

Call for Papers

International conference
Prague, November 10–11, 2022

THE EXHIBITION AS MEDIUM IN THE BLOC



RESONANCES

This international conference is part of the RESONANCES project and reflects the spread of a new art-history discipline called “Exhibition Histories”, which is a field of academic research that has been in existence for several decades. Its title is partly inspired by the book NETWORKING THE BLOC: EXPERIMENTAL ART IN EASTERN EUROPE 1965–1981, in which Klara Kemp-Welch examines the relationships that existed between artists in Eastern Europe and focuses on certain places where these actors networked and clashed on common platforms. It also draws on the five-year research of the VVP Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, which focused on the history of exhibitions in Czech art from 1957 to 1999. The research was based on institutional and personal archives, magazines from that period and many other documents of these fleeting events. The findings are presented in the comprehensive publication by Pavlína Morganová – Terezie Nekvindová – Dagmar Svatošová, VÝSTAVA JAKO MÉDIUM. ČESKÉ UMĚNÍ 1957–1999 [The Exhibition as Medium. Czech Art 1957–1999], Academy of Fine Arts, Prague 2020.

When documenting the various types of activities in the sphere of visual culture and the connections between different art scenes in the Eastern bloc after 1945, it is necessary to start with the exhibitions and the variety of forms or formats they took. According to our recent project's perspective, exhibitions serve as sites of artistic contacts, as a field of transnational collaboration, and mirror the regional and the global political turns in society.

During the whole period of state socialism, an exhibition had been an instrument of propaganda, a means of promoting the political and cultural objectives of the ruling power. In more liberal periods, it was the vehicle for new creative approaches, even while serving to codify period interpretations of art history. However, throughout the whole second half of the 20th century it represented space for discussion amongst the art community. It did not really matter whether it took the form of an apartment exhibition, studio confrontation or gallery retrospective. Nevertheless, the exhibition remained above all a cultural tool for the communication of currently recognised artistic values.

THE CONFERENCE WILL ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING TOPICS

The Unofficial / Official – different forms of exhibitions in Eastern and Central Europe from the 1950s to 2000

Development of the conditions underpinning the realisation of exhibitions, i.e. the organisational principles, the functioning of the system of power relations, censorship, and other institutional levels impacting on exhibition presentations

Exhibitions Histories – how to deal with the English term for a new discipline in the writing of local art history

The theory and methodology of Exhibitions Histories East and West

How the new perspective re-evaluates the history of art in the region

INVITED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Klara Kemp-Welch (The Courtauld Institute of Art, London)

Cristian Nae (George Enescu National University of Arts, Iasi)

Lucy Steeds (Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh)

Gabriela Switek (University of Warsaw, Warsaw)

VVP AVU TEAM

Pavína Morganová

Lujza Kotočová

Dagmar Svatošová

Please send the abstract of your proposed contribution in English (max. 500 words) and your short CV to vvp@avu.cz by May 29, 2022.

The selected applicants will be notified by June 15, 2022.

The conference outcomes will be published in the special issue of the NOTEBOOK FOR ART, THEORY AND RELATED ZONES, reviewed journal published by VVP AVU.

The conference is part of the long-run research project, Resonances: Regional and Transregional Cultural Transfer in the Art of the 1970s realised in cooperation with Andrea Euringer Bátorová (Department of Art History of the Comenius University, Bratislava), Hana Buddeus (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Institute of Art History, Prague), Dávid Fehér, Zsófia Kókai, Emese Kürti, Zsuzsa László (Central European Research Institute for Art History (KEMKI) – Artpool Art Research Center, Budapest), and Magdalena Radomska (Piotr Piotrowski Center for Research on East-Central Europe at the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań).

The project is co-financed by the Governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.

