited book, *Ultra Sounds. The Sonic Art of Polish Radio Experimental Studio* was published in 2019. As a curator, Crowley's major exhibitions include 'Cold War Modern' at the V&A Museum, London in 2008–9 (co-curated with Jane Pavitt); 'Sounding the Body Electric. Experimental Art and Music in Eastern Europe' at Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, 2012 and Calvert 22, London, 2013 (co-curated with Daniel Muzyczuk); 'Notes from the Underground. Alternative Art and Music in Eastern Europe 1968–1994' Muzeum Sztuki Łódź, 2016 / Akademie der Kunste Berlin, 2018 (also co-curated with Daniel Muzyczuk).

**A year after organizing** the first happening in Hungary, in 1967, Gábor Altorjay left Hungary and joined Wolf Vostell and the anti-capitalist, New Left group of the German Fluxus in Cologne. As an anti-communist artist and a follower of Steinerian, mystical philosophies, he was shocked by the leftist worldview of his West German colleagues, but he soon assimilated to the ideas of his new environment and not only his participation in the grounding a new commune, but also his installations and fluxus objects reflected the ideological shift. Altorjay reported the events of 1968, Dutschke's politics and the prospects of the revolution in letters to his happenner-friend Tamás Szentjóby, who remained in Budapest. The correspondence between the two reveals the sceptical reception, yet inspiring impact, of the flow of New Left ideas from Western Europe to the East, their confrontation with the reality of existing socialism and their attempt to reconcile it with the esoteric doctrines that offered a philosophical alternative for their generation.

In my case study, I draw on primary, unpublished sources, letters and oral history methods to present and interpret the complex relationship between two of the most important figures in Hungarian action art and their relationship to esotericism and the New Left. This specific local ambivalence not only provides an interpretative framework for the contextual analysis of the emblematic works of the period around 1968, but also answers the question why the Hungarian avant-garde chose esotericism instead of György Lukács, who at that time dominated contemporary Western discourses.

## Alessandra Franetovich

### ‘Cosmic Thoughts’ in Moscow Conceptualism during the 1970s

**Alessandra Franetovich** is an art historian, critic and independent curator based in Turin. She is a PhD student in Art History at University of Florence. Her dissertation addresses the concept of the archive as a device to artistic self-institutionalisation through the case study of the archive of Moscow Conceptualism created by the artist Vadim Zakharov. She is teaching assistant at University of Pisa, and she has led lectures, seminars, and conferences in several European institutions. She has curated exhibitions, art residencies, and collaborated with art galleries, non profit spaces, and festivals. As a curatorial assistant, she collaborated with museums and galleries. She has been awarded with grants and scholarships with Pegaso-Tuscany, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Italian Ministry of Culture and Italian Ministry of External Affairs, and V-A-C foundation, Moscow. Her latest texts were written for the e-flux journal, C-E-M, a project by V A-C foundation, Castello di Rivoli, Cosmic Bulletin. She is co-editor of the volume *Dal medioevo al videogame. Saggi sull'interattività delle arti* (forthcoming).

**In this workshop**, I will present the outcome of my current research on the connection between Moscow Conceptualism and Russian Cosmism, as well as their approach to the wider propagandistic topic of the 'Space Race'. On this topic, I've published an article entitled 'Cosmic Thoughts: The Paradigm of Space in Moscow Conceptualism' (e-flux journal, 2019) which highlights the prevailing and diverse interests in the cosmos held by artists from this circle, from the 1970s onwards.

In this workshop, I will focus my attention on the figures of Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Andrei Monastyrski and Igor Makarevich in the 1970s, by asking the question 'What were the effects of esoteric ideas on counter-cultural production?' Their work undertaken under the influence of cosmism demonstrates their interest in creating a parallel world, and a general lack of interest in taking public and political stances. Artists from this circle were keen to develop an introspective space for freedom, and the propagandistic 'reality' of life in the USSR was reinterpreted through personal imageries. This too is also a political stance, albeit a more subtle one, without a claim on direct politics.

## Christian Nae

### Eclectic Spiritualism in Romanian Experimental Art during the 1970s

**Cristian Nae** is Associate Professor at George Enescu National University of the Arts in Iasi, Romania, where he teaches critical theory, exhibition studies and contemporary art history. His research focuses on exhibition histories and critical art practices in Eastern and Central Europe after the 1960s. He has received research grants and fellowships from the Erste Foundation, Vienna; CNCS-UE-FISCDI (Romanian National Research Council); the Getty Foundation, Los Angeles and the New Europe College Institute for Advanced Studies, Bucharest. He participated in the CAA-Getty International Program in 2012, 2017 and 2021. Currently he is senior advisor in the project 'Periodisation in the History of Art and its Conundrums. How to tackle them in East-Central Europe' supported by the Getty Foundation as part of its Connecting Art Histories initiative. His recent studies were included in the publications *Art History in a Global Context: Methods, Themes and Approaches* (2020, Wiley Blackwell); *Realisms of the Avant-Garde* (2020, De Gruyter); and *Performance Art in the Second Public Sphere: Event-based Art in Late Socialist Europe* (2018, Routledge). He co-edited the publication *Contemporary Romanian Art 2010-2020* (Hatje Cantz, 2020) and curated the Romanian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale.

**Psychoanalysis, Platonism and Neo-Platonism**, Hinduist, and Buddhist philosophies, as well as Yoga practices seem, at first glance, a disconcerting cultural compound of ideas. Nevertheless, some Romanian artists such as Constantin Flondor, Decebal Scriba, Ilie Pavel or Horia Bernea found such an eclectic mix of ideas and cultural imports to fit in their own thinking, with the view of redefining living in common during the late 1960s and the 1970s. The adaptation of such intellectual also intervene in rethinking the anthropocentric relation with nature during the 1970s, given that ties with the traditionalist rural Romanian society were severed by the forced industrialization exercised by the socialist political regime during the 1950s and the 1960s. I am interested in reviewing how the import of philosophical ideas fused with Orthodox religiosity Oriental spiritual practices, producing experimental artworks which questioned dogmatic Marxist descriptions of social reality. They also highlight an uncommon environmental consciousness that becomes of utmost importance given the current climate crisis.

## Ana Peraica

### Between National Upheavals and Drug Culture - On some New Photographs of Red Peristyle (Split, Yugoslavia, 1968)

**Dr. Ana Peraica** is the author of *The Age of Total Images* (Institute of Advanced Cultures, Amsterdam, 2019), *Fotografija kao Dokaz* (Multimedijalni institute, Zagreb, 2018), *Culture of the Selfie* (Institute of Advanced Cultures, Amsterdam, 2017). She is the author of chapters for anthologies and readers published by MIT Press, Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, encyclopedia entries for SAGE and publishes with journals as *Leonardo*, *Philosophy of Photography*, *Art Documentation*, *Lexia* and others. She holds a position of Visiting Professor at Danube University in Austria and was previously a Visiting Fellow at Central European University in Budapest.

**On the night of 10- 11 January 1968**, a group of young people, among whom some students at art school and experimental film makers, painted the main square of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's palace in Split in Croatia (then Yugoslavia) in red (Peraica 2004 and 2006). The next morning, they were hunted and prosecuted by socialist government, interpreting the event as a political provocation, following the national upheavals in socialist countries (in the framework of so called maspok 'Croatian Spring'; 1967-1971). Following the prosecution, a few of youngsters painting the square escaped abroad, one committed suicide, one sealed in silence and one become a drug dealer, the event was mythologized and as such entered art history and its institutions. Interpreting the event as artistic rather than cultural, this unique 1968 event was appropriated into a closed, high art circles, where it did not belong at the beginning.

A series of new visual documents, acquired with the 50th anniversary of the event which brought some of protagonists together, illustrates how the whole event was not thought as an art action, but rather a playful event of the generation. Besides, it establishes the consistency to their heavy experimentation with drugs (mainly; marijuana, LSD, and heroin) characteristic for the '68 generation in general. This presentation focuses on various heritages introduced by the group of youngsters which painted the Peristyle square red.

## **Samo Oleami**

### **Slovene Neo-avant-gardes 1964-75 - OHO and 442 / Pupilija Ferkeverk**

Samo Oleami (formerly Samo Gosarič) is a theatre critic at Ljubljana's Radio Student, a writer and an artist in the field of performing arts. Through studies, art projects and writings he has researched Slovene neo-avant-garde movements of the late 1960s – groups OHO (visual poetry, happenings, visual art, landart, conceptual art), Pupilija Ferkeverk (poetry, theatre, happenings) and the early era of Glej Experimental Theatre (devised theatre, influences of physical theatre, Grotowski, hippiedom / popular youth culture). He worked as dramaturge/assistant director of Janez Janša (ex- Emil Hrvatin) at two re-enactments of Slovene neo-avantgarde performances – Pupilija, papa Pupilo and the Pupilčke (original 1969, re-enactment 2006), Monument G (original 1972, re-enactment 2009). In the project Walk performance (2009) he did research, re-enactments and lecture performance of 1960s – 1970s public space actions from the area of Southeast and Eastern Europe. His study of theoretical texts by OHO also led to performance How to make a Reistic Performance (2010).

**After the Tito-Stalin split** in 1948 Yugoslavia ditched socialistic realism as the official artistic style and opened itself to modernism and, with it, to western credits. In Slovenia the Communist party started to remove itself from interfering into culture and arts in 1956 after the party didn't back one of its members in a public dispute against Josip Vidmar, a heavy-weight of cultural politics, who claimed art is in itself progressive and humanistic, and thus does not need additional ideology. After 1966 the thaw was complete and enabled new aesthetics to emerge from student neo-avantgarde groups - OHO and 442/Pupilija Ferkeverk - who drew from western influences of beat poetry, modernism, neo-dada, rock music, the hippy movement, existentialism, structuralism, visual poetry and developed their own approaches and practices, in particular land art, conceptual art, performance art and happenings, which were in tune with similar developments in the West. Their humorous provocations weren't aimed at the Communist Party, but at the conservative notions of high art represented by the same Josip Vidmar. In particular, the younger 442 group was connected to student movements which included feminism, sexual revolution, new age and creation of hippy communes. However, the brief thaw ended in 1972 when Yugoslav communist party ousted progressive head of Slovene government Stane Kavčič and the last remnants of neo-avantgardes were expunged by 1975.

## Agata Jakubowska

### Between Science of Desire and Free Love - Maria Pinińska-Bereś and Jana Želibská on female sexuality

**Agata Jakubowska** worked for many years at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. From July 2021 she is affiliated with Warsaw University where she realizes a project titled 'Globalising History of All-women Exhibitions'. Between 2019-2021 she led a research seminar 'Gender Politics and the Art of the Socialist European States' ([www.cah.amu.edu.pl](http://www.cah.amu.edu.pl)). She is the author of *On the Margins of the Mirror: The Female Body in Polish Women Artists' Works* (in Polish, 2004) and *Multiple Portrait of Alina Szapocznikow's Oeuvre* (in Polish, 2008); the editor of *Alina Szapocznikow. Awkward Objects* (2011) and *Zofia Kulik: Methodology, My Love* (2019); and the co-editor (with Katy Deepwell) of *All-Women Art Spaces in Europe in the Long 1970s* (2018). She is just completing a book *Art and Emancipation of Women in Socialist Europe. The Case of Maria Pinińska-Bereś*.