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NA OBÁLKE / ON THE COVER:

A. Levi: Prez verigi [Through Chains]. Sofia 1932 (Pozri s. 44, obr. 20 / See p. 44, fig. 20)

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The editorial board thanks Prof. Steven Mansbach, Prof. Victor A. Friedman and Dr. Janis Kreslins for guest-editing the I<sup>st</sup> section of this issue.

Redakcia ďakuje Prof. Stevenovi Mansbachovi, Prof. Victorovi A. Friedmanovi a Dr. Janisovi Kreslinsovi za zostavenie I. časti tohto čísla.

## New Histories and New Methods in Engaging the Eastern European Avant-Gardes. Introduction

Several years ago, a prominent Slavic linguist and an art historian gathered informally to discuss the shifting emphases characterizing their respective fields, their approaches and especially their objectives. Because the two share a liberal humanistic perspective on twentieth-century culture and an integrative and interdisciplinary view of *Mitteleuropa*, and the related geographies to the east and southeast, the exchange of ideas had a delimited focus. After a few more intellectual exchanges, it was decided that these informal academic musings might serve as an appropriate stimulus for a scholarly gathering devoted to a more comprehensive consideration of the methodologies (and historiography) that were being challenged by the social, cultural, and especially intellectual dynamics of the post-Soviet era. Moreover, by bringing together a rich roster of specialists on the visual arts, the literatures, and cultural histories of the ever-changing intellectual territories of Central and Eastern Europe, there arose the opportunity to examine anew the methodologies used by scholars and to promote a corrective to the hoariness of established practices and the narrowness of prevailing assumptions. Hence, Victor A. Friedman of the University of Chicago and Steven Mansbach of the University of Maryland – later to be joined by Janis Kreslins of the Kungliga biblioteket (National Library of Sweden) – collaborated on implementing an international conference devoted to investigating

“New Histories of Modern Art: The Eastern European Avant-Gardes”. This two-day symposium, held at the University of Chicago early in 2010,<sup>1</sup> engaged both the classical avant-gardes from the early twentieth century as well as those that ensued in the last decades of the past century and the first ten years of the new millennium.

In light of recent scholarship and based on a host of new critical methodologies that have newly invigorated the study of the modern and contemporary art from East-Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Europe, we thought it timely to reconsider both the classical avant-garde period and the subsequent “neo-avant-gardes” in tandem, rather than in isolation. Instead of rehearsing the scholarship from the 1970s through the 1990s, which had first seriously addressed the interwar (and prewar) period in “Eastern Europe”, we believed it important to question the historiographical assumptions (and the scholarship based on them) in light both of the “second” avant-gardes from the post-1989 era and of the emergent approaches of visual studies that have reconfigured the practice of art history in the museum and the university. Thus, we organized the conference to highlight new perspectives and to stimulate debate. Toward this objective, the program accommodated both a formal set of presentations and a lively discussion. The topics suggested and those invited to address them were intended to prompt new think-

<sup>1</sup> We would like to acknowledge the help of the following organizations at The University of Chicago that supported the conference, which served as the source and inspiration for the articles in this volume: The Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies (CEERES), The Franke Institute for the Humanities, The Center for International Studies

Norman Wait Harris Fund, The Department of Art History, The Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, The Smart Museum of Art, and The Renaissance Society. Finally, we wish to register our gratitude to Meredith Clason of the University of Chicago, and to Ján Bakoš, the editor-in-chief of *ARS*, for the invitation to guest-edit this issue of *ARS*.

ing and promote vibrant exchange rather than to shore up established positions or consolidate accepted views. Bringing together younger and senior scholars, museum and academic professionals from Europe and the United States to address the varied avant-gardes in and from “Eastern Europe” afforded a breadth of viewpoints and an exchange of perspectives that are already yielding “new histories of modern art”.

The conference itself was organized in two overarching thematic sessions. The first treated the general theme of “New States, New Realities, New Art” by looking at Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, the Western Balkans, and the Baltic States. It included a range of visual media – architecture and planning, painting, sculpture, photography, the graphic arts, “visual poetry”, and more. The second was devoted to “New Avant-Gardes, New Modernisms, New Arts?” and examined the “neo-avant-gardes” that emerged in the wake (or in anticipation) of the political events of ca. 1989 – 1991 in Southeastern Europe, Poland, and Russia. Many of these latter developments reprised, adapted, or rejected the styles, ideologies, and social implications of the earlier avant-garde movements that had defined the classical period of modernism in Central and Eastern Europe. But many more inflected the history of modern art in creative ways in order to engage pressing contemporary issues, investigate new applications and forms of aesthetic (or anti-aesthetic) expression, or otherwise to articulate new forms of critical discourse (mostly) visually.

The extraordinary range of papers delivered, topics covered, and ideas adumbrated cannot be easily summarized or practically reprised in the present issue of this Journal. However, what can be effectively and appropriately presented here are variations on those presentations that collectively opened up the greatest potential for a fundamental reconsideration of how we might examine, interpret, and ultimately differently (and more richly) comprehend the histories of modern and avant-garde visual expression. Toward this audacious objective, five diverse essays have been selected. Although each might function as a telling assessment of how a specific body of work might be approached, collectively the group can be read suggestively as an invitation to rethink avant-garde art itself as a practice, a historical tax-

onomy, or as a confounding category of communication. They challenge us to reflect on and reassess our understanding of the role, contributions, and methodological contradictions that engaging modernism and the avant-garde necessarily entail. Thus, the five areas selected for presentation here afford collectively a rich mix of media, methods, and materials: 1. film as a medium for representations of social and political changes, and how the moving image can be related to the stasis (literal and figural) of architecture; 2. the aesthetics of the invisible; 3. and 4. the nature and practice of seeing and reading, and their interplay within the liminality of geography and vision; and finally 5. how visibility allows us to negotiate that which is universal and that which must be comprehended as local and personal. A more specific précis follows.

Juliana Maxim, of the University of San Diego, treats communist architecture in Romania through examining its representation in post-communist cinema. Her focus on film necessarily recasts the perception of architectural representation. In particular, she investigates its categorical “spatiality” as it was reconfigured cinematographically. By examining Romania’s unique form of spatial representation through the film-makers’ lens, Maxim reveals the ways in which that nation’s communist architecture became the *dramatis persona* of a national trauma. Her novel filmic approach “*makes recourse to the experience of architecture to suggest some of the intangible and intractable aspects of life under and after communism*”.

Matthew Jesse Jackson, of the University of Chicago, addresses a singular determinant of visibility under Soviet communism through a different theoretic lens; namely, that of a “*distinctive and combative way of thinking about the relationship between the Seen and the Unseen in a modern[izing] society*”, or what the author juxtaposes as the inexorable modern impulse toward the duality of Sex and Death. Jackson focuses on the reasons why and the nature of the regime’s resistance to what the author characterizes as a pervasive twentieth-century erotic/thanatotic demiurge. With these emphases, Soviet communism’s aestheticized social aspirations can be revealed as channeling “*the pain and suffering of others in visually captivating forms*”. Thus, there is a telling parallel between the trauma of communist Romania’s architectural representation and that of Soviet Russia’s “*orchestrations of vicarious*

*pain*". Perhaps, the most essential things of (Eastern European) modern life can only be grasped through an inherent instability: between media, between histories, and between visual ineffabilities.

Victor A. Friedman and Janis Kreslins take on the essential question of reading versus seeing, especially as it applies to booklets designed and printed in historically liminal lands at the southeastern and northeastern edges of "Europe": Balkan Bulgaria and Macedonia and Baltic Latvia. Both articles treat "borders" in a number of senses: the demarcation between content seen and message read, between domestic and international systems of exchange, between cosmopolitan and provincial, between dialect and normative linguistic standards, and between historical retrospection and insistent contemporaneity. These contending valences were invigorated by a creative contestation between politics and poetics that first appeared early in the twentieth century but then resurfaced in a post-soviet present. In both historical epochs, as Kreslins suggests in his study of early twentieth-century publications from Riga, artists "*experimented with notions of ephemerality and... they used this artistic exploration in their search for new methodologies for historicizing culture and identity*". Friedman, inspired by Kreslins's study of the Baltic, turns a comparative gaze to the Balkans in his searching assessment of the innovatory strategies pursued in Bulgaria and Macedonia to engage the inner borders – historical, cultural, and psychological – that animated this geography of modernist aspiration and retrospective identity formation. For Bulgaria, in particular, the multiple sites of graphic innovation extended beyond the urban limits of the modern capital. The creative merger of reading and seeing, design and decipherment, that characterize most every progressive style employed for Bulgarian book covers (and somewhat later for Macedonian examples), was fostered in a host of provincial centers, which overcame their relative isolation through mod-

ernist design stratagems. Utilizing rare and seldom seen examples of Bulgarian and Macedonian book cover design, Friedman's contribution unites with Kreslins's to refocus our understanding of these frequently overlooked arenas of cultural invention and modernist modes of visual address.

The present cluster of articles, each engaging different cultural, historical, disciplinary, and especially methodological geographies, ends with an artist's statement, both textual and visual. Here, the contemporary Macedonian painter, Atanas Botev, demonstrates how history is necessarily reconfigured, reinterpreted, and ultimately confounded in order to unmask its multifarious contradictions. This is especially evident in Botev's negotiation between universal references and local inferences. Often, as the selected works reproduced here make clear, irony and paradox are ingeniously employed as aesthetic strategies through which the temporal and geographical location of the individual and his historical context can be both affirmed and transcended.

Collectively, the contributors to this volume – historians of art, of literature, of linguistics, and of architecture, as well as a practicing artist – recognize the insufficiencies of conventional methodological practices and their underlying assumptions. Acknowledging the tectonic shifts in academic practice and historical self-awareness prompted by post-Soviet and post-Yugoslav events, each scholar has rethought the nature, subjects, and objectives of the avant-garde, both the historical ones of the early twentieth century and their more recent iterations. Although economy prohibits a comprehensive representation of the papers delivered in Chicago, the present selection affords a rich introduction to some of the most imaginative thinking currently being focused on Eastern European modernism.

*Steven Mansbach – Victor A. Friedman – Janis Kreslins*

## Downcast Colossus. Communist Architecture in Romania's Post-Communist Cinema

Juliana MAXIM

Films and videos discussed in this article:

- *To vlemma tou Odyssea* (Ulysses' Gaze), 1995, dir. Theo Angelopoulos, Greece, France, Italy.
- *4 luni, 3 săptămâni și 2 zile* (4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days), 2007, dir. Cristian Mungiu, Romania.
- *A fost sau n-a fost?* (12:08 East of Bucharest), 2006, dir. Corneliu Porumboiu, Romania.
- *Poveste de la scara "C"* ("C" Block Story), 2003, short, dir. Cristian Nemescu, Romania.
- *Moartea domnului Lăzărescu* (The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu), 2005, dir. Cristi Puiu, Romania.
- *Un cartuș de Kent și un pachet de cafea* (Cigarettes and Coffee), 2004, dir. Cristi Puiu, Romania.
- *Bătuta lui Oprică* (Oprică's Dance), 2003, video, artist Irina Botea.
- *Amintiri din epoca de aur* (Tales from the Golden Age), 2009, dir. Hanno Hofer, Răzvan Mărculescu and others; writer Cristian Mungiu, Romania.

### The Colossus in Motion

Under a gray wintry light, on a vast expanse of water – both river and sea – a solitary barge carries its load. As the camera zooms in, we progressively understand the hulks of white rubble to be disassembled body parts of a recumbent giant Lenin. A man on the deck stands next to one of the giant's feet, in a strange intimacy with the broken body, and we follow the two men, one supine and colossal, the other erect and small, floating up the current, set loose on a journey without clear beginning or end, against the boundless horizon [Fig. 1].



1. Lenin on a barge. Still from *Ulysses' Gaze*, 1995, dir. Theo Angelopoulos. Photo: Archive of the author.

It is 1994, and we, the viewers, follow the scene from the Romanian shore of the Danube, where the mighty river merges with the Black Sea. As we get closer, we see that Lenin, although buoyant, is, like Gulliver, tied in ropes. On the shore, Lilliputian humans, black little silhouettes, run the see the broken figure, many making fervently the sign of the cross, its meaning uncertain: does the miracle consist in the leader having become a pile of rubble – his de-sacralization a holy event in itself? Or does the collapsed Lenin, with his index now pointed heavenwards, still bear his aura, and is his statue to be treated like the relic of a saint? Or is it, perhaps, the monument's improbable mobility that induces awe? The scene is, undoubtedly, haunting and otherworldly – the massive weight threading on water with barely a ripple, the whiteness of the stone against the mournful



leaden-blue Danube and the winter sky, the placidity of nature in the face of human upheaval.<sup>1</sup>

The clip, from Theo Angelopoulos' *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995), presents the colossus' demise as both tragic (head severed, feet snapped off the ground, body constricted with ropes) and liberating – the statue has been put in motion, and is drifting, released from its static monumentality by the currents of history. Its condition is highly ambiguous, because it carries both the traces of past domination and the sense of a new fantastic visual potential. This is communism's own Laocoon moment, when failure and tragic fate become manifest in a scene of breathtaking beauty.

More than two decades separate Romania from the violent overthrow of the communist regime in 1989. By now, an entire generation has come of age knowing about communism only indirectly. Given this distance, what shape has the memory of communism taken in Romania, and what narratives, written or visual, have developed around communism's legacy? In the last ten years, historians have begun timidly the systematic historical investigation of communism in Romania, but in this article, I look at how film directors and video artists, through the medium of the moving image, have proved surprisingly vital to the formation of a collective imaginary about the communist past. The films discussed here, I suggest, courageously confront the question, so often avoided in the overall culture, of how to represent a difficult or traumatic past, and explore how memory is articulated visually and specifically through the visual motif of the architecture built under communist rule.<sup>2</sup> As I will show, all these films



2. Balta Albă housing district, Bucharest, Romania. Repr: *Arhitectura*, 101, 1966, No. 4, p. 32.

directly or indirectly make recourse to the experience of architecture to suggest some of the most intangible and intractable aspects of life under and after communism. How is the totalitarian condition, elusive in its definition yet experienced everywhere, by everyone, and at all times, defined in these moving images, and what role does architecture fulfill?

When trying to pinpoint the specificity of everyday life under communist regimes, a certain spatiality is often invoked.<sup>3</sup> Arguably, the most important visual legacy of communism in Romania are the mass housing projects the regime commissioned during its half-century of existence. Between 1947 and 1989, tens of thousands of similar apartment blocks were efficiently but numbingly assembled in residential districts over vast swaths of urban territory. Nowhere is the persistency of totalitarianism more visible and intractable than in this architecture in which one can still feel the abstract authority of the state reiterated in each apartment, mirrored in each perspective

<sup>1</sup> In "The Past as Dustbin, or, the Phantoms of Socialist Realism", Régine Robin comments on the strange fate of communism's "monumental leftovers", the grandiose statues and monuments de-commissioned after 1989. She suggests that this particular statue is on its way to become part of a rich German's collection. Although I was not able to verify the claim, the idea of a public monument dissolving into a private – and gigantic – curio is particularly appealing for my argument. – ROBIN, R.: *The Past as Dustbin, or, the Phantoms of Socialist Realism*. In: LAHUSEN, T. – DOBRENKO, E. (eds.): *Socialist Realism without Shores*. Durham (NC) 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Giving a tangible form to the memory of communism constitutes an important recommendation of the imposing Final

Report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Communist Dictatorship in Romania. I argue here that the films do precisely that – they erect unexpected memorials to lives lived under communism. See *Comisia Prezidențială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România. Raport Final*. Bucharest: Office of the President, 2006. Published at [www.presidency.ro](http://www.presidency.ro).

<sup>3</sup> Crowley and Reid build a similar argument about the existence of "socialist spaces" in *Socialist Spaces*. Svetlana Boym's seminal book on everyday life under Soviet rule dedicates an important chapter to dwelling patterns and habits inside the socialist apartment. – CROWLEY, D. – REID, S.: *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*. London 2002.

[Fig. 2].<sup>4</sup> For the inhabitants of Romania's major cities, the visual remains of communism still frame daily existence: in Bucharest alone, 2 million people, or 70% of the city's population, live in housing estates built under communism.<sup>5</sup> Through the all too familiar, endlessly repeated residential districts, and the hundreds of thousands of identical apartments, communism maintains its grip over the landscape.

Although apartment buildings were rarely monumental in themselves, housing districts as a whole operated on a colossal scale, by subsuming all functions of life (residential, social, commercial, education, etc.) and by establishing for hundreds of thousands of people relatively similar living conditions. The register of the gigantic, captured so poignantly in Angelopoulos' film, is, I argue, central to a visual history of communism. It invokes particularly well not only the overwhelming physical presence of architecture, but also the experience of an unavoidable and total spatial condition, of a life lived at all times within the regime's shadow.<sup>6</sup>

Let me propose, then, the moving image of this junkyard-bound Lenin as the guiding analogy for the ways in which the legacy of communism was embodied in architectural form. The statue of the deposed leader as the stand-in for the social body is a well established trope, and so are attacks on the leader's effigy important rituals of political upheavals – from Stalin's head dragged through the streets of Budapest in 1956, to Saddam Hussein's statue toppled in Baghdad in 2003.<sup>7</sup> The films I discuss here, I argue, extend this analogy to the architectural remains of communism, which they approach as the abstract but equally colossal body of a totalitarian regime.

I trace here the many variations on the shattered Lenin that appear in them, the ways in which the architecture's monumental omnipresence is anthropomorphized, corroded, or outright attacked. Some of the works (such as Irina Botea's video installations and photographs about Ceaușescu's People's House in Bucharest) directly address the issue of gigantism; some others (such as "C" *Block Story*, parts of *Tales from the Golden Age*, or *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu*) weave their story line in and out of the interior spaces of communist housing estates; all of them rely on architecture to convey the inescapable texture of life during, or right after, communism.

The Romanian films approach communist architecture in the same way Angelopoulos captures the body of the deposed leader: by registering at once its tragic and colossal quality, and by reinvesting its static and oppressive monumentality with motion, shifts in scale, and ultimately, affect. This architecture, the films tacitly argue, produced not only a visual and physical environment, but also a social, and experiential one. Angelopoulos' floating Lenin stands therefore as an apt analogy of a defunct communist condition not only iconographically, but also, and perhaps more importantly, because the movie camera seems to have the ability to poetically recharge the visual legacy of a traumatic past (Lenin's statue and mass housing districts equally).

### The Garbage Chute as Anti-Monument

From the flurry of post-communist cinema produced in Romania (and often referred to as Romania's *nouvelle vague*), Cristian Mungiu's 4

<sup>4</sup> I understand totalitarianism here less as "total" domination and more as a domination that aims at the "totality" of society. For a succinct but very useful discussion of definitions of totalitarianism, see Anson Rabinbach's review of Richard Overly's *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia* (London 2004). – RABINBACH, A.: Moments of Totalitarianism. In: *History and Theory*, 45, 2006, No. 1, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> MARIN, V.: Politicile de locuire și planificare urbană. Ameliorarea locuirii colective în București. [PhD. Diss.] Bucharest 2010.

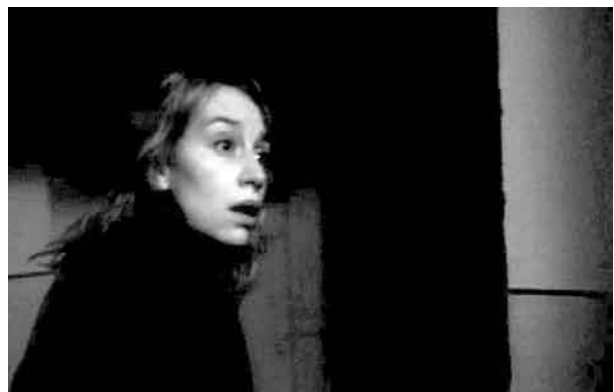
<sup>6</sup> Communist reports of construction data curiously mimic the tall tale in which narrative progresses through increasing

exaggeration. There is something strangely similar between Gargantua's feats (how many barrels of wine consumed in one meal) and the boasting of communist achievements (how many apartments erected in one year, etc.). See Susan Stewart's discussion of the giant in STEWART, S.: *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham (NC) 1993.

<sup>7</sup> For a photographic record of the violence to which Stalin's bronze body was subjected during the days of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, see Erich Lessing's photographic archive at [www.lessing-photo.com](http://www.lessing-photo.com) or LESSING, E.: *Revolution in Hungary. The 1956 Budapest Uprising*. London 2006. See also VERDERY, K.: *Political Lives of Dead Bodies*. New York 1999.

*Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days* (2007) is the film that has received the most attention in the West, winning the Golden Palm in Cannes.<sup>8</sup> Because of its clear-headed and jarring portrayal of abortion, the film has been discussed almost exclusively in terms of the economy of bodies under a repressive regime.<sup>9</sup> But the film's climax occurs when these bodies intersect with architecture, and more specifically, with a spatial device characteristic of collective living: the apartment block's garbage chute.

The film follows a young woman, Otilia, over the course of one day, as she helps her friend, Găbița, get an illegal abortion. The story is situated in the last years of Ceaușescu's regime, when such an action would have resulted in severe punishments, a risk Otilia is willing to take, as well as to make other sacrifices of her own. Otilia's day culminates in a sequence in which she frantically paces the city at night, looking for a place to safely dispose of the aborted and incriminating fetus. For ten long minutes, we accompany her terrified search through dark streets, until she eventually climbs the stairs of an apartment building and throws the fetus down a garbage chute [Fig. 3]. Her gruesome errand unfolds in pitch-black spaces, an obscurity even more significant since in the preceding sequence, the camera had forced us to stare for several long moments at the fetus as it lay discarded on a neon-lit bathroom floor. By contrast, when filming architecture, the camera surrenders visibility to sound, forcing us to rely on noises to follow Otilia's path and the fetus' grotesque burial: her panicked panting, dogs barking in the distance, muffled voices behind closed doors, the silence itself, and the final pathetic thump of the fetus bundled in towels, as it terminates its descent down the garbage chute.<sup>10</sup> The darkness is more than a realistic rendering of Bucharest in the late 1980s, when electricity, gas, or hot water (as well as most goods) were tightly rationed. The suspension of sight, I believe, signals enclosure, amplifies the sensation of being engulfed,



3. Otilia in search of a garbage chute. Still from *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days*, 2007, dir. Cristian Mungiu. Photo: Archive of the author.

and thus best reveals the register of the colossus, which is something too large to be apprehended by sight. The building, which Otilia picks at random, and which therefore can stand in for any and all housing blocks, is a container, a monstrous womb, which we can know only partially.<sup>11</sup>

Mungiu offers one of the most somber and literal representations of the architecture of communism as a gigantic organism that, like Saturn, ends up by devouring its own children. The fetus, Otilia, and the viewers alike are literally swallowed by the night, the dark city, and by the architecture that seals us all in as in a tomb. But as in many stories of giants, the relationship between engulfing/engulfed (or, in other words, of the boundaries between body and space) are subject to reversals. This is closely illustrated in the opening clip by Angelopoulos, in which Lenin's colossal body contains a clandestine passenger who travels hidden in its folds, while in turn being engulfed by the immensity of the water or in the metaphoric current of the historical events. In Mungiu's film, the architecture functions as a burial site, but is also used to express expulsion, as the fe-

<sup>8</sup> One of the most established figures of Romanian cinema, Lucian Pintilie, exuberantly endorses the idea of a *nouvelle vague*. See Pintilie's writings on [www.liternet.ro](http://www.liternet.ro).

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, URICARU, I.: The Corruption of Intimacy. In: *Film Quarterly*, 61, 2008, No. 4, pp. 12-17.

<sup>10</sup> Mungiu writes about the very deliberate effort that went into capturing the sound and following Otilia with the entire crew through dark spaces. – <http://www.4months3weeksand2days.com>.

<sup>11</sup> See Susan Stewart's discussion of the gigantic in STEWART 1993 (see in note 6).

tus is cast further and further out, outside Găbița's body, outside the visible, and ultimately outside the imaginable.

At the moment the garbage chute becomes the fetus' unmarked grave, the drama of repression plays itself out in the spatial configuration of communist mass housing. Efficient, collective, and homogenizing, the vertically stacked, serially built apartment tower organized its hundreds of inhabitants around the hollow axes of the staircase, of the elevator (which I will discuss below), and of the garbage chute – all of which become, in these films, the site where rational planning is at once triumphant, and subverted. Although hollow and anti-monumental, these spaces are nonetheless fraught with symbolism and act as condensers of spatial and social relations between the inhabitants and the ordering power of a repressive society. In *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days*, the common staircase and garbage chute illustrate poignantly a condition in which privacy is threatened or lost (through collective living, or state control over individual bodies); but also a condition in which the loss of privacy caused by the proximity of many others allows gestures to remain anonymous. The collectivization of everyday functions (the common green spaces, the roof terrace, the entry hall, the staircase, and ultimately the garbage chute), by being everybody's, turned out to belong to no one. The loss of identity is tragic, but also marginally protective.

In a totalitarian world, it is collective evacuation, the merged flow of detritus, that offered the unexpected possibility of a secret, un-investigated, fully anonymous act; garbage being that rare part of life without scrutiny and surveillance – but also, as a result, without possibility of recollection. For Mungiu, the consuming architectural colossus generated by communism requires not only the sacrifice of beings but also of their memories. The film closes on a long silence between the two young women, Otilia having requested that the abortion and the burial not be mentioned ever again. The apartment block, in this sense, is the perfect anti-monument, the architectural expression of the impossibility (and unwillingness) to commemorate, the place where events vanish from the storyline. The film reveals the garbage chute, the apartment building, and ultimately the city itself – for one is bound to wonder, how many Găbița and Otilia were there? – as unexpected

communist catacombs, not only for bodies, but also for memories. Unlike a tomb, which marks and commemorates, this architecture swallows without a trace. Inside its body, past experiences decompose like kitchen scraps.

### Architecture and Remembering

Having witnessed the ways in which communism compromised the preservation of memory, how is one, then, to remember communism? Memory and the mechanisms of its production, transformation, or obfuscation, so central to the colossal register, are at stake also in Corneliu Porumboiu's *12:08 East of Bucharest* (*A fost sau n-a fost?*) (2006). In Romanian, the film's title reads as *Was it, or was it not?* (*Did it occur or not?*), a variation on the existential “*to be or not to be*” that announces the director's preoccupation with the tenuousness of historical narratives. Much of the film is shot in a television studio, during a talk show in which guests and callers debate, and slowly and inadvertently debunk the very idea that in 1989, the inhabitants of this small town participated in the overthrow of the regime. As we listen to the widely dissenting accounts about what happened on that fateful December day of Ceaușescu's fall, what had been meant initially as a celebratory recounting of a revolution ultimately dissolves into a kaleidoscope of personal anecdotes, conflicting recollections, evocations, and regrets, leaving the viewer deeply ambivalent about the construction of memory.

Even in a film such as this, which is entirely about words, in which the action consists strictly of dialogues, and in which the camera is at times painfully static, the message about the relationship between past and present is nonetheless anchored in architecture. The talk show takes place in front of an enlarged photograph of the small town's city hall, an important architectural landmark of the modernization of provincial towns achieved in the 1960s and 1970s throughout communist Romania but also the site of the 1989 “revolutionary” events the film invites us to question [Fig 4].<sup>12</sup> As the photographic backdrop of the small TV studio, the building registers the uncertainties of history: should we read its

<sup>12</sup> The building is the Town Hall of Vaslui, 1968, architect Ion Vericeanu.

architecture as a marker of communism or of communism overthrown? Of civic pride or civic shame? Or is the building, perhaps, a neutral background, available for endless appropriations, easily becoming the décor for an impromptu salsa performance [Fig. 5]? The semantic flexibility of the architecture, its impassible ability to stand as visual symbol of, in turn, communism, anti-communism, and, ultimately, capitalist globalization, is ambiguously liberating in the film, and corrosive of the possibility of a single master narrative.

In the film's closing minutes, we witness the lights going out in the now silent studio. Cut to the city outside: it is dusk, snow is falling, and instead of the poster of the civic center, the static camera records with equal insistence the snow falling against the façade of a crumbling housing bloc [Fig. 6]. As the dialogue has slowly undermined any possibility of a mythical memory, our assessment of architecture changes from a space saturated with official meaning to one that seems empty of any at all. History has become a confused web of stories, and architecture, unmoored from any single historical or political association, has returned to the natural cycle of days and nights and weather conditions – very much like Lenin's colossal statue has lost any trace of its original context and returned like all ruins to the elements, the sky and the water. In this long, sustained closing shot, we are reminded that in a disenchanted world, even the most dejected architectural remains still hold the possibility of experience, such as the intimate wonder of fresh snow.

Cristian Nemescu's short *"C" Block Story* (2003) casts communist architecture in an even more redemptive light. The film is about two intertwined love stories, both triggered and fulfilled by the forced proximity of everyday life in mass housing blocs, and the ability to hear voices without seeing the interlocutor – the ultimate condition of close habitation and thin walls.

By mixing communist spatial practices and cultural practices that appeared with the post-1989 transition to capitalism, such as phone sex, the scenario re-casts the anonymity of the housing block into intimacy. The sweeping motions of the camera reveal the serialized, monotonous and drab spaces of mass housing as brim-full with passion, desires, fantasies, whispers, glances, their density tantalizing rather



4. Inside the television studio. In the background, an example of Romania's civic architecture built under communism. Still from *12:08 East of Bucharest*, 2006, dir. Corneliu Porumboiu. Photo: Archive of the author.



5. Inside the television studio: a salsa performance. Still from *12:08 East of Bucharest*, 2006, dir. Corneliu Porumboiu. Photo: Archive of the author.



6. Snow. Still from *12:08 East of Bucharest*, 2006, dir. Corneliu Porumboiu. Photo: Archive of the author.

than constrictive. The film is best understood as a project for eroticizing the blankness and monotony



7. *The Communist elevator. Still from "C" Block Story, 2003, dir. Cristian Nemescu. Photo: Archive of the author.*

of serial buildings, assisted by a very active camera that provides close-ups and unexpected angles, from above, from below, grazing the walls, clearly counteracting the predictability of architecture. The movie constantly juxtaposes the dull and the lively, the forbidding concrete surfaces with smooth warm skin, the inanimate architecture with the pulsating life it contains. Nemescu (who died just two years after this film) actively seeks to disclose the surprising currents of passion that traverse the dismal spaces and to reverse the ordinariness of roles. The mother, for instance, whom the viewer sees initially as predictable and grey in her everyday rhythms of work and household chores, and awkward in her efforts to reach out to her moody teenage son, turns out to hold not a banal secretarial job, as the viewer all too easily presumes but instead, and unknowingly to her family, that of a phone erotic performer.

"C" *Block Story* provides a direct counterpoint to the sinister garbage chute in *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days* by giving the elevator central role. In Nemescu's short film, surprising encounters happen, and inhabitants connect on the vertical, mobile axis of the apartment bloc, not only the stairs, but also, and principally, in the elevator: cramped, overlaid with graffiti, poorly lit, the ultimate device of entrapment, it is presented here instead as an intimate, protected space, a room of fantasies and embraces. It is not any kind of elevator, but only the one of the communist mass housing bloc – technologically primitive, small, and chronically stuck between floors – that allows

couples to find each other, slowly weave secret desires, and ultimately fulfill them [Fig. 7].

### The Question of Realism

With Nemescu, we are clearly in the realm of the phantasmatic, but the fictional register (things imagined, things dreamed, things too intimate to put in the open) is nonetheless firmly anchored in very real, and very specific spatial conditions, which the camera documents attentively. In all the films discussed here, the meaning of communist sites is re-written through the inhabitants' personal experiences, from the traumatic to the amorous. However, it is less this act of re-imagining spaces, and much more the raw, unvarnished quality of both the scenarios and the cinematography that has attracted most of the viewers and critics' attention and commentary.<sup>13</sup> The hand-held cameras, the shabby clothes, the grey tonalities, the overall sobriety of production are recurrent features that amount almost to a genre.

One is bound, however, to reflect on the particular implications of a realist approach in a post-communist context. In fact, I would like to suggest that the meticulous truthfulness, the earnest and un-staged quality of these films amounts to a critical aesthetic position in a country where trust in images has been compromised by their systematic ideological manipulation throughout communist history. One of Mungiu's *Tales from the Golden Age* takes up precisely the kind of political control exerted over images. The film retraces with mild irony the ways in which photographs – in this case, a representation of Ceaușescu and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing side by side – were subjected to numerous corrections and layers of official approvals. The story concerns a minor correction brought to Ceaușescu's hat, a "correction" that exposes the systematic falsification of the visual under communism, when even photographs – commonly held as the most objective and realistic medium – were not to be trusted as true. If the insidious hand of ideology had corrupted all images in the past, then the insistence on a certain kind of realism in these recent films functions,

<sup>13</sup> "Gripping realism", one reads about *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days* on [www.cineuropa.org](http://www.cineuropa.org) (May 17, 2007); "Raw realism" ("realism crud") writes Călin Stănculescu about *The Death of*

*Mr. Lăzărescu* in the daily newspaper *România Liberă* (June 2005) – to quote just a few examples of a recurring motif.

perhaps, as a necessary remedy to the generalized distrust toward representation.

Even a cursory comparison between *Ulysses' Gaze* and these Romanian films illustrates well the particular tone one finds throughout the latter. Like the Romanian films, the Greek one also offers a sustained reflection on the communist past and the shadows it casts over the present, but, as it becomes apparent in the clip in which Lenin slides away on the Danube, Angelopoulos' manner and narrative are broad, mournful, and epic. By contrast, the Romanian films use the language of the quotidian, and emphasize the banality in which totalitarianism came wrapped. As in Angelopoulos, there are also plenty of long travelling shots. In Porumboiu's *12:08 East of Bucharest*, for instance, we follow the protagonist not through a mythic journey, but through potholed streets with a Christmas tree precariously tied on the top of his battered car [Fig. 8]. In *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days*, the camera follows Otilia not through awe-inspiring landscapes, but, for instance, through a poorly-lit and decrepit dorm; in her journey, she intersects not national borders and historic figures, but two shabby street dogs. "Suntem niște nenorociți de oameni, domnule?" ("We are but poor wretches, sir!") says a bitter Mr. Lăzărescu in *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu*. In these films, the Romanian directors tacitly argue that the gritty, unmemorable texture of the characters' lives brings us closer to the experience of communism than grand historical perspectives, and that truth is to be found in the everyday and its oddities.

Therefore, I believe small budgets were not the only, and not even the main motivation behind the minimalism and cinéma-vérité quality of these films. Ways to make do with little, of adapting to scarcity and difficulties, not only shape their cinematography but also constitute their main story, told over and over again, in a thousand guises. These films are all about minor strategies of survival, moments when individual circumstances and sweeping state ideology tangle with each other, and when ordinariness comes in contact with the transcendence of the colossus.

### The Everyday, or the Colossus' Defeat

By approaching totalitarianism not in abstract political terms, but through an investigation of the rituals of everyday life, the films fall in the wake



8. Through the streets of the town of Vaslui. Still from *12:08 East of Bucharest*, 2006, dir. Corneliu Porumboiu. Photo: Archive of the author.

of a literary genre that tackles ponderous themes through eyes of an ordinary person, one used so potently and paradigmatically, for instance, by Solzhenitsyn in *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. In many ways, Otilia in *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days*, or Mr. Lăzărescu in *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu*, are versions of Ivan Denisovich, and so are the three main characters in *12:08 East of Bucharest*. The communist city is, in milder terms, their gulag, and we follow them through the arc of one day, as the authoritarian regime or its aftermath affects every one of their actions and lodges in every fold of their thoughts. Like in Solzhenitsyn, the films reveal the overwhelming, even despotic hold that minor needs exert on those living under communism, and the enormous amount of energy one had to devote to their fulfillment. It is not outright hunger or cold that grind down the characters, but the constant concern for finding provisions, preserving them for the winter, staying attuned to when the next batch of hot water will be delivered to the apartment building and making the most of it, money worries, the complex art of bribing, and a thousand other small tasks that control their days as tightly as in a forced labor camp. Cristi Puiu, both in *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu* and in *Cigarettes and Coffee*, is the master narrator of the endless vexations and indignities one had to endure, in the late years of Romanian communism, in every practical pursuit. In all these films, we are peering at the colossus from very close, taking in the dust, the irregularities of its surface, the hidden joints, rather than the grandeur of the silhouette.



9. Boris Ignatovich: *Hermitage, Leningrad*, 1929, photograph. Illustrated on the cover page of *BOYM* 1994 (see in note 14).



10. Irina Botea: *Bătuta lui Oprică (Oprică's Dance)*, 2003, still from video animation. Photo: Reproduced with permission of the artist.

Also as in Solzhenitsyn, the films reveal not only the “art of *minor compromise and resistance*” required to survive political repression and precarious material conditions, but also the possible redemptive moments such an experience may yield.<sup>14</sup> The characters’ concern for goods and comforts, for instance, is of a very different nature from the western consumer culture that was expanding in earnest during the same period. Although similarly centered on material life, life under communism is characterized in these films by resourcefulness and economy rather than prodigality and excess. This is well illustrated, for instance, in the “Tale of the Air Sellers” (one of the *Tales from the Golden Age*), in which two young people – a communist version of Bonny and Clyde – convince unsuspecting mass housing residents to give them “air samples” in empty glass bottles that, once redeemed at the recycling center, would afford them enough money for a vacation, or, who knows, even a new car. The story of the young couple’s successful and wildly imaginative attempt to make something out of literally nothing, takes the viewers

far away from representations of communism as grey and monotonous: if there ever could be a poetry of scarcity and make-do, this is it. Similarly, films such as *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days*, *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu*, *12:08 East of Bucharest*, or “*C*” *Block Story* show how difficult everyday conditions led not to the individualism and anomie that afflict capitalist societies, but to potentially deepened human relationships, and to bonds that sustained in face of adversity.

### Dwarfing the Colossus

The series of videos and installations produced by the young Romanian artist Irina Botea under the title *Casa Poporului* (People’s House) offer one last contribution to the larger project of transcribing communism’s colossal architectural presence onto the banality of everyday life. Botea’s tactic for confronting, and perhaps defeating, communism’s grip is to miniaturize its most representative – and colossal – architecture, Ceaușescu’s monstrously vast People’s House, which, at 3.5 million square feet,

<sup>14</sup> Another important book that comes to mind is Svetlana Boym’s *Common Places*, in which the author explicitly proposes ordinary life as crucial material for understanding communism, thus initiating an entire sub-field of Soviet studies. Serendipitously, Boym’s book cover shows another colossus, one of the two Atlases that flank the entrance to the Hermitage in St. Petersburg [Fig. 9]. Taken by the Soviet avant-garde member Boris Ignatovich (1899 – 1976) in 1929, the photograph, through play with perspective, dramatically

accentuates the difference in scale between the Atlas’ giant left foot and the minuscule silhouettes of the passers-by. The image signals the existence of two realms, that of the small and everyday, and that of the monumental. Boym does not discuss the photo in her book; I am, however, interested in precisely the friction between these two realms. See BOYM, S.: *Common Places. Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge (MA) 1995.





11. Irina Botea: *Casa Poporului (People's House)*, 2003, digital print. Photo: Reproduced with permission of the artist.



12. Irina Botea: *Casa Poporului (People's House)*, 2003, digital print. Photo: Reproduced with permission of the artist.

stands still today as the second largest government building in the world. In the Romanian psyche, the People's House holds a particularly traumatic place, as its gigantic silhouette rose, throughout the 1980s, from the brutal demolitions of Bucharest's historical core. In the short video animation *Bătuta lui Oprică* (Oprică's Dance), Botea forces a much diminished cardboard version of the building to join other partners in kitsch (lawn dwarfs, bunnies, Snow White, ladybugs – all antidotes to the seriousness of the colossal), in a lively dance [Fig 10].

The video subverts the building's symbolic and physical heft on many levels; certainly, by vertiginously diminishing its size, the palace is made inoffensive, trivialized into an innocuously decorative knick-knack, easily dismissed or damaged, rather than mighty and oppressive. Displayed as a miniature among others, the video turns an object of traumatic memory into a gift-shop souvenir, and, as a result, denounces the communist monument's origin in petit-bourgeois subjectivity. The video also shifts the register from the official, classicizing language of the People's House architecture to an irreverent vernacular, signified both in the Gypsy music and the lowbrow garden ornaments. The miniature, placed between toys, defuses the mythical into the humorous.

Other reversals are at play; the chronic state of incompleteness of the People's House, which, like yet another a grotesque hungry body, kept growing and engulfing labor and materials for almost a decade,



13. Irina Botea: *Casa Poporului (People's House)*, 2003, digital print. Photo: Reproduced with permission of the artist.

is here reduced into the finite, rapidly made, flimsy cardboard construction; a photo of Irina Botea holding the paper palace in her hand inverses the original relation of power and vulnerability, and transposes the collective monument into the realm of the private [Fig. 11]. Finally, a series of photographs stage the cardboard reproduction of the People's House in a variety of settings, and, like Angelopoulos' Lenin, allow the colossus to become mobile, floating, vagabonding [Figs. 12, 13].

### Ambiguous Cinema

In this article, I've been taking up the possibility that these films constitute a cultural manifestation

with a unified character: put together, I argue, they offer a loosely formulated manifesto for the poetic recuperation of communism's most potent relic, its architecture. In cautiously celebrating these films' ability to open communist architecture and the past it represents to the possibility of new readings, I am revisiting an old and familiar argument about the potential of film to expose historical truths that otherwise would remain hidden, or unexamined.<sup>15</sup> The movie camera, these films suggest, can transform our perception of this architecture from site of mournful monotony and submission to site of affect and the imaginary, and present its inhabitants as more than subjects in the sense of those submitted to subjugation, and instead as beholders of a full range of experiences, from the traumatic to the exhilarating.

Equally important to the reinterpretation of communist architecture is the films' systematic recourse to an everyday reality scrubbed free of the mythical and the staged. The register of the banal, the insistence on the small ways in which the extraordinary condition of life under communism becomes manifest in the ordinary, successfully challenge any single rigid political narrative in favor of a multitude of personal ones. The films subvert the transcendence of the ideological with the same verve with which they integrate feeling and experience in their formulation of a history of communism.

But the stubbornly apolitical realism of these films, while in many ways liberating, risks leaving the viewer with a view of communism drained of all agency, and sidesteps any possibility of historical analysis and judgment.

In these films, communism appears as a generalized, chronic condition, something one is born under, or within, like an atmosphere that colors everything. Because the agents of this subjugation

are never seen, or remain very abstract, political power is pervasive and unexplained, even inexplicable. As a result, nobody seems responsible of the unfolding of historical circumstances and events – or, when apparatchiks make their appearance (as, for instance, in *Tales from the Golden Age*), they are ineffectual, incompetent, and darkly comical, themselves victims of an absurd system. And because the mechanisms of power and repression remain unarticulated and unspecified, the only response possible seems to be secret and often minor compromises for survival rather than open confrontation or acts of dissent. As one of Porumboiu's talk-show participants humbly concedes: "*We each do the revolution we can.*"

Unlike Solzhenitsyn's writings, written from a political position of resistance, these films were produced after communism's defeat, once history had dismantled the colossus, tied it down in ropes, and sent it down the Danube. And therefore, while in Solzhenitsyn's novel, the insistence on the minutiae of the everyday challenged the mythical language of totalitarian power, the similar narrative stance applied in these films only softens the way in which we remember communism, resulting at times in a strangely forgiving view of what were, after all, years of harsh dictatorship. While none of the films succumb to a naively-colored image of the past, subtle currents of nostalgia run nonetheless below the surface: under communism, one experienced deprivation, but a certain innocence allowed people to believe that pollution could be trapped in bottles. In the communist past, one would sacrifice for the sake of friendship, and forced physical proximity could become real intimacy. In these films, life under communism was brutal and absurd and sad, but also, perhaps, more authentic.

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<sup>15</sup> I refer here, primarily, to Walter Benjamin's eulogy of film in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936).

## Zvrhnutý kolos. Komunistická architektúra v rumunskom postkomunistickom filme

### Resumé

Štúdia sa zaoberá sériou filmov a videí, ktoré konfrontujú a prehodnocujú odkaz komunistickej architektúry v postkomunistickom svete. Analyzuje videá a fotografie rumunskej umelkyne Iriny Botey z roku 2003, spracúvajúce motív Ceaușescovho gigantického Domu ľudu v Bukurešti, a aktuálne rumunské filmy, ktorých príbehy sa odvíjajú na pozadí architektúr komunistických sídlisk, napr. *A fost sau n-a fost?* (12:08 na východ od Bukurešti) z roku 2006 – režisér Corneliu Porumboiu; *4 luni, 3 săptămâni și 2 zile* (4 mesiace, 3 týždne a 2 dni) z roku 2007 – režisér Cristian Mungiu či *Poveste de la scara „C”* (Príbeh z bloku „C“) z roku 2003 – režisér Cristian Nemescu.

Pravdepodobne najvýznamnejším vizuálnym dedičstvom komunizmu v Rumunsku sú objekty hromadnej bytovej výstavby – programovo budované počas polstoročného trvania režimu po celej krajine v podobe rozsiahlych obytných štvrtí. Skutočnosť, že z postupne do zabudnutia odchádzajúceho obdobia komunizmu pretrváva práve moderná architektúra, upozorňuje na osobitosti tohto dedičstva: 1. na kolosálnu mierku (tak vo vzťahu k početnosti – milióny bytov, ako aj veľkosti – monštruózný Dom ľudu v Bukurešti); 2. na trvalosť (tieto stavby raz a navždy zmenili charakter krajiny a dodnes poskytujú strechu nad hlavou väčšine rumunskej populácie).

Akým spôsobom bolo toto všadeprítomné a trvalé architektonické dedičstvo po páde komunistického režimu naplnené novým obsahom? Ako sa zbavilo toho starého? Ako je táto architektúra vnímaná dnes, dvadsať rokov po páde režimu? Ako má človek spomínať na komunizmus?

Vyššie spomenutí umelci a filmoví režiséri prepisujú postkomunistickú skúsenosť zahrnujúcu konfrontáciu s výraznou architektonickou prítomnosťou traumatickej minulosti. Pozornosť je preto smerovaná na skúmanie súboru stratégií, ktoré jednotliví autori využívajú na rekódovanie pretrvávajúcich stôp totality, formujúcich rumunskú krajinu, a najmä na opakujúcu sa metaforu architektúry ako gigantického tela.

Záver štúdie sa snaží dokázať, že analyzované filmy a videá predstavujú ako celok jeden z najtriezvejších prístupov k dedičstvu komunizmu v súčasnom Rumunsku a tiež jediný systematický pokus vyrovnáť sa s pretrvávajúcimi monumentálnymi stopami podrobenia si rumunskej krajiny. Tým, že vytrhávajú predmetné architektúry zo sféry, kde sú vnímané len ako miesta jednotvárnosti a rezignácie, do sféry, kde sa stávajú priestorom pre imagináciu, podieľajú sa tieto filmy a videá na formovaní pamäte, ktorá nevníma komunizmus ako jednoznačne negatívny, no pritom neprepadá do mytologizujúcej oslavnosti.

*Preklad z angličtiny M. Hrdina*

## Vision and Communism

Matthew Jesse JACKSON

It might be argued that the forces of Sex and Death defined the character of twentieth-century culture. What is more, *Sex/Death* gathered strength as sequential technological and political revolutions rendered the public's relationship to the visual ever more expansive and all-encompassing. This essentially capitalist visuality involved not only a proliferation of sublime and spectacular effects, but also an invasive colonization of the intimate – making readily available to a multitude of eyes that which one assumes *should* remain difficult for anyone to see: the private, the pornographic, the vindictive, the deceptive, and a nearly infinite cavalcade of real and simulated violent death.<sup>1</sup> Within this burgeoning atmosphere of intense visual intimacy and pervasive representational violence, the Soviet Bloc's "Communist" societies nurtured what turned out to be the twentieth century's most sustained *dissident public visual culture*, one grounded in austere notions of civic propriety and intellectual self-discipline.<sup>2</sup>

Such observations are not new. As early as the 1950s, the sociologist and Surrealist Roger Caillois wondered if the Soviet Union was not "*depriving itself of a generous and irreplaceable source*" of energy due to its self-censoring organization of public life.<sup>3</sup> From *this* point of view, the puritanical and pedagogical orientation of the U.S.S.R.'s social realm, manifested in

its devotion to encyclopedias, museums, nineteenth-century novels, and popular science, as well as its outward, official dedication to an atheistic, rational, science-friendly humanity, precluded its adaptation to what might be called, in the philosopher Jacques Rancière's terms, *the twentieth-century's prevailing image regime*.<sup>4</sup>

Photographs display public responses to appearances by Adolf Hitler [Fig. 1] and the Beatles, a juxtaposition that serves as a kind of psychological shorthand for atmospheres that cultivate scenes of ecstatic visuality. In comparative historical context, then, one might say that the *image regimes* of Nazi Germany and postwar Euro-American capitalism both mastered *Sex/Death's* experiential challenge in oddly analogous ways. One need only recall the words of glam rock's original sexual icon, Roxy Music's Bryan Ferry, who once said: "*My God, the Nazis knew how to put themselves in the limelight and present themselves... the mass parades and the flags – just amazing. Really beautiful.*"<sup>5</sup> I would add that it is hard to imagine Ferry saying anything similar about self-presentation in the Soviet Union, a place where ecstasy and vision rarely kept company.

To say that aggressively sexual and deathly motifs dominated the Nazi imagination is now a common-

<sup>1</sup> For a recent, popular, and provocative take on such phenomena, see Jaron Lanier's discussion of the "*ideology of violation*" that dominates the "*online world*" in LANIER, J.: *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto*. New York 2010.

<sup>2</sup> I will employ the terms "Communist" and "Communism" without further defining them; although, in general, I have in mind the lifestyles of the postwar Soviet Union. For a compelling articulation of this orientation toward propriety and

self-discipline, see the Soviet Marxist critic Mikhail Lifshits' essays collected in LIFSHITS, M.: *Pochemu ja ne modernist?* [Why Am I Not a Modernist?] Moscow 2009.

<sup>3</sup> CAILLOIS, R.: *Man, Play and Games*. Urbana – Chicago 2001, pp. 158-159.

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion of "*régimes d'imagéité*" in RANCIÈRE, J.: *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. London 2004.



1. Sudeten Women Greeting Hitler, ca. 1938, black-and-white photograph.

place – consider Roberto Bolaño’s description of fictive “Fourth Reich” author Segundo José Heredia whose favored subjects are “rape, sexual and workplace sadism, incest, impaling, and human sacrifice”.<sup>6</sup> Yet what Bolaño’s portraits of post-Nazi fascist culture in the Americas ultimately demonstrate is not so much the truth of this commonplace, but rather just how hauntingly consonant our own contemporary sensibilities are with this Nazified imagination. That is, it should not surprise us that that the world’s largest corporation by revenue, Wal-Mart, recently unveiled a T-shirt line emblazoned with the death’s head symbol of the Waffen-SS. My point here is not that Wal-Mart sympathizes with Nazism, or that a single consumer item can tell us much about a society’s values, but that it is peculiar, to say the least, that the world’s largest clothing store could so readily distribute the violent symbology of one of the twentieth century’s most murderous institutions (by the way, Wal-Mart removed the T-shirts and apologized).<sup>7</sup> And it hardly needs to be mentioned that such a product would never have reached store shelves in the U.S.S.R., due in equal parts to economic scarcity and visual propriety.

<sup>6</sup> Bryan Ferry, as quoted in German: “[D]ie Art und Weise, wie sich die Nazis inszeniert und präsentiert haben, meine Herren! Ich spreche von den Filmen von Leni Riefenstahl und den Gebäuden von Albert Speer und den Massenaufmärschen und den Flaggen – einfach fantastisch. Wirklich schön.” – *Welt am Sonntag*, 3 March 2007.

<sup>6</sup> BOLAÑO, R.: *Nazi Literature in the Americas*. New York 2008, p. 114.



2. Viktor Koretsky: *Equal Rights!!!*, 1960s, original maquette. Photo: Ne boltai. A Collection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Propaganda.

In other words, around the same time that Video Killed the Radio Star, *Sex/Death* overran the U.S.S.R. In the aftermath, the Communist belief that all public visibility should contribute to the betterment of humanity seemed not only naïve, but destructive, even incompatible with creativity itself. And here, I think, we get to the heart of vision and Communism: throughout the twentieth century, Soviet artists

<sup>7</sup> “We are deeply sorry that this happened, and we are in the process of pulling all of these T-shirts from our stores,” said Wal-Mart spokesperson David Tovar. He continued: “Respect for the individual is a core value of our company and we would never have placed this T-shirt on our shelves had we known the origin and significance of this emblem.” – [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15702868/ns/business-us\\_business/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15702868/ns/business-us_business/), accessed 1 January 2011.



3. Viktor Koretsky: *CLA Affairs*, 1960s, original maquette. Photo: Ne boltai. *A Collection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Propaganda*.

– whether committed Socialist Realists or maverick avant-gardists – wrestled with an encroaching technological environment saturated with this proliferating network of Death and Sex.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike Guy Debord’s *Spectacle* or Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno’s *Kulturindustrie, Sex/Death* does not represent a culminating achievement of capitalist modernity; more akin to modernization’s emotive detritus, it functions primarily as a psychic harbinger, a rising cloud on the horizon that alerts locals to the imminent arrival of capitalist economic relations. In fact, the Cold War could perhaps be reinterpreted as, among many other things, a violent worldwide struggle between two competing imprecations: Capitalism’s “Just Look!” and Communism’s “Don’t Believe Your Eyes!” My argument, then, is simple: In some important way, Communism has been about seeing things, or not seeing them, and through it all, Communism has always been on the side of *The Unseen*: the subvisual, the infrastructural, the barely visible, that which resists being paraphrased in any already agreed-upon terms. Not simply another manifestation of the iconoclastic temperament that ranges through world history from the iconoclasm of Byzantium to Bamiyan, Communism rebelled against

the idea that our modern lives would be lived in the thrall of the visual, in subjugation to *The Seen*.

On this score, consider Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’ inaugural description of Communism: a ghost haunting Europe, a visible entity with no visible form. Recall also that Communism erupted into (and faded from) human consciousness in an era bounded by the introduction of the photographic negative in 1840 and the first Web browser in 1991, dates that track uncannily with the appearance of Marx’s first writings and the fall of the Soviet Union. In other words, perhaps we could say that at least in a broadly psychoanalytic sense, Communism embodied not only an economic worldview or stance of political commitment, but also a militant response to modernity’s increasingly frivolous and all-consuming visuality.

In its many guises, Communism entailed a distinctive and combative way of thinking about the relationship between the Seen and the Unseen in a modern society. In the United States and much of the West, we have generally understood vision and

<sup>8</sup> The post-Soviet transition to *Sex/Death* is treated in depth in BORENSTEIN, E.: *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Ithaca – London 2008.

Communism within the vocabularies of freedom and expression: Communism grotesquely violated the individual's freedoms by seeking to control one's means of expression and the access to information; however, there are several other sides to this familiar story.

In retrospect, many of the visual experiments of the pre-Second World War and post-war Soviet avant-gardes could be reinterpreted as efforts to come to terms with the same challenge that Socialist Realism confronted: How does one resist the advance of the erotic/thanatotic energies that pulsed across the twentieth century? In this case, Soviet Socialist Realism did not "fail" due to its lack of truthfulness, or because of its overly tendentious obviousness – after all, Pop art became a global phenomenon *due* to its untruthfulness and its overly tendentious obviousness. Most probably, Socialist Realism's downfall had little to do with truth or propaganda, and everything to do with *Sex/Death*, as the celebrities and disasters strewn through Andy Warhol's early canvases make clear: Socialist Realism's palpable estrangement from this intoxicating circuitry rendered its productions preternaturally obsolete.

Not unlike Socialist Realism, "modern art created under Communism", or more simply, "Communist modern art", wanted to find a way of being in the world that resisted subservience to the representation of the already visible, the already known, in favor of *something else* – the Secular Unseen, if you will. Concentrating on the sub-imagistic *madness* (sdelannost') of things, works such as Aleksandr Rodchenko's *Oval Hanging Construction Number 12* (1920) explore a mental space where plans, designs, platforms, structures, templates, and all manner of operational and procedural activities take precedence over the incarnating capacities of mimesis. Appropriately, the filmic, erotic, irrational, sensual side of modern art, essentially what might be regarded as the legacies of Marcel Duchamp, Dada, and Surrealism, hardly ever took root in the U.S.S.R.<sup>9</sup> Even the most cosmopolitan, unconventional dissident

art of the Soviet sixties and seventies abstains from the transmedial, corporeal gestures that appear so often within contemporaneous art movements such as Viennese Actionism or Fluxus.

A typically "Communist" work in this respect is the conceptual art group Collective Actions' *To G. Kizevalter (Slogan – 1980)*, a performance piece that occurred when Collective Actions' Georgy Kizevalter raised a cloth banner by himself in the countryside of Yakutia in the spring of 1980. "Performed" by Kizevalter after he received a package from Andrei Monastyrsky, another group member, containing the cloth object and instructions; the action unfolded in a snow-covered field next to a thick outcropping of Siberian forest. Here Kizevalter rigged the banner (still obscured by black cloth) between two trees, and, as per the enclosed instructions, he then retreated, dragging two attached cords with him. Next, after reaching the designated distance, Kizevalter pulled the cords. They unveiled a visible yet illegible slogan. Kizevalter photographed his handiwork and then left, never knowing that the distant inscription stated: "IN THE SPRING, ON THE EDGE OF A FIELD, BETWEEN TREES, G. KIZEVALTER HUNG A WHITE CLOTH WITH AN INSCRIPTION IN RED LETTERS."

Works of this sort underscore that Communist modern art's greatest contribution to the history of art is its movement away from the dexterous play with symbols, signs, and codes that defines the achievement of European and North American modernism and postmodernism, from Picasso and Braque's painterly "marriage" to Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, and its movement toward *something else*. Discussing the twentieth century's visual environment and its accompanying transformations of artistic expression, the philosopher Alain Badiou writes: "*Art would then amount to the unrepeatable within a repetition.*"<sup>10</sup> And it is very much due to their constitutive "unrepeatable repetitiveness", as well as their fundamental lack of "aboutness", that works such as *To G. Kizevalter* or Rodchenko's *Oval Hanging Construction* come about as close as possible to simply *being* something, rather than being *about*

<sup>9</sup> Such elements appear prominently in other Eastern European contexts, particularly in postwar Poland; see PIOTROWSKI, P.: *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945 – 1989*. London 2009.

<sup>10</sup> BADIOU, A.: *The Century*. Cambridge (UK) 2007, p. 159.



4. Viktor Koretsky: *Twins in Spirit and Blood*, 1960s, original maquette. Photo: Ne boltai. *A Collection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Propaganda*.

something, and as such, if they are *about* anything, they are usually *about themselves*. Yet at the same time, this is not *l'art pour l'art*; if anything, it's hard to say that it's *l'art* at all. Such Soviet productions keep the spectator's mind vibrating around their own procedures, embodying one of the most sustained efforts in the twentieth century to escape the *Sex/Death* matrix: to leap beyond representation into the space of being as such.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Rancière discusses “the project for an art released from images” and its enactment through an “art which abolishes the distance of the image so as to identify its procedures with the forms of a whole life in action, no longer separating art from work or politics” in RANCIÈRE, J.: *The Future of the Image*. London – New York 2007, p. 19.

With these observations in mind, one could say that the graphic designs and *photoposters* (fotoplakaty) of the state-sponsored Soviet artist Viktor Koretsky attempted to propel vision and Communism beyond modern art's self-reflexivity and Socialist Realist rectitude [Figs. 2-5]. In his art, Koretsky argues that a truly Communist *and* modern vision must ignore representation of the Known to enact evocations of the Unknown, while also trading materializations of prosperity for visualizations of pain.

Unlike Koretsky's adventurous designs, most Soviet propaganda awkwardly revolved around the banalities of everyday life, and the viewer living in the U.S.S.R. would compare the imagery to her lived reality and she would immediately detect a yawning gap between her day-to-day existence and the depictions of happy workers and wise leaders placed before her. Such earnest, yet crude images would obviously never be able to compete with Western advertising's alluring fables of acquisition. As Koretsky writes: “We often encounter posters today that should be vital, but that serve as illustrations. For example, a lot of posters come out in which you see tractor drivers harvesting grain, and so on. These subjects long ago lost their impact. In posters with themes such as ‘Farmers! More Grain for the Motherland!’, we often run into an image of a collective farm worker in front of a grain elevator or harvesting machines. Such a strategy – head-on and declarative – results in the spectator glancing at the poster while casually passing by.”<sup>12</sup>

In the last thirty years of the Soviet Communist project, Victor Koretsky's art struggled to solve an enduring “vision riddle”: how to ensure – or restore – Communism's moral health through the production of a distinctively Communist vision. The political poster artist, he writes, succeeds when “the challenge to fulfill an important state task is organically combined with an upsurge of emotion in the spectator's individual feelings”.<sup>13</sup> Which pictures, Koretsky asked, would not only survive, but thrive, in a domestic environment irradiated by the bland bombast of state-sponsored lies – or even more problematically, within a global arena al-

<sup>12</sup> KORETSKY, V.: *Tovarishch plakaty: opyt, razmyshleniia* [Comrade Poster: Experience, Thoughts]. Moscow 1981, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.





5. Viktor Koretsky: *Africa Fights, Africa Will Win!*, 1968, original maquette. Photo: Ne boltai. *A Collection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Propaganda*.

ready swimming in *Sex/Death*? To invoke both Lenin and Chernyshevsky: “*What is to be done?*”

Koretsky’s Communist art did not wish to concentrate attention on what the viewer had already seen. Rather, he expected the display and viewing of photoposters to be transformed in the future. Regarding the technological enhancements to the post-viewing process, he writes that poster art “*will turn to such means to intensify its artistic impact*”.<sup>14</sup> Abandoning “head-on and declarative” visual strategies in favor of the hallucinatory and the horrific, this art demonstrates what an “avant-garde late Communist art” would have looked like if we had ever seen it mature. Manifesting the pain and suffering of others in visually captivating forms, in forms that sought to establish extreme modes of personal identification

– or “*medium intimacy*” as Robert Bird puts it – became Koretsky’s self-imposed task. His art aimed to construct an Empathy Machine that would have ceaselessly pulled viewers out of their accustomed image-worlds toward the experiences of another – ideally, a person far away, someone they would never meet – a person suffering in ways that they could hardly imagine. To achieve this exceptional level of *emotivity* (emotional’nost’), Koretsky pursued tragic and jarring themes from exotic places, while also working with a team of actors (who would be photographed in various poses), so that he became “*like a director who employs the actors’ expressive mastery*”.<sup>15</sup> In Koretsky’s hands, vision and Communism would not have supplied viewers with uplifting slogans, or titillating configurations of familiar pleasures, but with exquisite orchestrations of vicarious pain.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 66.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

Crucially, whatever reservoirs of Sex and Death these pictures tapped into, and they certainly tapped into some, they always aspire to teach. They are designed to inflame, but also to edify, not simply to persuade or entice. There would be no smiling tractor drivers here. Koretsky's most powerful art sketches out a vision of a relentlessly unfamiliar world (at least to a Soviet citizen), a visibility that would speak exclusively of others, of the literally invisible worlds of the American South or South Africa, not of one's own problems, hopes or dreams for a better tomorrow. In this sense, even though these images differ radically in pictorial form from those of earlier avant-gardists, such as John Heartfield, Valentina Kulagina, Gustav Klutssis, or Aleksandr Rodchenko, Koretsky wanted, like these earlier artists, the union of vision and Communism to produce a profoundly defamiliarizing – even alienating – effect on the viewer.<sup>16</sup>

The autonomous visuality of the Internet, in which one can search billions of images united by one capricious word, or merely a letter or number, is the ultimate dystopia for any Communist vision. In stark contrast, Koretsky wanted the visible world to be filled with meaning, to be visually *meaning-full*, although the obvious danger was that such a meaning-filled world would seem too didactic, or too tame for the technologically-advanced viewer,

the sensory-over-stimulated future Web surfer. In response, it is as if Koretsky intuited that his agitational images would have to channel the forbidden urgency of *Sex/Death* if they were to have any hope of compelling the jaded contemporary viewer into identification with experiences of deprivation and exploitation.

In the end, Koretsky's art admits that the combination of vision and Communism could not produce images of emotional or material abundance in a convincing way. Vision and Communism could only manage to offer absence and duress, especially images of Another under Duress. It is likely that this Other Person under Duress would have become an engine for a Communist art of the future. As such, Koretsky's art might best be described as a kind of Communist advertising for a future that never quite arrived. What the advertising would have offered would have been the opportunity to join a diverse unseen humanity in its struggles to overcome its own dehumanization. The implicit message of every poster and maquette: Communism is not yet capable of spreading visible joy, but joining its multicultural world of shared sacrifice and humanist ambition will ultimately be more invigorating, more life-affirming, and more personally satisfying than participating in the ecology of *Sex/Death*.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See the artist's discussion of these predecessors' poster designs in *Ibidem*, pp. 8-25.

<sup>17</sup> Further sources:

On vision and visuality, standard departure points are JAY, M.: *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century Thought*. Berkeley 1993; and FOSTER, H. (ed.): *Vision and Visuality*. New York 1988.

To track the transformations in postwar capitalist visuality and *Sex/Death*, see DEBORD, G.: *The Society of the Spectacle* [1967]. New York 1994; DIEDERICHSEN, D.: *Sexbeat: 1972 bis heute* [Sexbeat: 1972 to Today] [1985]. Köln 2002 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.); KRAUS, Ch.: *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and The Triumph of Nothingness*. New York 2004; The Invisible Committee: *The Coming Insurrection* [2007]. Los Angeles 2009.

On conceptions of the avant-garde in the twentieth century, see FOSTER, H.: *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge (MA) 2006.

On the U.S.S.R., Communism, and Communist aesthetics, see SVENONIUS, I.: *The Psychic Soviet and Other Works*. Chicago 2006; ŽIŽEK, S.: *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?* New York 2001; and GROYS, B.: *The Communist Postscript* [2006]. New York 2010.

Among the many publications on Soviet art, see KIAER, Ch.: *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism*. Cambridge (MA) 2005; DEGOT, E.: *Russkoe iskusstvo XX veka* [Russian Art of the Twentieth Century]. Moscow 2002; GROYS, B.: *History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism*. Cambridge (MA) 2010; TUPITSYN, V.: *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Cambridge (MA) 2009; and Margarita Tupitsyn's upcoming study of late Soviet art.

Concerning questions of identification, spectatorship and the consumption of art and propaganda, Jacques Rancière's essay "The Emancipated Spectator" continues to pose extremely productive questions; see RANCIÈRE, J.: *The Emancipated Spectator*. London 2009. More generally, Michael Fried's writing has thematized these problems for forty years; in particular, see FRIED, M.: *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*. Berkeley 1980; and FRIED, M.: *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*. Chicago – London 1998; on the broader psychological landscape of these questions, see BUTLER, J.: *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford (CA) 1997.

On Viktor Koretsky and his art, see the artist's observations collected in KORETSKY, V.: *Tovarischch plakaty: opyt, razmysleniia* [Comrade Poster: Experience, Thoughts]. Moscow 1981; as well as the survey volume *Viktor Koretsky*. Moscow 1984.

## Vízia a komunizmus

### *Resumé*

Spoločnosti komunistického sovietskeho bloku si na rozdiel od globalizovaného kapitalistického sveta typického silnejúcou atmosférou sexu a smrti pestovali zaujatie pre encyklopédie, múzeá, romány 19. storočia a populárnu vedu, ako aj pre oficiálne propagovanú estetickú, racionálnu humánnosť. Celkovo tu môžeme hovoriť o prejavoch najtrvalejšej disidentskej verejnej vizuálnej kultúry 20.

storočia. V rámci tohto sveta sa Viktor Koretsky svojím dielom snažil vyriešiť pretrvávajúci rébus: ako zabezpečiť či obnoviť morálne zdravie komunizmu prostredníctvom tvorby jasne formulovanej komunistickej vízie. Koretského práce ukazujú, ako by vyzeralo „avantgardné neskorokomunistické umenie“, ak by malo možnosť dospieť.

*Preklad z angličtiny M. Hrdina*

## Reading, Seeing, Conceiving in the Baltic, or Don't Judge a Modernist Book by Its Cover\*

Janis KRESLINS

By delving into the complex and contradictory expanses of the Baltic during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I shall be opening the door to a world in which rugged land meets the sea, vast woods stretch to the horizon, summer fields are bathed in resplendent light, the winter sun hides behind a murky haze, and where any tale about creative thought and the power of visual image and language is unequivocally characterized not by cohesion and convergence, but by disjunction and displacement [Fig. 1].

To deliver an insight into the culture of communication in the Baltic during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to reveal how artistic expression reflected some of the basic tensions in the region, it is necessary to suggest – by means however indirect – a grammar of the space in which artistic exchange, intellectual debate and the unintended patterns of social life, which frequently defy ideological reduction, could have taken place.<sup>1</sup> As any grammar, even this grammar should reveal both morphological and syntactical properties, it should describe not only

the constituent elements of a particular culture of communication – which we would refer to as word formation in a standard grammar – but also provide a conspectus into how these elements were arranged in units – sentences. As any grammar it is defined by its limitations. Grammars aspire to capture the dynamic aspect of communication, but do it by employing static models.

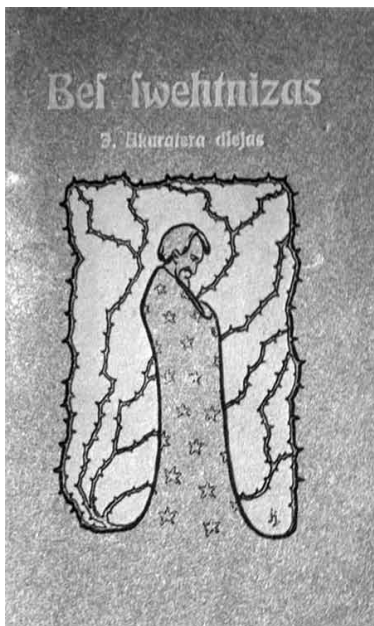
The Baltic world during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was extremely dynamic – in such motion that one must question the feasibility of applying certain linguistic categories to the subject matter at hand.<sup>2</sup> Can we, for instance, even embed the notion of a perfective aspect in our depiction of this world, if it appears to revel in constant change? How are we to conjure iterativeness and mark repetitiveness if the goal of the artists themselves was to create a new world, which turned its back on traditions and conventions? How are we to apprehend participial constructions – expressions compressed for the sake of brevity and to allow for new forms of contextu-

\* I owe an immense debt of gratitude for permission to use the images of the private collections of Valdis Vilerušs (Ikšķile) and Jānis Krēslīņš (New York), as well as those of the Academic Library of the University of Latvia in Riga and the Kungliga biblioteket (National Library of Sweden) in Stockholm. I have benefited from the learnedness and intellectual generosity of the collectors.

<sup>1</sup> This view of grammar presupposes that lexicon, morphology, and syntax form a continuum of symbolic units. “*Grammatical structures do not constitute an autonomous formal system or level of representation; they are claimed instead to be inherently symbolic, providing for the structuring and conventional symbolization of contextual*

*content.*” – LANGACKER, R. W.: Introduction to Concept, Image and Symbol. In: *Cognitive Linguistic Research 34*. Eds. D. GEERAERTS – R. DIRVEN – J. R. TAYLOR. Berlin – New York 2006, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> A sense of the dynamic nature of the region is conveyed by G. von PISTOHLKORS in his survey *Das „Baltische Gebiet“ des Russischen Reiches (1860 – 1914)*. In: *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas – Baltische Länder*. Berlin 1994, pp. 363-435. See also PLAKANS, A.: *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. Cambridge 2011, pp. 254-285; and NORTH, M.: *Geschichte der Ostsee. Handel und Kulturen*. München 2011, pp. 234-237 and 250-254.



1. J. Akuratars: *Bes snehtnīzas*. Rīga : P. Porietis, 1907. Artistic design J. Jaunsudrabiņš. Photo: Private collection of Jānis Krēsliņš.

alization – and how do we achieve terseness without laconicism, a prerequisite for communicating one’s message, but not always commensurate with the process of artistic thinking and production?

By using the notion of grammar, we inadvertently are drawn away from forms of expression firmly grounded in image and move toward more textual contexts. By using the special terminology of grammar, we apprehend aspectual and perspectival dimensions which otherwise may remain hidden. Such dimensions allow us to discover new meanings for established terms. One such term is the Baltic. Per-

spective seldom is purely physical. The Baltic, as we shall be using the term here, is neither self-explanatory nor perspicuous. Unlike the Baltic Sea, which can be found on a map, the Baltic is hard to pinpoint. It is a complex network of territories, each with its own history and cultural markers, a conglomerate of heterogeneous parts, which have changed over time. Never has there been any real consensus on where the Baltic is located or agreement about its distinguishing features. The answers to these questions cannot be formulated in purely geographical terms. Though the Baltic Sea is an integral part of this region, it is not its defining element.<sup>3</sup>

The Baltic to which we shall be referring here shall encompass a world which at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was in a state of upheaval and disjunction.<sup>4</sup> Its urban areas were characterized by fervent economic growth and almost uninhibited expansion. This was, at least in part, spawned by technical innovation, which, in many regards, was more revolutionary than that which we are experiencing today. Just as the computer has dramatically altered our home environments, the spread of electricity and industrial modernization dramatically altered the lifestyles of the region’s inhabitants. If present development is characterized by increases in efficiency and the speed in which everything happens, the changes of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Baltic provided new understandings of and access to a new culture of communication. Not only did audiences change. It was possible to create new audiences and reach out to them. This led to social tension and upheaval, which culminated in the build-up towards the 1905 revolution, its short but intensive culmination and its lingering aftermath. This had significant po-

<sup>3</sup> It is clear that the Baltic – and, most likely, all regions – does not conform to standard typologies of topography. The spread of ideas, cultural traits, behavior does not follow set paradigms. Uniformity is conspicuous by its absence and thus all attempts to define this region using single patterns of commonality as a point of reference are too limiting to be meaningful. In this region, diversity has been just as decisive as uniformity. For an attempt to present the region using perspectival geography, see *Gränsländer – Östersjön in ny gestalt*. Eds. J. KRESLINS – S. MANSBACH – R. SCHWEITZER. Stockholm 2003.

<sup>4</sup> The rapid changes during the first decade of the new century were not always anchored in the tumultuous social and po-

litical reality, but could be reflected in visual representation. This changed significantly during the following decade. The Russian Empire during this first decade was a diverse, contentious and deliberating political entity, which often was characterized by its bureaucratic structures. Never was it really clear what terms such as “*assimilation into a Russian*”, “*acculturation into Russia culture*” and “*integration into the Russian state*” really meant, thus opening the door for great cultural and political experimentation. See Giedrius Subacius’s review of Darius Staliūnas’s monograph from 2008. – SUBACIUS, G.: Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians. Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863*. In: *Archivum Lithuanicum*, 10, 2008, pp. 272-273.

litical repercussions. In the wake of all these changes, the already complex topography of identity of the region became even more intricate.<sup>5</sup> For an attempt to encapsulate the various moods of the era and the moments of upheaval one not need to look further than to the new era in visual representation which was ushered in by technical reproduction. Nowhere is this more evident than in the world of books.

The dramatic changes in the world of books have most frequently been portrayed against the background of photo relief reproduction techniques and the incorporation of images alongside written texts. As Gerry Beegan has claimed, the status of design changed profoundly as illustrated monthly and weekly magazines started shifting to mass-produced photo-mechanical reproductions.<sup>6</sup> The role that artists played in redefining artistic space has not, however, received the attention that it deserves. Book production in the Baltic reveals the magnitude of these changes.

Of special interest is the role that Riga played in these developments. There are a number of factors which led to this sudden outburst of creativity. First and foremost, Riga was inextricably bound to a number of artistic centers by both formal and informal networks. Many aspiring artists went abroad in the search for new impulses and challenges. Others chose to remain closer to home, enrolling at the Academy in St. Petersburg. Most, however, found commissions in Riga, which was the economic tiger

in the region. Furthermore, national character and cultural profile evolved as issues and began garnering increased attention. The environments in both in St. Petersburg and in Riga were explicitly multicultural.<sup>7</sup> During this volatile period, the topography of identity underwent profound changes. For the first time there were entire generations of artists whose cultural identities no longer fit century-old patterns. Having completed their academic studies, there were hardly any clear forms of artistic expression which reflected the disjunctive and disaffiliative environments. The community of artists was by no means alone. Their values upturned, representatives of all walks of society struggled with this uncertainty and in many ways fragile topography of identity.

As traditional cultural showcases underwent re-evaluation, the book suddenly attracted newfound interest. During the first decade of the century, restraints on freedom of artistic creation lost some of their efficacy, as the new culture of communication guaranteed access to information as almost never before. Censorship laws were revised – and those enacted could be circumvented with the help of newly established communication networks.<sup>8</sup> This led not only to a dramatic increase in book production, even in centers outside the major metropolitan areas. It also led to the reinvention of the book as a showcase for artistic innovation and creativity, transforming the cover and setting it aside as an open space for experimentation and inquiry.<sup>9</sup> This space opened the

<sup>5</sup> For general surveys of this build-up, see ASCHER, A.: *The Revolution of 1905*. Palo Alto 2004, pp. 18-25; and PIPES, R.: *The Russian Revolution, 1899 – 1919*. London 1990, pp. 76-80; the revolution in the Baltic demonstrated how difficult it is to separate political agendas from social ones at this time. For a more detailed study of the revolution in the Baltic, especially Latvia, see APINE, I.: *1905. – 1907. gada revolūcija Latvijā un latviešu sociāldemokrāti*. Riga 2005, pp. 7-9; and Latvia in the Russian Empire 1900 – 1918. In: *History of Latvia: The 20th Century*. Eds. D. BLEIRE – I. BUTULIS – A. ZUNDA – A. STRANGA – I. FELDMANIS. Riga 2006, p. 68 ff.

<sup>6</sup> BEEGAN, G.: *The Mass Image. A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London*. Basingstoke 2008; for a poignant summary, see the opening of BEEGAN, G.: *The Studio. Photomechanical Reproduction and the Changing Status of Design*. In: *Design Issues*, 23, 2007, No. 4, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> For an insightful presentation of one such community, the Swedish, in St. Petersburg, see JANGFELDT, B.: *Svenska vägar*

*till St. Petersburg: kapitel ur historien om svenskarna vid Nevans stränder*. Stockholm 1998. For a distinctive, but powerful general presentation of the imperial city in its historical eclecticism, with an emphasis on its textual topography, see BUCKLER, J.: *Mapping St. Petersburg*. Princeton 2005, pp. 24-26, in which she questions the mythology of uniqueness associated with the city.

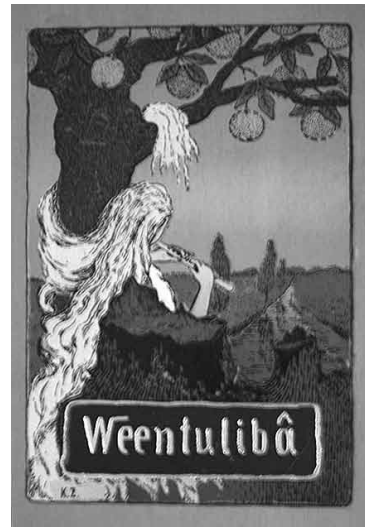
<sup>8</sup> On the importance of local administrative reform in these issues, see WEISSMAN, N.: *Reform in Tsarist Russia. The State Bureaucracy and Local Government, 1900 – 1914*. New Brunswick 1981, pp. 94-106. In the aftermath of the relaxation of censorship, avant-garde literature flourished. – *Encyclopedia of Literature and Politics*. Ed. M. K. BOOKER. Westport 2005, p. 623. For publications on statutes regulating publishing in Riga in 1906 and 1907, see *Latvijas zīnātne un literatūra*, 1940, pp. 269-270.

<sup>9</sup> This period served as a prologue to the search for a new visual vocabulary which is characteristic of the following decades.

door to a new form of expression. A world unto itself, it merited delineation as a separate entity, often completely divorced from the rest of the book, both conceptually and aesthetically.<sup>10</sup> It offered the opportunity for the artist to invent space – at times decoratively, at others functionally. The cover served as an advertisement and opened for creative interplay between text and image. It could change from one copy to another [Fig. 2] – a throwback, ironically, to the hand-press era. By purposefully transgressing conventions, by going against the grain of previous book design, it could underscore borderless transitions. Designing covers served as a very important source of income for the generation of artists during this decade. There was money in conceiving and crafting this artistic space. The vast involvement on the part of the community of artists signaled the advent of a new form of commercialization. Most importantly, it reinforced the conviction that not only did the message have to be succinct to be effective, but it also was, in many ways, transient. It is in these qualities that new meanings and uses could be discovered and articulated.

One of the most striking features of the covers produced during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Riga is the predilection of the new generation artists for hand-designed lettering, avoiding type-set lettering and that which can be referred to as classic calligraphy. How can this be explained? What could this signify? What kind of tools do we need to investigate this question? Are there new parameters which we need to introduce in investigating artistic expression during this period? What other fields and disciplines might offer us a glimpse or view below the surface, provide an understanding into the inner character and hidden nature of things?

To answer some of these questions, I would like to transpose our tale of the artistic environments which gave rise to these developments by introducing two forms of cultural expression – those of



2. E. Treimanis-Zvārgulis: *Weentulibâ*. Cēsis: J. Osols, 1905. Artistic design Krišjānis Ceplītis. Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vīlerušs.

orality and literacy – and the significance they had for promoting and sustaining cultural expression in the region.

Unlike its western counterparts, the eastern regions of the Baltic were shaped by the tension between orality and literacy. For centuries, it was one of the most fundamental identity markers, much more important than the language or languages one used as a primary vehicle of communication, much more important than confession, trade or ethnic background.<sup>11</sup> In the Baltic, culture, and thus identity, was twofold – either *deutsch* or *unddeutsch*. Identity was formed by the culture of communication to which one belonged. The gulf between these two worlds was profound. This had been so already in the middle ages and the early modern period.<sup>12</sup> This had not changed dramatically until the turn of the last century, despite significant developments in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century proved to be a tumultuous turning point.

For the catalogue of the groundbreaking exhibition at the New York Public Library about book covers from this later period, see MANSBACH, S. A. – SIEMASZKIEWICZ, W. J.: *Graphic Modernism. From the Baltic to the Balkans, 1910 – 1935*. New York 2007.

<sup>10</sup> The ink and brush drawings on the cover were designed neither to lead the reader into the book, nor to simply cover it.

<sup>11</sup> GREEN, D. H.: *Medieval Listening and Reading*. Cambridge 1994, pp. 2-19; ONG, W.: *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing the Word*. London 1982, pp. 31-115.

<sup>12</sup> KRESLINS, J.: Übersetzen um jeden Preis. Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im frühneuzeitlichen europäischen Nordosten. In: *Wissenstransfer und Innovationen rund um das Mare Balticum*. Ed. B. SCHMIDT. Hamburg 2007, pp. 35-41.



3. *Bildende Kunst in den Ostseeprovinzen, II. Riga* : Architektenverein, 1908. Photo: National Library of Sweden, Stockholm.



4. *A. Sauleetis (Saulietis): Purva*. Riga : Zalktis, 1904. Artistic design J. Rozentāls. Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vilerušs.

It is important to remember that many *unddeutsch* artists who entered the stage during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were, for the most part, despite their academic training, deeply rooted in the world of orality. Being the first generation to have received a formal higher education, it was not far removed from its cultural roots and still had a command of the tools that a culture based in orality used. As these artists forged their new identities, they did not simply embrace and assimilate to the artistic language of the academy, nor did they turn their backs on the culture that had in many regards formed them.

The culture of literacy is regulated by one set of conventions and practices, the culture of orality by others. Despite our proclivity to associate orality with some form of “primitiveness”, the oral culture of the eastern Baltic had in many ways been much more globalized than that of literacy. This did not mean that every individual had access to or utilized the opportunities that the culture of orality offered, but the linguistically most acrobatic inhabitants of the region were those who relied on oral communication and had mastered the art of semi-communication. Those who had used the languages of literacy in the Baltic – Latin in a historical perspective, but otherwise predominantly German – and here I am not using language as we use the term today, but rather its cultural expressions – usually engaged the world in those circles which shared the same values.

Its geography was one of nodes. The culture of orality is different. It is more drawn to communicative environments where the goal is not the transfer of information, but rather the encounter itself, which by no means is merely fleeting and without depth. In this sense, the culture of orality is immediate and participatory; conservative and formulaic in form, it is nonetheless lively and spontaneous; it has a completely different understanding of creativity; its language very frequently lacks codified form – each speech act, each grammatical construction is new; each construction can and will be repeated, but in a new context it acquires new meanings; there is a strong need to express interdependency and entanglement. It is the encounter which enables one to bridge seemingly contradictory experiences; it is the encounter which allows one to recycle, re-use spontaneity; it is the encounter which supplies the requisite means to engage the disruptive. The notion of tradition has a completely different emotional force and significance.

I have identified three features which I believe reveal the oral nature of the artistic explosion on these covers. First and foremost, I shall draw attention to handwritten lettering. The first decade of the century was a period of upheaval even in this regard. The region’s undeniable typographical identity was Gothic. Latin type was appearing all the more frequently. But daring innovation had to take place in





5. *Modernu seņveeschu mīlestības dzeesmas*. Rīga : W. Skribe, 1907. Artistic design E. Brencēns. Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vīlerušs.



6. *Zalktis*, No. 4. *Rakstu krājums mākslai un kritikai*. Rīga 1908. Photo: Private collection of Janis Krēsliņš.

another context, outside the realm of existing linguistic and typographical conventions. By choosing handwritten lettering, most often vertically narrow and horizontally broad, existing graphic notions were abandoned and the letter was liberated from the culture of literacy [Fig. 3], liberated to such a degree that it even obliterated and obfuscated the border

between image and text [Figs. 4-5]. The covers clearly demonstrate that the response to Gothic type was not Latinity, but orality – this moves us into the world of chatrooms, not the world of blossoming *Rezeptionsgeschichten*. Though Otto Eckmann's Jugendtype appears with a certain regularity, this type is by no means dominant for these covers<sup>13</sup> [Fig. 6].<sup>14</sup> This

<sup>13</sup> On the importance of Eckmann's Jugendtype, see RODENBERG, J.: *In der Schmiede der Schrift: Karl Klingspor und sein Werk*. Berlin 1940, pp. 39-44; WELLE, D.: *Deutsche Schriftgießereien und die künstlerischen Schriften zwischen 1900 und 1930*. Regensburg 1997, pp. 78-91. Jugendtype had as its expressed goal obliterating the ground between inner disposition and detail. The following was said about Eckmann's friend and colleague Peter Behrens and his type: "Es bleibe nur der Eindruck des Dahinschwebens, Dabingleitens... und so sei auch bei der Schrift die Gesamtlinie der gleichsam vor dem Auge dahinziehenden Buchstaben, nicht deren Einzelgestalt, das Entscheidende." – RODENBERG 1940 (see in this note), p. 47. On the Riga covers from the first decade of the century, this sense of affect is raised to a new level. Valdis Vīlerušs has succinctly summarized the changes in graphic design in the Baltic. – VILERUŠS, V.: Eine Einsicht in die Novitäten der graphischen Gestaltung der Presse Lettlands in der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert. In: *Architektur und bildende Kunst im Baltikum um 1900*. Ed. E. GROSMANE. Frankfurt 2009, pp. 123-134. For a survey of the perhaps leading publishing house most frequently associated with the proliferation of Jugendstil in the realm of books – Zalktis, see RUDZĪTE, G.: Izdevniecība Zalktis un tās loma latviešu mākslinieciskās apdares attīstībā. In: *V. Lāča Latvijas PSR Valsts bibliotēkas raksti*. Rīga 1974, pp.

156-187. For further studies, see BRANCIS, M.: Jūgendstila un baltvācu grāmata Latvija 19. gs. beigās – 20. gs. sākumā. In: *Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, 1, 1994, pp. 20-27; and BRANCIS, M.: Jūgendstila ornamentika Latvijas žurnālos 19. gs. beigās un 20. gs. sākumā. In: *Ornaments Latvija*. Rīga 1994, pp. 107-118.

<sup>14</sup> The works of the overwhelming majority of illustrators in Riga at this time were imbued with the sensuous and decorative quality of Jugendstil, which could easily be adapted to book design and which enhanced the already the positive view towards the book as a significant starting point for visual exploration. Here as elsewhere in the visual arts, borders were often transcended and new ones frequently established. Publishers became proponents of a new attitude towards visual culture. One significant pioneer in this field was Janis Ozols, who was able to engage leading artists in his commitment to unbridled aesthetic creativity. He was widely recognized for fostering artistic experimentation through various formats and settings, rarely shying away from elaborate ornamentation, thus giving the book a handcrafted look. A leader in this direction was the publishing house Zalktis, founded in 1904, with the expressed goal of treating the book as an art object. Many leading artists were commissioned



7. V. Plūdona: *Uz saulaino tāli*. Rīga : A. Golts, 1912. Artistic design K. Melbārds. Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vīlerts.



8. J. Rainis: *Tālas noskaņas zilā vakarā*. Rīga 1903. Artistic design J. Madernieks. Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vīlerts.

compels us to raise the question whether Jugend-covers were, in fact, all that Jugend! Using established type reaffirms and expresses belonging to a tradition. By using Eckmann, one was bravely transforming the old world, but not opening the door to a brave new world. The covers, by using hand-written lettering underscored the spontaneous nature and importance of the encounter – both dominant themes in oral communication.

This draws us into the second feature of these covers – their ephemerality and, subsequently, the ephemerality of the encounter with the beholder. They are jolting and dramatic [Fig. 7]. Just as an advertisement, they leave us with the sense that they will disappear just as quickly as they have appeared. It is no coincidence that they often served also as a medium for spreading revolutionary sentiments and, one hundred years later, still exude a sense of agitation and energy. In the brief encounter, they

point to the new order, its realm of possibilities, even its inevitability, but in no way present this new order as a lasting solution or as the advent of a new age – it is that which it is, a one-night stand, powerful, but fleeting. Even their materiality reveals their short-livedness – simple, frail cardboard enclosures and wrappings as opposed to a reinforced binding. More a newspaper which will self-destruct! As if one were encouraged to rip it off and preserve it separately. It should therefore come as no great surprise that many library copies lack these covers, which only reinforces their ephemerality. This ephemerality is also reinforced by their anonymity. Often the covers are not signed. This can only partially be explained by their, at times politically sensitive material. Authorship seems to be a secondary issue [Fig. 8]. In this regard, the cover is indistinguishable from a receipt, a membership card, or a ticket [Figs. 9-10].

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to further this ambitious objective. As was true for others, Zalktis's visual expressions were indebted to the Jugendtype of the German painter and graphic artist Otto Eckmann. All in all, Zalktis published eighteen works, including a journal devoted to artistic issues – here the cover of the 1908 edition of this journal.

Although these book covers can be regarded as the epitome of Jugendstil book art in Riga, the Zalktis publications were nonetheless seldom the site of the artists' most daring experimentation, which was frequently expressed in other

formats. As a result, the aggregate impression one receives from reviewing these cover designs is a deeper awareness of their underlying formal rigour.

The cover in Fig. 4 is from one of the earliest editions of publishing house. It comprises a part of the collected works of Augusts Saulietis. Each part was published separately with two covers. The works could be enjoyed separately. Or, upon removing the outer cover, they could be bound together to form a unit.



9. A bill of exchange from the first decade of the century. Photo: Academic Library of the University of Latvia, Riga.



10. Ticket to a social occasion at the Riga Latvian Society from 1903 conceived by J. Madernieks. Photo: Academic Library of the University of Latvia, Riga.

Thirdly, the covers allow the artist to find new solutions for how to historicize one's culture and thus one's identity. They lack traditional iconography which is so typical of the culture of literacy [Fig. 11]. The past is not to be traced, but rather ornamentalized – it is not encumbered by historical insignia [Fig. 12]. We can even be immediately drawn into the world of folklore, a world which communicated its message in much the same way that Twitter messages do today – with the utmost of brevity [Fig. 13]. We are in the world of participial construction. Ornamentation conjured notions of a distant past and of a newfound

<sup>15</sup> These newfound identities were not determined “from above”. Rather, they were the result of technologies for the social management of conduct that worked in less visible ways. – UMBACH, M.: *German Cities and Burgeois Modernism,*



11. Baltisches Dichterbuch. Ed. J. von Grobuss. Reval 1895. Photo: Private collection of Jānis Krēsliņš.

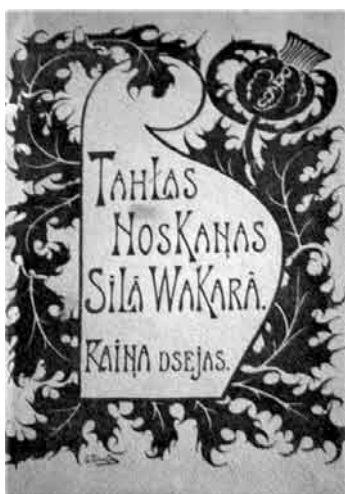


12. Bildende Kunst in den Ostseeprovinzen, III. Riga : Architektverein, 1909. Photo: National Library of Sweden, Stockholm.

identity.<sup>15</sup> The tradition to which it hearkened could not be traced or visualized, since it changed its form in every single encounter. Nonetheless, it is a canon which always must be repeated, but in new forms in each new situation [Fig. 14].<sup>16</sup> It is this kind of histori-

1890 – 1924. Oxford 2009, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> The turn of the century marked an escalation of interest in the role that folklore and traditional culture could play in the



13. J. Rainis: *Tablas noskaņas silā wakarā*. St. Petersburg 1903. Artistic design E. Ziverts (Zivarts). Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vilerušs.



14. A. Kalniņš: *8 danses du conte de Rainis "Le roi de mouches"*. Riga: *Komponistu apgāds*, 1924. Artistic design J. Madernieks. Photo: Private collection of Janis Krēsliņš.

cizing, using the tools of orality, which does not look back, but forward – where each engagement already includes the anticipation of the next [Fig. 15].

In many regards, this is the reconfiguration of that which already had been reconfigured before, one which we know from the world of folklore. But folklore had at this juncture already slipped into the realm of collectors, into a preservation mode and was part of a world which required dictionaries. The

culture of literacy was, to a large extent, dependent on translations and definitions.

The culture of orality compels us to engage the world, not to define what it is, not to preserve it. This world never fits into a package. We never have a clear understanding of its true nature and, therefore, symmetry is always lacking [Fig. 16]. It is most effective when everything appears as if it were enveloped in smoke [Fig. 17].

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construction of identities which were not only local, but also cosmopolitan in nature. The study of folklore was deeply bound to fieldwork, the notion of collecting remnants of past lives, recording them and thus preserving them for posterity. This involved transforming orality to some form of literacy, and abandoning practically all social contexts. The process of documentation reflected a shift in consciousness – preservation became synonymous with exploration. Not all, however, were willing to regard folklore and folk art as a static experience merely to be observed as a historical relict. There emerged artists who viewed folklore and folk art as a dynamic practice that could engage the emerging cosmopolitan traditions. For these artists, ornament was of special interest. It raised an awareness of the techniques associated with reproduction of models collected in the field; at the same time, it revealed that which was inherent in the technique of making.

Jūlijs Madernieks (1870 – 1955) was fascinated by ornament in its various manifestations. Educated in St. Petersburg, he complemented his studies by peregrinating through Europe, studying the sublimity of expression and the ease of orna-

ments. Upon his return to Riga in 1903, he immersed himself in the study of textile design in the ethnographic collections of the Riga Latvian Society, which was not only a social gathering point for the nascent middle class of Latvians, but also served as research center. At the society, researchers could examine and interpret disparate collections and ultimately recast their identities.

The cover here is from 1924, but bears witness to Madernieks's ability to transgress borders and to transform the book into a multi-media platform. A number of other covers presented here are the work of Madernieks from the first decade of the century. His ornaments use traditional vocabulary, but clearly revel in their iconographic iconoclasm. The volume here contains 8 piano etudes by the Alfreds Kalniņš, who readily utilized folksongs and folk themes for his compositions. Here, however, he has turned to the poetry of Janis Rainis, who during the first decade of the century was a leading literary and political figure.

On Madernieks as book artist, see the short introductory article of J. SILIŅŠ in *Raksti. Jūlijs Madernieks*. Riga 1930, pp. 13-20.



15. Aspazija: *Sposchi sapni. Dzejiski tehojumi*. Rīga 1909. Artistic design. J. Zegners. Photo: Private collection of Jānis Krēsliņš.



16. J. Gulbis: *Nemiera stundās*. Rīga : A. Golts, 1907. Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vīlerušs.

Therefore I have chosen not a lexicographical, but a grammatical approach. An approach which never can really succeed in capturing an artistic language! The covers are, in some sense, the ultimate ablative absolute. They consist of a noun or pronoun signifying that what we see is truly a real manifestation. The noun or pronoun is combined with a participle which infuses verbal motion. Both are grammatically independent of the main clause. In our case, the cover itself is independent of the text, but it does, nonetheless, express the time, the occasion or the circumstance that the book as a whole states.

*Sole oriente.* In the new world of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Baltic, the book covers are like the rising sun, omnipresent, but detached. But as we view this sun above the vast expanses and the covers against the tumultuous first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Baltic, we form an ability to remember the future and explore the psychological dimension of memory.



17. K. Skalbe: *Semes duhmos*. Rīga : D. Zeltiņš, 1906. Artistic design K. Ceplītis. Photo: Private collection of Valdis Vīlerušs.

## Čítanie, vnímanie a tvorba na Balte alebo o tom, že modernistická kniha by sa podľa obálky súdiť nemala

### *Resumé*

Ktorú platformu by sme si dnes vybrali pre objasnenie napätia medzi stálosťou a premenlivosťou? Spočíva hodnota novosti iba v prehodnocovaní historických modelov? Môžu byť tradičné metódy uplatnené pri formovaní novej kultúry komunikácie? Všetko otázky, ktoré mali veľký význam v rámci radikálnej transformácie kultúry komunikácie a vyjadrovania na Balte začiatkom 20. storočia. Ako to už často býva, návraty k tradícii a predpovedanie nových umeleckých topografií a spoločenských vzťahov išli ruka v ruke.

Počas prvej dekády minulého storočia sa svet tlače opäť stával výkladnou skriňou symbolov a obrazov novej vizuálnej kultúry. Technické novinky, ako napríklad fotomechanická reprodukcia, redefinovali vizuálnu identitu knihy. Nespútaná umelecká tvorivosť prinášala nový slovník a nové stratégie pri koncipovaní ich obálok.

Začiatok 20. storočia bol na Balte poznačený dramatickým nárastom knižnej produkcie, keďže

desať rokov staré obmedzenia slobody umeleckej tvorby stratili veľa zo svojej účinnosti. Zmeny sa popri texte dotkli aj ďalších aspektov knihy. Umelci transformovali knižné obálky na priestory otvorené experimentovaniu.

Centrom tohto experimentovania sa stala Riga. Nová generácia umelcov, ktorých kultúrne identity už nezodpovedali starým vzorcom, premenila knižné obálky na médiá sprostredkujúce prevratné umelecké formy.

Namiesto toho, aby modernizovali existujúci umelecký slovník, skúmali umelci spôsoby, ktorými by rukopis mohol obsiahnuť rôzne nálady doby, predovšetkým jej prevratnosť. Experimentovali s efemérnosťou a s úlohou čitateľa. Toto umelecké experimentovanie napokon využili pri hľadaní nových metodológií pre historizujúcu kultúrnu identitu.

*Preklad z angličtiny M. Hrdina*

## Beyond the Borders. Bulgarian and Macedonian Poetic Cover Art in the Early and Middle Twentieth Century\*

Victor A. FRIEDMAN

This article takes its inspiration from Janis Kreslins' (this volume). As a Balkanist, I have frequently encountered the confusion of *Balkan* and *Baltic*. Both are disyllabic, initially stressed, and begin with *Bal-*. Both are located east of the West European self-imagined center. One, of course, is to the north and squeezed between and overlapped by the Germanic and the Slavic, with German cultural domination being the historically more significant. The other is to the south, squeezed among and overlapped by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman, Serbian and Bulgarian, Roman and Byzantine, while actively participating in and constituting the worlds of the

dominators.<sup>1</sup> If, as Kreslins notes, defining the Baltic in simple terms is “*too limiting to be meaningful*”, then defining the Balkans is not merely a constantly shifting target, but even an entire academic cottage industry.<sup>2</sup> That said, however, for the purposes of this paper I shall examine a heartland of the Balkans – Bulgaria and Macedonia – without presuming to claim that this part can stand for the whole.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, their connections to that broader Europe of European Modern Art constitutes part of my focus.<sup>4</sup> As Kreslins (this volume) so clearly demonstrates, the art of the book cover, by its very intersection of the ephemeral and the innovative, gives a vital

\* The Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies (CEERES) of the University of Chicago made possible the scanning of the covers of the University of Chicago Regenstein Library Bulgarian poetry collection. I am indebted to Meredith Clason, Associate Director of CEERES, June Pachuta Farris, Bibliographer for Slavic East European and Eurasian Studies, and Kathleen E. MacArthur, Preservation Reformatting Librarian, both of the University of Chicago Library, for their invaluable cooperation and assistance. I also wish to thank Professor Christina E. Kramer of the University of Toronto who scanned and shared with me the Macedonian covers. Finally, my deepest thanks to Steven Mansbach and Janis Kreslins for their guidance and inspiration.

<sup>1</sup> My references here are to modern, medieval, and ancient Empires. By adding Albanians, Jews, and Roms (Gypsies), we cover representatives of all the long-standing linguistic groups in the region. For both the Baltic and the Balkans, many other groups could also be appropriately named, but my aim here is to evoke rather than to enumerate.

<sup>2</sup> For a linguistic definition, see FRIEDMAN, V. A.: The Balkan Languages and Balkan Linguistics. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 40, 2011, pp. 275-291. For an attempt to map the conception of the Balkan *Sprachbund* onto the Baltic, see DAHL, Ö. – KOPTJEVSKAJA-TAMM, M. (eds.): *Circum-Baltic Languages*. Amsterdam 2001.

<sup>3</sup> We can note that the mountain range for which the peninsula is named runs through the middle of Bulgaria, whose national airlines was named *Balkan* 1947 – 2002. The connection of Bulgaria to Macedonia will become clear in this article.

<sup>4</sup> Graphic art in Bulgaria has received considerable attention, e.g. GENOVA, I. – DIMITROVA, T. (eds.): *Izskustvo v Bŭlgarija pres 1920-te godini: Modernizŭm i nacionalna ideja / Art in Bulgaria during the 1920s: Modernism and the National Idea*. Sofia 2002; GENOVA, I.: *Modernizmi i modernost – (ne)vŭzmozŭbnost ŭa istorizirane. Izskustvo v Bŭlgarija i hudoŭbestven obmen s balkanski strani*. Sofia 2004; KUZMANOVA-ZOGRAFOVA, K.: *Chavdar Mutafor: Vŭskresenieto na Diletanta*. Sofia 2001; MANSBACH, S. A.: *Graphic Modernism. From the Baltic to the Balkans, 1910 – 1935*. New York 2007. My hope here is to contribute to the conversation with heretofore untapped sources.

z obrázkov môžem  
číslo písané ceruzkou  
vyretušovať?



1. St. Boradzhiiev: *Utrenna kütka* [Morning Bouquet]. Veliko Tŕrnovo : K. Boradzhiiev, 1905. Artistic design S. Velkov. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



2. St. Chilingirov: *Ednazh da sámne* [Once Let It Dawn]. Sofia : P. M. Bŕzajtov, 1907. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.

visual representation of varied transitions. His three elements of what he calls “*the oral nature of the artistic explosion on [book] covers*” – hand lettering, jolting ephemerality, and new ways of historicizing culture and identity – find interesting echoes in the Balkans as represented by Bulgaria and Macedonia. Bulgarian cover art follows the flows of modernism until World War Two, while in the early post-War days of the Republic of Macedonia, perhaps precisely because the entity and the recognition of its language as official were so new, the strictures of socialist realism did not weigh as heavily.

The sources for this meditation on ephemeral Balkan art will be two collections of poetry pamphlets, i.e. precisely the type of cover art that, as Kreslins observes, libraries routinely destroy in the process of binding and preservation. The first of these collections comprises approximately one thousand poetry

pamphlets published in Bulgaria between 1895 and 1945 housed at the University of Chicago Regenstein Library. We are indeed fortunate that the library chose to bind these pamphlets in groups, thus preserving them in their entirety. The second collection is of Macedonian books acquired by Horace G. Lunt in the 1940s and 1950s and given by him to Christina E. Kramer of the University of Toronto.<sup>5</sup> Although Kreslins concentrates on Riga in the first decade of the twentieth century, the present article moves through its first half owing to the nature of the material.

As in Riga, so, too in Bulgaria the first decade of the twentieth century saw an explosion of innovative book cover design. Moreover, the innovation was not limited to Sofia, the capital, as seen in S. Velkov’s cover illustration [Fig. 1] from Veliko Tŕrnovo, itself a town of considerable historical importance. The framing is Jugendstil and the lettering would be

<sup>5</sup> Horace G. Lunt was the author of the first complete grammar of modern Macedonian. – LUNT, H. G.: *A Grammar of the Macedonian Literary Language*. Skopje 1952. Most of his collection of Macedonian books is now at the University of

Toronto’s Robarts Library and Thomas Fisher Rare Book Room, the remainder (including those reproduced here) is in Prof. Kramer’s possession and will be donated to Toronto’s library at a later date.





3. I. Kunev: *Iz ostrova* [From the Island]. Sofia : T. Peen, 1909. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



4. D. Chernoslav: *Rozhbi na grēxa* [Offspring of Sin]. Sofia : Gr. T. Paspalev, 1910. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.

called “psychedelic” in the 1960s. Thanatos [Fig. 2] and Eros, this latter envisioned as pure [Fig. 3] or impure [Fig. 4], also made their presence felt. The communist exclusions identified by Matthew Jesse Jackson (this volume) did not gain control in Bulgaria until after the 9 September 1944 revolution/coup d’état (depending on your viewpoint), although, as we shall see below, the movement that claimed to speak for workers had its visual voices in pre-War Bulgaria as well. The *Offspring of Sin* [Fig. 4] also references Bulgarian (and Slavic) folklore, specifically the *rusalki*, malevolent female water spirits believed to lure men to their deaths. *Chrysanthemums* [Fig. 5] also shows a merger of form and writing, the lines of the title mimicking the thread-like petals of the flowers, while in *Snowflakes* [Fig. 6] the haunting ephemerality of the stormy image both references and refutes the title, which appears to be either accumulating or melting.

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that the Bulgarian title, *Vistrel*, literally “a shot”, but here clearly referring to a shot from a firearm, is an archaism in Bulgarian, echoing the Russian *vystrel* (which

The power of smoke pointed to by Kreslins also appears in Bulgaria during this period, albeit the variation of experimentation seems to wane as the decade progresses. Moreover, the provinces show themselves more adventurous than the capital. Thus, in the first edition of the famous Bulgarian writer Elin Pelin’s *Ashes from My Cigarettes* [Fig. 7], published in the western border town of Kjustendil, A. Bozhinov’s illustration has the smoke mix with the title, while five years later, at the end of the decade and in Sofia, the capital, P. Morozov’s illustration for the second edition feels autumnally static [Fig. 8].

Graphic production in Bulgaria during the 1920s, after the tremendous upheavals of the second decade of the twentieth century, ran the gamut from the decoesque art nouveau of Ari Kalûchev’s illustration of *Lights in the Forest* [Fig. 9] to the austere – and also political – avant-garde of a *Gunshot* [Fig. 10].<sup>6</sup> The first half of the decade saw experiments

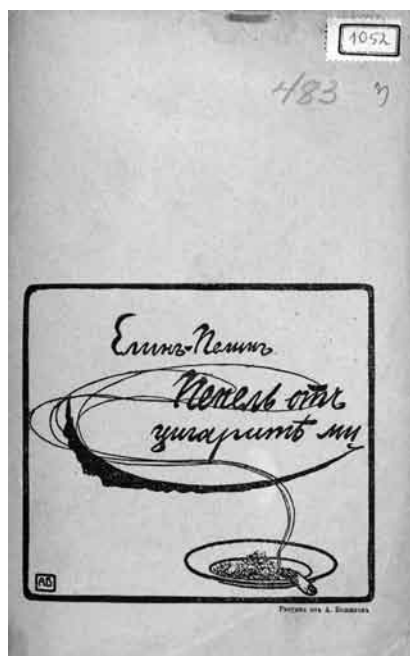
is also the title of a famous short story by Pushkin about a duel) rather than the more common Bulgarian *izstrel*.



5. T. Kuner: *Hrizantemi* [Chrysanthemums]. Sofia : P. M. Búzajtov, 1907. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



6. E. Nencheva: *Sněžinki* [Snowflakes]. Sofia : Pridvornata pechatnica, 1909. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



7. E. Pelin: *Pepel ot cigarite mi* [Ashes from My Cigarettes]. Kjustendil : Jakim Jakimov, 1905. Artistic design A. Bozhinov. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



8. E. Pelin: *Pepel ot cigarite mi* [Ashes from My Cigarettes]. Sofia : Balkan, 1910 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Artistic design P. Morozov. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



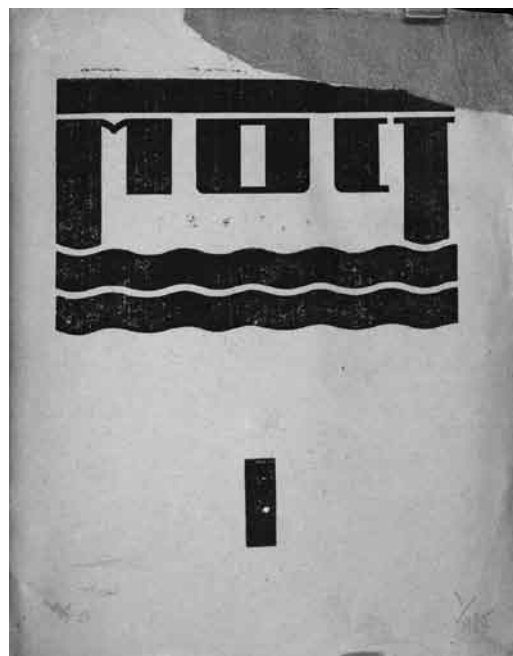
9. M. Vechev: *Svĕtlini v lĕsa* [Lights in the Forest]. Sofia : T. L. Klisarov, 1921. Artistic design A. Kalŭchev. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



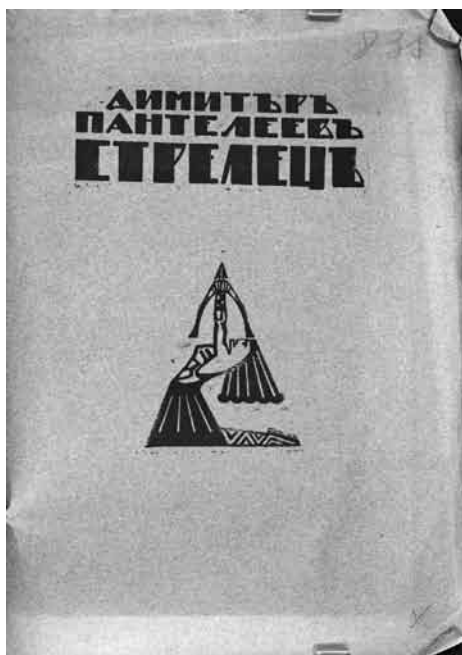
10. S. Krasinski: *Vistrel* [Gunshot]. Sofia : Gutenberg, 1929. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.

like *Bridge 1* [Fig. 11] where the letters were pylons, *Archer* – literally “shooter” – [Fig. 12], where the frame of the figure replicates an arrowhead, and *The Earth Is Calling Us* [Fig. 13], where the heavy lettering and the mournful figure suggest the pull of our inevitable descent into Sheol. The second half of the decade produced, among others, varying images of fragmentation in addition to the carefully jumbled letters of *Gunshot*. Dechko Uzunov’s cover for Lamar’s *Iron Icons* [Fig. 14],<sup>7</sup> disassembles the notion of sacred image, while *Smashed Tablets* [Fig. 15], with its suggestive outer shape associated with one of the Tablets of the Law, depicts despairing dissolution. In *Shattered Mirrors* [Fig. 16], the fragmentation attempts to give the impression of coherence, while the framing C’s of *Стухотворна сбирка* (*Stihotvorna sbirka* – Poetry collection) are abstract to the point of unrecognizability out of context.

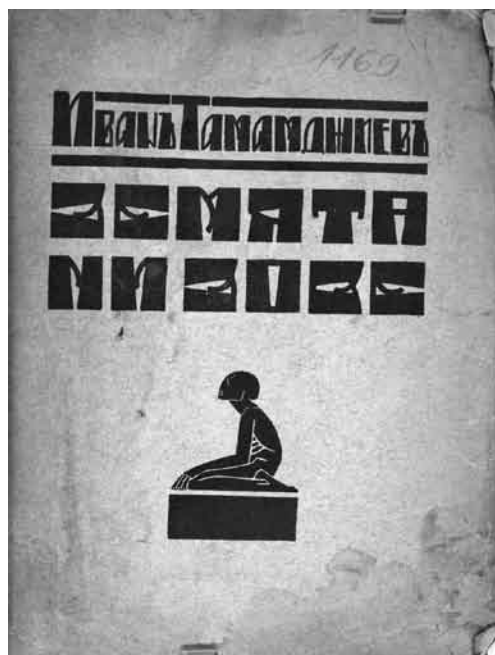
<sup>7</sup> Lamar’s *Arena* figures on p. 15 of GENOVA, I: The Cultural Situation Non-Center and Bulgarian Art During the 1920s. In: GENOVA – DIMITROVA 2002 (see in note 4), pp. 7-46.



11. D. Pantelev – G. Karaivanov – A. Dalchev: *Most 1* [Bridge 1]. Sofia : Most, 1923. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



12. D. Pantelev: *Strelets* [Archer]. Sofia : Lëto, 1924. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



13. I. Tamandzhiev: *Zemjata ni zove* [The Earth Is Calling Us]. Sofia : Dovërie, 1925. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



14. Lamar: *Zhelezni ikoni* [Iron Icons]. Sofia : Jasnaja Poljana, 1927. Artistic design D. Uzunov. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



15. S. Markov: *Razbiti skrizhali* [Smashed Tablets (of the Law)]. Sofia : Br. Miladinovi, 1929. Artistic design B. Popov. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



16. V. Hristov: *Razchupeni ogledala* [Shattered Mirrors]. Plodiv : J. B. Pardoj, 1929. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



17. L. Rogachev: *Fabrichni kumini* [Factory Smokestacks]. Sofia : Posrednik, 1929 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Artistic design G. Karakashev. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.

Of particular interest are the two covers of Lalju Rogachev's *Factory Smokestacks*. Rogachev was associated with Geo Milev and a number of leftist, anarchist artists. The first cover, by Georgi Karakashev [Fig. 17], was published in January 1929 by the publishing house Posrednik. The image is almost as socialist realist as the one on a communist era 20 lev note.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, the second edition, which was published by Spoluka in April of that same year with a cover by Kiril Bujuklijski [Fig. 18], is an unambiguous critique of the effects of industrialization.

The 1930s saw a descent into fascism and expansionist nationalism in Bulgaria as in other parts of Europe, but the period was not without complexities and contestations. Sirak Skitnik, whose work in the 1920s Irina Genova has analyzed so



18. L. Rogachev: *Fabrichni kumini* [Factory Smokestacks]. Sofia : Spoluka, 1929 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Artistic design K. Bujuklijski. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.

<sup>8</sup> The image is available at <http://www.shutterstock.com/pic-4278343/stock-photo-old-banknote-of-bulgaria-lev-year.html>, accessed 13 May 2012.



19. A. Dushkor: *Momúkt' s laterna* [The Lad with the Barrel Organ]. Sofia : Dovérie, 1935. Artistic design S. Skitnik. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



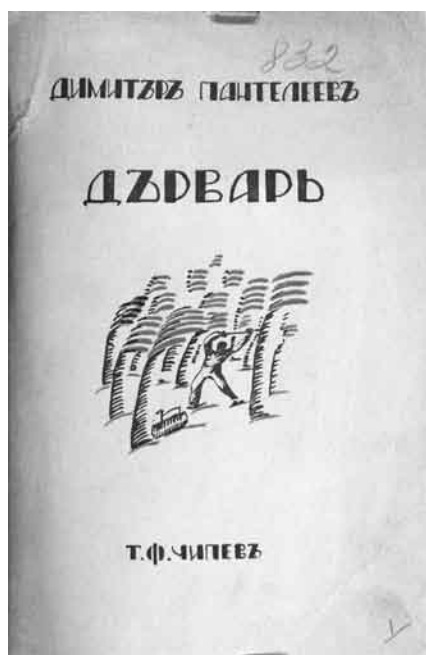
20. A. Levi: *Prez verigi* [Through Chains]. Sofia : [no publisher given], 1932. Artistic design M. Metsger. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



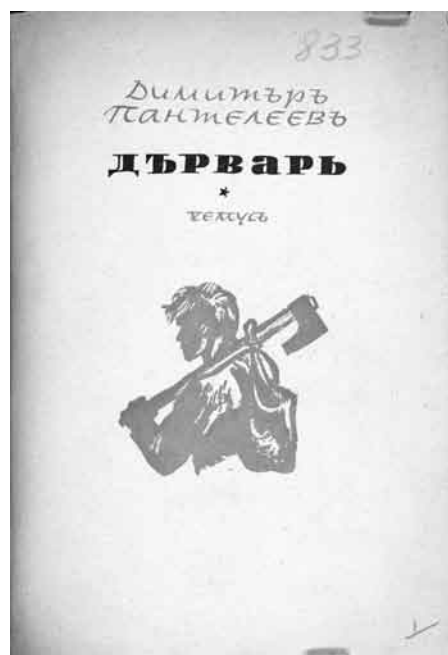
21. L. Rogacher: *Nivi* [Fields]. Sofia : Kultura, 1933. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



22. S. Vasilev: *Dejstvitelnost* [Reality]. Karnobat : Zora, 1939. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



23. D. Panteleev: *Dárvar* [Woodcutter]. Sofia : T. F. Chipev, 1928. Artistic design P. Georgiev. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.



24. D. Panteleev: *Dárvar* [Woodcutter]. Sofia : Hemus, 1942 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Artistic design B. Angelushev. Photo: The University of Chicago Regenstein Library.

effectively,<sup>9</sup> concentrated entirely on book covers such as the expressionist cityscape for *The Lad with the Barrel Organ* [Fig. 19]. The shaded planes and intersections of Skitnik's cover contrast with the sharp but intersecting geometric edges of Maks Metsger's abstract composition for *Through Chains* [Fig. 20], whose red and black color scheme and stylized chains proclaim its leftist orientation. Genova points out that the city was felt as something alien to Bulgaria's imagined rural-based national essence in the 1920s but had become naturalized by the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> Thus the art nouveau style *Fields* [Fig. 21] for leftist Lalju Rogachev's poetry seems like a throwback, rejection, or reaction to the urbanization that Kiril Bujuklijski decried in the 1920s. The provinces, too, shared in international movements. From Karnobat, in southeastern Bulgaria, comes the 1939 World's

Fair perisphere transfixed by the trylon and crossed by a straight path labeled *Reality* rather than being encircled by the gently sloping helieline of the imaginary future [Fig. 22].

The end to modernist experiments that came with World War Two is illustrated poignantly by Pencho Georgiev's illustration for the first edition of Dimitûr Panteleev's *Woodcutter*, which was published by T. F. Chipev in 1928 [Fig. 23], and Boris Angelushev's for the second edition, published by Hemus, in 1942 [Fig. 24]. Aside from the obvious damming of the flow of movement in the second illustration, even the typography changes from a light, almost deco, style reminiscent of rounded Glagolitic, seeming to move with the wind in the trees, to a thickened ponderousness as heavy and unexpressive as the axe blade over the woodcutter's shoulder.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> GENOVA, I.: Sirak Skitnik and the Bulgarian Book in the 1920s. In: GENOVA – DIMITROVA 2002 (see in note 4), pp. 141-171.

<sup>10</sup> GENOVA 2002 (see in note 7).

<sup>11</sup> The style of the 1928 Cyrillic is close to that used by Boris Ivanov for a radical book cover in 1935. See MANSBACH 2007 (see in note 4), pp. 28-29.



25. K. Nedelkovski: *Stixovi* [Verses]. Skopje : Kocho Racin, 1958.  
Photo: Private collection of Prof. Christina E. Kramer.



26. T. Momirovski: *Strei i pesoci* [Eaves and Sands]. Skopje : Kocho Racin, 1956. Photo: Private collection of Prof. Christina E. Kramer.



27. S. Popov: *Kalesh Angja* [Dark-eyed Angja]. Skopje : Kultura, 1958.  
Photo: Private collection of Prof. Christina E. Kramer.



28. B. Koneski: *Pesni* [Poems]. Skopje : Kocho Racin, 1953. Photo: Private collection of Prof. Christina E. Kramer.





29. M. Matevski: *Doždovi* [Rains]. Skopje : Kultura, 1956. Photo: Private collection of Prof. Christina E. Kramer.

After World War Two, the Republic of Macedonia was established first as a People's, then as a Socialist, and now as an independent republic – the first two having been within the framework of the second Yugoslavia. Steven Mansbach gives a fine summary of the art-historical situation in what had been the Serbian part of Macedonia up to World War Two.<sup>12</sup> A striking feature of the first modern Macedonian political entity in which Macedonian particularism – including an officially recognized Macedonian standard language based on the dialects of the western

part of the Republic of Macedonia – was supported by state structures is that graphic art was allowed degrees of abstractness absent from the socialist realist cannon. Both Nedelkovski's *Verses* [Fig. 25] and Momirovski's *Eaves and Sands* [Fig. 26] show an angular freedom of line, color, and orthography that proclaims a kind of abstract liberation unfelt elsewhere in the socialist east. The modernist yet static quality of Stale Popov's *Dark-eyed Angja* [Fig. 27] echoes the maiden in Karalijchkev's 1921 cover for *Rye* analyzed by Mansbach,<sup>13</sup> but where Karalijchkev's maiden was portrayed with sweeping movement, the stasis of *Kalesh Angja* references the well-known (to Macedonian audiences) plot of the Christian maiden who refused to undergo conversion to Islam – a theme that simultaneously served all the standard Balkan Christian nationalisms, but could take on new resonances in an independent Macedonia that resisted Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian hegemonies. The windswept, leafless loneliness of the tree and signature-style orthography of Koneski's *Poems* [Fig. 28], whose titular orthography reflects instead the bright but hopelessly distant birds, can be read as an intimately personal moment of a type that the socialist collective would not have permitted. Finally, the abstract flow of Matevski's *Rains* [Fig. 29] arguably references its author's complicated life's journey without being tied to any realist moment.

As Koheleth tells us: “*Of making many books there is no end*”,<sup>14</sup> and many studies will further our knowledge. More remains to be researched and written, but for the moment it is my hope that this article will contribute to a new history of the modern in art by showing the vitality of various currents in pre-World War Two twentieth century Bulgaria and post-War Macedonia.

<sup>12</sup> MANSBACH, S. A.: *Modern Art in Eastern Europe. From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890 – 1939*. Cambridge 1999, pp. 235-242. The Bulgarian claims on Macedonia and Macedonian – including the graphic representation of the same – constitute a fascinating (and, alas, on-going) current in Bulgarian

art and academe. The tracing of that line, however, must be left for a separate work.

<sup>13</sup> MANSBACH 2007 (see in note 4), pp. 26-28.

<sup>14</sup> Ecclesiastes 12:12.

## Pohľad ponad hranice. Obálky bulharských a macedónskych básnických zbierok zo začiatku a polovice dvadsiateho storočia

### *Resumé*

Umelecké stvárnenia obálok básnických zbierok z Bulharska v rokoch 1900 – 1939 a z Macedónska v prvom desaťročí po vzniku republiky v roku 1944 predstavujú efemérne okná do vývoja modernistickej grafiky na Balkáne. Obálky tohto druhu sa v rámci knižničného spracovania často odstraňujú, prezentované príklady sú preto rovnako ojedinelé, ako sú expresívne a ilustratívne. Rôzne prúdy modernizmu sa v Bulharsku rozvíjali a prelínali nielen v hlavnom meste Sofii, ale i v menších mestách, a to až do vypuknutia druhej svetovej vojny. V povojnovom

období udivuje skutočnosť, že v rámci prvého moderného macedónskeho politického útvaru sa grafike dostalo slobody abstrakcie a osobnej kreativity, značne odlišnej od kánonu socialistického realizmu. Výrazný modernizmus tu mohol slúžiť na upevnenie macedónskej samostatnosti voči bulharskému, gréckemu a srbskému hegemonizmu. Článok nabáda k celkovému prehodnoteniu miesta moderny v balkánskych – a tým aj európskych – dejinách umenia.

*Preklad z angličtiny M. Hrdina*

## What Deconstruction Is Not? (Is Derrida's Philosophy Based upon His Hashish Consumption?)

Atanas BOTEV

As an artist active in and cognizant of the modern culture of South Eastern Europe, I endeavour to situate my work both locally and broadly. Through references to regional and Western historical,

political, and social landscapes, I conduct what might best be understood as a multimedia experiment: my art offers a detailed description of the seemingly disjunctive narratives – History and Art



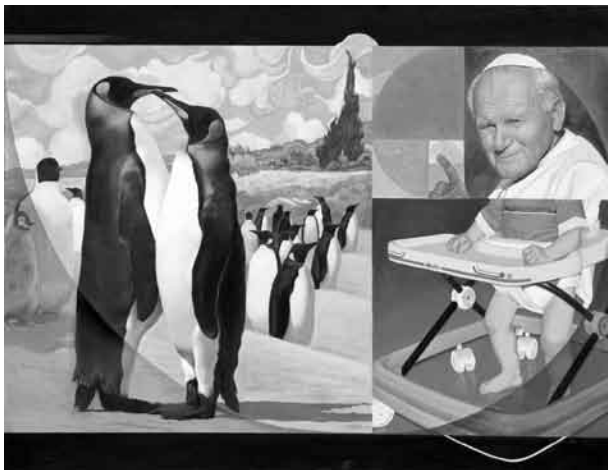
1. Atanas Botev: *Tintin's Bad Trip*, 2002, oil on canvas, 50 × 70 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



2. Atanas Botev: *Retroavanguardia Performance*, 2007, oil on canvas, 146 × 116 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



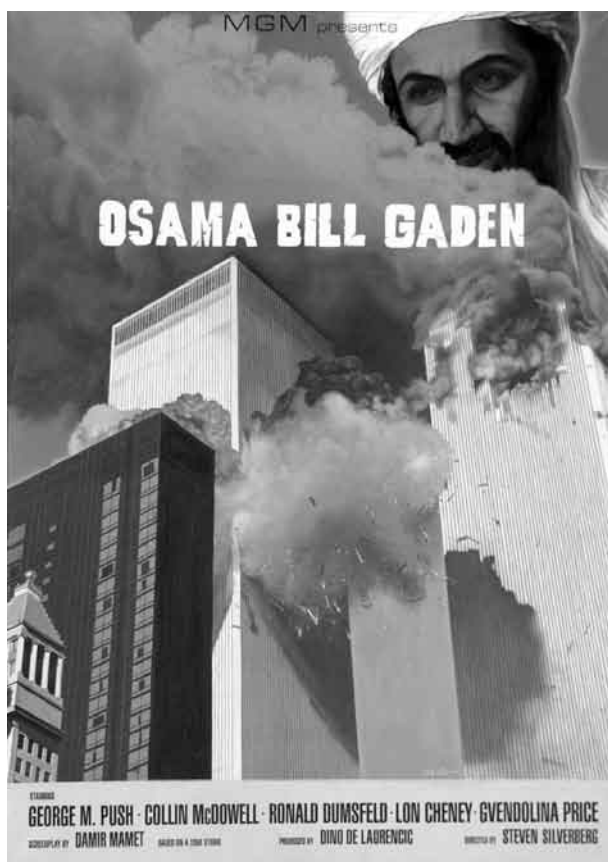
4. Atanas Botev: *Alice*, 2008, oil on canvas, 100 × 80 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



3. Atanas Botev: *Pontifex Maximus*, 2004, oil on canvas, 97 × 130 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



5. Atanas Botev: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 2004, oil on canvas. Photo: Archive of the author.



6. Atanas Botev: *Blockbuster*, 2004, oil on canvas, 130 × 97 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



7. Atanas Botev: *www.marcos.com*, 2005, oil on canvas, 95 × 173 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.

History both specific and generic. In that complex and contradictory context, I take the audience into a hypnotic world where the great narratives – the history of the political and the history of the aesthetic – become immanent. This hallucinatory blow to the building of a universal academic structure acquires revolutionary features; and in the domains of the poetic, it glows with a perceptive amazement and a psychedelic shock – a game where the interested and the active recipient finds the way out by means of free association.

We are a society with all kinds of turbulences and therefore a fertile ground for committed art is well prepared. I'm trying to make a synthesis of history, artistic streams and ideologies of the near and distant past, and to redefine them, actualising their meaning today, by confronting political, public and social context.

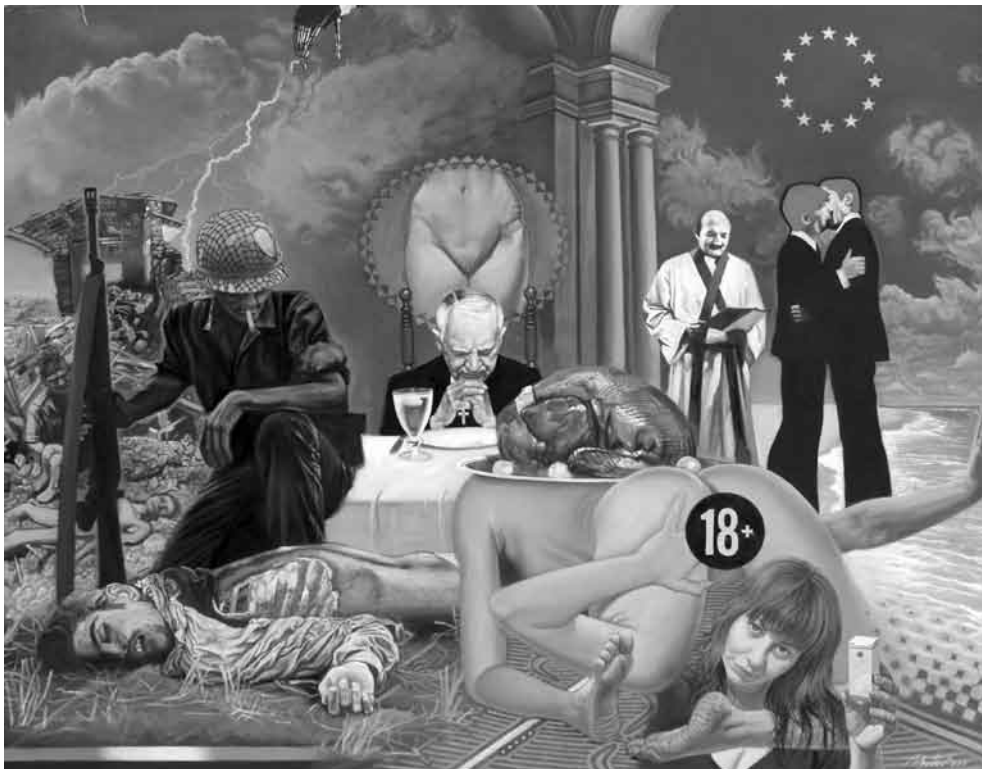
This requires, I believe, a hyperrealistic procedure – a simulation of a collage where I try to reinterpret all my preoccupations, such as the elements of popular culture, the comic, film, as well as quotations of artworks by artists from different epochs. And then I place them in a new, organic whole, alluding (sometimes interrogatively and sometimes ironically) to what a certain artist and his work once meant, and what they mean today. Being ironical in relation to reality, hyperrealism is also interesting for its paradoxical tautological nature. The recipient is often caught by surprise by the items displayed: “*Is it a painting or a photograph?*” is often the first question that comes to his/her mind. Another aspect is the feeling of alienation and irreality. Painted work also has pictorial, tactical artistic values and an aura (I'm paraphrasing Walter Benjamin here) that in the age of digital technology becomes a kind of a curiosity.

Osama Bin Laden levitates in the apocalyptic smoke clouds hanging over the twin towers in Manhattan in their film simulacrum – a poster or a dream.

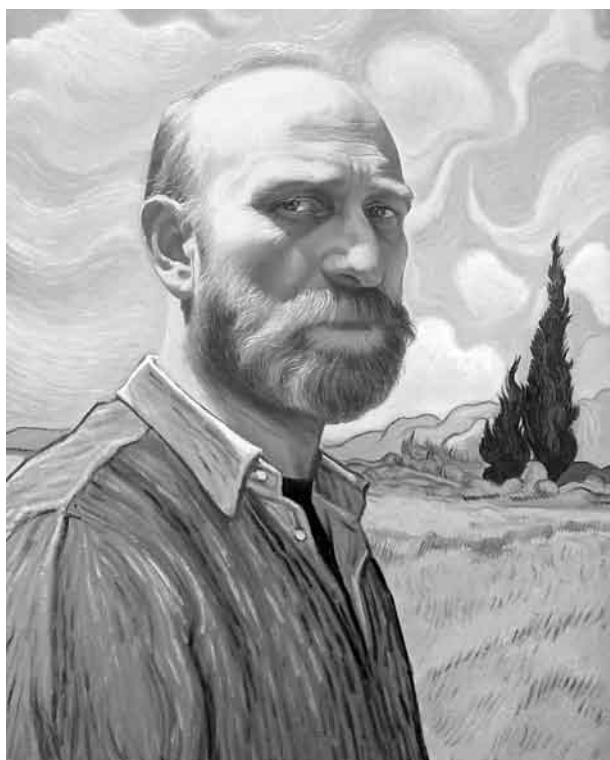
The day when America, together with the entire world, experienced a real destructive spectacle also marked the end of the fictitious Hollywood spectacle. The artificial cataclysms lost their meaning because no one will ever think of trying to rouse the audience with the demolition of the Pentagon, or the destruction of Manhattan or the White House. Things that have already happened in real life be-



8. Atanas Boter: *CAA O-pa-(gzi)-ba(t) and the Stubborn Ejaculate (after Titian)*, 2007, oil on canvas, 97 × 130 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



9. Atanas Boter: *(Dis)integration*, 2007, oil on canvas, 130 × 162 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



come epic, while the Hollywood action spectacle was mostly based upon some fantastic hypothesis, upon things that seem real, but which we know can never really happen.

Two artists from two different historical epochs, two accomplished individuals in their professions. Along with their physical similarity, the next thing they have in common is their social status. Despite being one of the best Macedonian actors, Vlado Jovanovski has been constantly obstructed by the clannish cultural oligarchy that had even suspended him at a certain period of time. Although the problem is local, the artwork is a universal metaphor for the position of the artist confronted by a merciless capitalistic society.

Mondrian's structural visuality becomes a kind of a framework (both as a style reference and as ambient scenography) of that imaginary world the artist is so scrupulously creating in the direction of curiosity, always setting aside convenience in order to remind us of the cynical note of reality. Van Gogh's colonization – as a retroactive deconstruction of Mondrian's artistic intellectuality – from the positions

10. Atanas Botev: *Vlado*, 2005, oil on canvas, 100 × 70 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



11. Atanas Botev: *The Bad Trip of Delacroix Aroused by His Frequent Confrontation with Ingres*, 2007, oil on canvas, 130 × 162 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.



of an expressive poetic catharsis (there is an evident inherited aesthetic factor between these two Dutch artists belonging to two different stylistic-historic periods). Their interrelation is achieved through the alchemy of pop-art that in my creative efforts acquires almost ritual features. So, humour emanates even in the context of the most delicate content: the character of Dr. Gachet is replaced with the character of Sigmund Freud, and from behind emerges Boris Karloff, touching his shoulder in the role of Frankenstein's monster. Mondrian's post-cubistic facets metamorphose (through the experience of the Bauhaus) into commercial billboards with the logo of the most prominent brand on the planet – Coca Cola. In the process of the stylistic evolution the organic structures acquire a geometric aura....

12. Atanas Botev: *Super-ego Mondrian*, 2004, oil on canvas, 120 × 100 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.

13. Atanas Botev: *Amnesty*, 2008, oil on canvas, 80 × 130 cm. Photo: Archive of the author.





**Čo nie je dekoštrukciou?  
(Je Derridova filozofia založená na konzumácii hašišu?)**

*Resumé*

Ako umelec, aktívny v rámci modernej kultúry juhovýchodnej Európy, sa snažím situovať svoje dielo tak v lokálnom, ako aj medzinárodnom kontexte. Prostredníctvom odkazov na regionálne a západné historické, politické a spoločenské súvislosti sa usilujem o niečo, čo možno chápať ako multimediálny experiment: moje práce ponúkajú detailný opis na prvý pohľad nesúvisiacich príbehov – politických dejín a dejín umenia – zohľadňujúc pritom podrob-

nosi aj celkový obraz. Divákov privádzam v tomto komplexnom a protirečivom kontexte do snového sveta, v ktorom sa veľké príbehy – politické dejiny a dejiny umenia – stávajú imanentnými. Toto halucinačné narušenie univerzálnej akademickej štruktúry nadobúda revolučné črty – vo sfére poetiky prináša údiv a psychedelický šok – hru, ktorú aktívny divák dokáže riešiť pomocou voľných asociácií.

*Preklad z angličtiny M. Hrdina*

## Welcome to Capitalism. Institutional Dimensions of Art History in Post-Communist Slovakia\*

Mária ORIŠKOVÁ

My paper will examine the social and institutional dimensions of art history in post-Communist Slovakia. Art history itself an often presumed neutral autonomous science – though brutally contaminated ideologically in the previous regime – struggles today with several problems. Not only a lack of self-reflection on the discipline and its methods and a lack of critical dialogue with past practices, but a new socio-economic framework outline the set of questions that need to be asked.

Since institutional theory in Slovakia (and in Eastern Europe) is by and large barely developed, my text will also have the character of a probe of the situation of institutions dealing with art in which trained art historians work. My thoughts will be structured around several institutions: state institutions (museums and universities), non-governmental and commercial institutions. The concept of the “dominant”, “residual” and “emergent” drawn from Raymond Williams<sup>1</sup> can give us a basic framework for understanding the complex and dynamic ways in which culture operates. Next to emerging elements, residual elements from the dominant past have survived. By residual we refer to those practices that are derived from an earlier stage of society. Residual beliefs and practices remain dominant long after the social conditions that made them dominant have disappeared. Within the dominant there are also

emerging elements. Emerging practices are those that are being developed usually out of a new set of social interactions as society changes. They are often very different from and actively challenge the dominant. Raymond Williams’ argument that a culture is composed of a set of relations between dominant, residual and emerging forms is a way of emphasizing the uneven and dynamic quality of any particular moment. Some institutions affirm and maintain the dominant discourse from the previous regime, as well as traditional or even outmoded practices; others are more subversive and critical and attempt to undermine dominant discourses. My aim is to explore particular institutional mechanisms, key players and power relations.

### I. Art Historiography and Its Institutions

The fundamental question, which I want to ask, is how the science entitled art historiography is constituted and how it distributes knowledge under new conditions through concrete institutions. The socialization of epistemology, which does not disapprove of cognitive dimensions of science but also acknowledges its institutional dimensions (it is the social organization of science and its individual disciplines), has also occurred only recently in social sciences in Slovakia.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, in art history we have

\* This paper has been presented at the colloquium *Art History on the Disciplinary Map in East-Central Europe*, organized by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute (Williamstown, USA) and the Moravian Gallery in Brno, November 18 – 19, 2010.

<sup>1</sup> WILLIAMS, R.: Institutions. In: *Culture*. London 1981, pp. 33-56.

<sup>2</sup> See SZAPUOVÁ, M. (ed.): *Situovaná veda. Podoby a kontexty tvorby poznania*. Bratislava 2009.

recorded various sociological impulses for a much longer period: in social art history, which studies the social conditions of art and in the radical, critical or *new art history* from the end of the 1970s, which particularly examines the social dimensions of the discipline of art history. Within the framework of art historiography attempts to study institutional and wider social conditions and processes of the production of knowledge occur in Slovakia only slowly and hesitantly. Art historiography is still apprehended as a traditional modernist project built on humanist ideals and confirming universal values. Art history in Slovakia is predominantly comprised of canonized values which only slightly differ from those of the previous regime. Many times not only the reflection of research methods is absent but also of the conditions and circumstances in which they operate. The long term absence of critical methods (and the total rejection of Marxism, which was present at the birth of the critical methods at the Western world) left its traces on the current state of this discipline. No attention is paid to notions as ideology, power or desire, rather “magical” notions such as artist-genius, work of art or new art trends are placed at the centre of interest.<sup>3</sup> Aside from minor exceptions, the social role of art historical institutions, which produce, legitimize and disseminate knowledge and which are socially organized and regulated in terms of power, has not been critically researched.

To begin, we can define the notion of institution as referring both to actual buildings and organisations. If we were to list the institutions that play a role in the area of the operating of history and art theory in Slovakia today, most certainly it would incorporate the Institute of Art History at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Institute for the Preservation of Historical Monuments, as well as several departments of art history at universities and art academies, public art museums and galleries, centres for contemporary art, publishing houses, art history associations and groups, art and art history magazines, public media/TV formats, auction houses, private/commercial galleries, foundations and fellowship programs, art biennials, art festivals, conferences, symposia and different awards, as well as academic titles. Thus it pertains to diverse institutions and organizations with different priorities, whose activities may mingle and thus together

create the picture of art historical knowledge. It is evident that the art historical epistemic community began to diversify and specialize much more after 1989, especially if we imagine trained art historians as scholars, university professors, museum curators, connoisseurs, art critics, journalists, art dealers, art managers, etc. Even though this community in Slovakia is small, it is interconnected in many ways. As opposed to the past, when art history graduates were only employed in state services, we can now talk about new possibilities and about the new ratio of powers within the framework of contemporary (market capitalist) society. Although the state model – related especially to museums and universities – dominates even today, new institutions emerged with the market economic and business environment. Thus, from the beginning of the 1990s, certain institutions gradually closed down and others were established through the separation, transformation or re-organization of state institutions. However, completely new institutions have also been gradually established. The reorganization of institutions has its political historical dimension which was gradually demonstrated in the form of certain concepts or methods of work.

## II. State Institutions: Museum and University

With the commencement of the new situation shortly after the revolution of 1989, changes were expected and the transformation of the school system and culture should have been part of the so-called transformation processes. Although the idea of change did not have a clear outline, it was evident that it would pertain to the split from the Communist past. However, after the passing of the first euphoria, it turned out that it was not at all simple to implement the transformation and reject the Communist past; it was also necessary to prepare a new scenario and capital. But the “new beginning” did not have a prepared transformation project. Today it is obvious that the participants in reforms in the field of science and culture did not have previous experience with democratic compe-

<sup>3</sup> EDWARDS, S. (ed.): *Art and Its Histories. A Reader*. New Haven – London 1999, pp. 10-11.

tion or the market economy.<sup>4</sup> Certain attempts to transform individual state/public institutions at the beginning of the 1990s – such as the Slovak National Gallery as the institution of national significance which was transformed into three galleries which were to gradually become completely independent – were quickly stopped by the state organs. Because it turned out that the sphere of the school system and culture was still under state control (or under the control of the Ministry of Culture) and its political exponents who did not want to give it up – in spite of the fact that they did not show any serious interest in it and culture was not a priority in the transformed political situation. And although this could not be any ideological/political dictate “from above”, as it was in the past, the power-related decisions, orders and dismissals continued to exist.

The 1990s – when Slovakia experienced the first years of state independence – were relatively complicated. On one hand, it featured economic reform, privatizing and significant political-economic chaos in progress. On the other hand, the ideals championed by dissidents around Václav Havel were gradually fading. After the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, a great part of Slovak society needed to identify itself with its new, independent national state and probably to experience what most European national states underwent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But it was exactly this political situation in which national cultural institutions such as the Slovak National Gallery turned out to be useful. And so, after an unsuccessful attempt at change in the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava from 1990 to 1993, a different garniture of art historians appeared on the scene and began to implement a program in compliance with the political needs of independent Slovakia. Since the Slovak National Gallery is a public/state institution, it is subsidized by the state. In 1998, it was not difficult to begin implementing an ambitious project – a cycle entitled *The History of Slovak Fine Art*. The aim of this project

financed by the Ministry of Culture was to introduce a comprehensive picture of the development of all fine art types from prehistoric times up to the present (prehistoric, ancient and early medieval art, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century) in the form of exhibitions and publications. It is not necessary to emphasize that the above mentioned project was not only too ambitious but even non-implementable. Furthermore, as in many times in the past, it turned out that modern museum practices and the discipline of art history suitably served the politics of state representation and in the most conservative form. Claims that it would be objective art history, a great synthesis or a finally comprehensive overview related to the Slovak art heritage were not only untrustworthy (an old card of objectivity) but obviously nationalistic. Thus, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the exhibition and publication project created only another fiction of the art history of the Slovak nation, not to mention the fact that the authors themselves emphasize the continuity to a similar project from 1937. The positivistic interpretation of the chronological concept – planned for a long time in the previous regime – constitutes “*new grand narratives*”<sup>5</sup> and is evidently political and instrumental. But the expected and necessary attempt at critical revision of art history remained unfulfilled<sup>6</sup> and can be unambiguously characterized as “*residual*”, surviving from the dominant past.

Since *The History of Slovak Fine Art* publishing project volume surpasses all of the publications published in Slovakia in terms of volume, it becomes the so-called golden fund, the textbook and is decorated by awards and prizes. And of course, in its methodologically conservative (outmoded) form, it sets up certain value criteria; it sends signals towards society and strengthens the power of certain interest groups within the framework of the art historical community. Thanks to Michel Foucault in particular, we can say that the social ordering and control exerted by institutions seems to actually make society, its groups

<sup>4</sup> KUNC, J.: Kdy mrtvý chytá živého. In: BALADRÁN, Z. – HAVRÁNEK, V. (eds.): *Atlas transformace*. Praha 2009, p. 230.

<sup>5</sup> See ORIŠKOVÁ, M.: New Grand Narratives in East-Central European Art History? In: *Arx*, 35, 2002, Nos. 1-3, pp. 234-240.

<sup>6</sup> See BAKOŠ, J.: Slovak Art History in the Time of Globalisation. In: *Arx*, 39, 2006, No. 1, p. 117.

and individuals by creating meaning and values. However, the Slovak National Gallery recently organized a temporary exhibition critical of both the received art history and the category of high art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by combining high art artefacts with ethnographic objects.<sup>7</sup> Thus, attempts at different versions of art history have mildly rippled the still waters of temporary museum exhibitions and permanent collections. However, municipal and regional galleries in Slovakia (aside from small exceptions) look as if time stopped in the era of Socialism. Many of them can be designated not only as traditional, conservative or stagnant, but also as constantly repeating art historical clichés and stereotypes without any invention or critical reflection.

The history of post-Communist museums is full of contradictions and conflicts and so far it is not possible to evaluate it fully. Piotr Piotrowski tried to analyze post-Communist museums, which he understands as affected by “*transition period*” trauma. His idea of the trauma culture incorporates the syndrome of *traumatophilia* and its opposite – *traumatophobia*.<sup>8</sup> Piotrowski studied several examples of museum practice after 1989 in the dialectics of *traumatophilia* and *traumatophobia* by focusing on the concrete programs of museums in Eastern Europe in relation to their past. Those strategies, which show the tendencies to forget, he designates as *traumatophobic*. Conversely, he understands such museum programs as *traumatophilic* when the traumatic past is processed by collecting works of socialist realism and thus becomes part of the creation of historic memory and national identity.<sup>9</sup> The analytic framework designed by Piotrowski can not be bluntly applied to

all museums. Yet we can say about the situation in Slovakia that the museums have not included the plan to work with the Communist past in their program. The exhibition “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century” from the cycle *The History of Slovak Fine Art* and the exhibition “The Seventies”, which excluded the official art of socialist realism (as non-existent) through their concepts and fully developed “*new grand narrative*” about dissident alternative art, are proof of that.<sup>10</sup>

The area called academic/university art history certainly has its significant role in the production, legitimizing and dissemination of art historical knowledge. After 1989, the Department of Art History at the Philosophical Faculty of the Comenius University in Bratislava, the oldest department of its kind, became an independent department and in terms of its program declared itself as a follower of traditions of Western art historiography.<sup>11</sup> Within the framework of art historiography, significant developments in scientific research occurred at the university and academy after 1989 not only in the field of the methodology of art history<sup>12</sup> but also within the framework of embracing critical theory and *new art history*, especially through international symposia/conferences including conference proceedings and anthologies in translation.<sup>13</sup> As opposed to other art historical institutions, the attempts to form a critical revision of the discipline, its methods, approaches and tools, occurred within the framework of academic/university art history. Just as anywhere else, even here we must point out that many times this does not pertain to the reforms of entire institutions, but rather individuals who shift the art historical discourse forward.

<sup>7</sup> HRABUŠICKÝ, A. – BAJCUROVÁ, K. – KUSÁ, A.: *Slovenský mýtus*. [Exhib. Cat.] Bratislava : Slovenská národná galéria – Slovenské národné múzeum, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> PIOTROWSKI, P.: Nowe muzea w Nowej Europie. In: PIOTROWSKI, P.: *Agorafilia. Sztuka i demokracja w postkomunistycznej Europie*. Poznań 2010, pp. 203-223.

<sup>9</sup> JANEWSKI, A.: Případ muzea moderního umění ve Varšavě. In: BALADRÁN – HAVRÁNEK 2009 (see in note 4), pp. 740-741.

<sup>10</sup> ORIŠKOVÁ, M.: K otázke politiky vystavovania: príklad Slovenskej národnej galérie. In: *Arx*, 36, 2003, No. 3, pp. 201- 217.

<sup>11</sup> BAKOŠ, J.: Príbeh zakliatej vednej disciplíny. Seminár dejín umenia na bratislavskej univerzite. In: BOŘUTOVÁ, D. – ORIŠKO, Š. (eds.): *Pocťa Václavovi Menclovi. Zborník štúdií k otázkam interpretácie stredo európskeho umenia*. Bratislava 2000, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> See BAKOŠ, J.: *Štyri trasy metodológie dejín umenia*. Bratislava 2000.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. BAKOŠ, J. (ed.): *The Past in the Present. Contemporary Art & Art History's Myths*. Bratislava 2002; NELSON, R. – SHIFF, R. (eds.): *Kritické pojmy dejín umenia*. Bratislava 2006; and ORIŠKOVÁ, M. (ed.): *Ejekt múzea: predmety, praktiky, publikum. Antológia textov anglo-americkéj kritickéj teórie múzea*. Bratislava 2006.

Art historians – like other intellectuals in Slovakia – do not have exceptional status. Science and research, including pedagogical work at universities, is an area in which the state has been dominant. In the past regime Slovak scientists had to cope not only with the absence of intellectual freedom, bans and regulations, use and misuse from the party of the ruling power but also low social appreciation.<sup>14</sup> It is not in vain that up to today it has been talked about the academic proletariat. We can say that in Communism “*performance and expertise were devalued and power control and protectionism were revalued. The dependence of elected posts from the executive was strengthened. The bureaucratic end in itself and despotism saddled social expediency and subjugation.*”<sup>15</sup>

However, after the fall of the regime, scientists and intellectuals became the first ones to criticize not only the previous regime but also the new situation including the market, consumption, the commodification of knowledge and the relationship between the economy, politics and culture. Since the new global political economic system requires the weakening of the influence of the state,<sup>16</sup> for universities this means the decreasing of financing of the tertiary education system and science but ironically the growth of the number of students and control of the fulfilment of the requirements and criteria set up ahead of time from the part of the state and the EU. At universities and research institutes it has been more frequently talked about the market and its logic which concretely constitutes competition for financing from state and non-state (foundations in particular) resources. We can say that this is a complex set of rules for the implementation of knowledge which is not isolated from politics and the economy. The consumer capitalist economy is made up of connected managing and ruling apparatuses in which the production of knowledge in education, science and

research actively participates and at the same time by which it is controlled.<sup>17</sup> It is also evident that the forms and methods of the social organization of science are not some side factors; on the contrary, they intervene in the production and formation of knowledge. Thus scientific knowledge can be understood as “*constructed*” through social and economic processes and mechanisms and not “*autonomous*”.<sup>18</sup> Many authors designate the current situation as the discourse of “*academic capitalism*”,<sup>19</sup> where specific relations are created between cultural, political and economic components. The knowledge production can no longer be separated from the accumulation of capital and the behaviour strategies (of research and teaching) of individuals or groups/teams. Commissions and various consultative organs, ministries and non-governmental and grant agencies also constitute a part of the wider processes and mechanisms making decisions on “correct investments” in science, research and education. The production of knowledge not only began to be guided by the profit motive; the performance of power became more unclear than in the past. However, we can not deny that the economization of science and research takes place between the school system and science controlled by the state and the neo-liberal market economy. On one hand, profit oriented activities and academic capitalism signal more active relationships, professionalization and marketability. On the other hand, the question is whether the acclaimed productivity and profit-oriented activities also represent credibility and scientific values. The state still governs and distributes power via systems of regulations, stimuli and sanctions. The demands of bureaucracy turn education and art historical research into a result-bound model with quantity prevailing over quality. Management and control have been at least doubled because they come from both the national and supra-

<sup>14</sup> BAKOŠ, J.: *Intelektuál a pamiatka*. Bratislava 2004, pp. 57-64.

<sup>15</sup> FIBICH, J.: Sociální a personální parametry totality. In: BALADRÁN – HAVRÁNEK 2009 (see in note 4), p. 698.

<sup>16</sup> MIYOSHI, M.: “Globalization”, Culture, and the University. In: JAMESON, F. – MIYOSHI, M. (eds.): *The Cultures of Globalization*. Durham (NC) 1998, pp. 261-267.

<sup>17</sup> SZAPUOVÁ 2009 (see in note 2), p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> KOBOVÁ, I.: Akademický kapitalizmus na Slovensku. In: SZAPUOVÁ 2009 (see in note 2), pp. 31-119.

national levels. Rationalization measures must be in compliance with the *Bologna Accord* to ensure that the outcomes of research are clear, comparable and can be easily calculated.

We can not deny that all the areas in which art historians work are linked with the economy, the market or capital and that so-called managerial skills have also become part of their performance. Notions such as rating, ranking and audits are now part of the vocabulary of university professors and scholars. However, it is questionable whether “prescribed knowledge” – pedagogy preoccupied with succeeding and schooling aimed at producing the prescribed quality – also works here.

### III. Non-Governmental and Commercial Institutions

If we were to look for the elements of expected changes and new dynamics in Slovakia after 1989, then the Soros Center for Contemporary Arts (SCCA)<sup>20</sup> can be designated as the *emergent* element through which non-state, private foreign capital entered for the first time in the field of art historical discourse. Although it was predominantly the work in the field of contemporary art, the awarding of grants for curatorial projects and the establishment of the archive of modern and contemporary art (Artists Files), competition between older, state institutions was born here. New organization and administration methods of work, such as the system of changing members of the board of directors and other consultative organs from the domestic experts, as well as foreign cooperation also appeared on the horizon. The financing system independent of the state, as well as the first impulses for competition – not necessary in the previous regime – were truly new. Although we can not in any way talk about the production of autonomous knowledge in the field of art historiography (the SCCA management system through the Open Society Fund in New York precisely designated the activities which could be sup-

ported and what the funds could be designated for), the relations here were diametrically opposed to the previous control systems, authoritarian orders, limitations or intimidation typical for operations of art historical institutions in the previous regime. However, it is interesting to note the distrust with which certain parts of the artistic and art historical community reacted to the arrival of this new player.

Grandiose support in the area of contemporary art and later in publishing art historical literature, including literature in translation,<sup>21</sup> ended in 2001. The potential originally concentrated in art historical and theoretical publications has not been developed further in the Foundation – Centre of Contemporary Art (N-CSU). One of the aims of the donor of this Eastern European project was the support of open society principles in countries with a totalitarian past. But it was anticipated that this support would be temporary and that gradually individual regional centres would be transformed into new institutions according to the local needs which would ensure their own resources of financing. But here also a certain lack of preparation was manifested. And although in certain Eastern European countries new institutions were created from the original Soros centres, this did not happen in Slovakia. In general, art historical institutions have not taken shape; they lack vision and strategy and rather passively rely on “assistance from outside”. But the approximate ten years of activity of SCCA can be considered as an injection of funds that launched the re-evaluation of art of the totalitarian past by domestic art theoreticians and art critics.<sup>22</sup>

The elements of the operations of the Soros Centre were transferred into practice in the form of institutions such as Tranzit, which from 2002 constitutes the network within the framework of Central Europe (Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia). Tranzit, managed in Slovakia not by art critics and curators but by artists, also creates initiatives in the field of contemporary art with non-state financial aid. Subsidies, particularly from banks, en-

<sup>20</sup> HLAVÁČEK, L.: Sorosovo centrum súčasného umění. In: BALADRÁN – HAVRÁNEK 2009 (see in note 4), pp. 651-654.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. BAKOŠ, J.: *Umelec v kľietke*. Bratislava 2000; ORIŠKOVÁ, M. (ed.): *Teória a prax múzeya umenia*. Bratislava 2002; NELSON – SHIFF 2006 (see in note 13).

<sup>22</sup> BAKOŠ 2000 (see in note 21).

able the implementation of a number of activities such as exhibitions of contemporary domestic and foreign artists, publications, discussions, lectures, symposiums, i.e., non-formal education. The activities of Tranzit are of the character of “kunsthalle” and thus today they fill the absence of such institution which the fine art community, art critics and curators have long called for.

Purely commercial institutions are certainly a part of the mosaic of post-Communist transformation in the field of artistic and art history institutions. In 1998, SOGA, the 1<sup>st</sup> Auction Company in Bratislava, and various commercial galleries<sup>23</sup> were established through private capital investments. It is not necessary to emphasize that the donors/sponsors of these institutions are not solely from abroad, but already include domestic entrepreneurs, “new rich” people, art collectors and art dealers who invest not only in older art but also in emerging (but almost exclusively Slovak) art. At this moment, not only art historians who in these institutions work as experts but also the wider community is becoming aware of the definitive validity of the relationship of a work of art to the market as a unique commodity. As opposed to the Western capitalist countries, this situation is completely new for Slovak art history and art historical practice. However, Slovak art historians can not claim in full conscience that “*art history was shaped, for much of the twentieth century, by its role in the art market*”,<sup>24</sup> although in the previous regime they were trained to write the catalogue raisonné, the monograph, organize a one-person show, as well as many of the basic working concepts – provenance, attribution, authentication, etc. Today, art historians may also use their training within the framework of the emerging art market: there is an option. The problem which occurs here within the framework of our “young democracy” is constituted by so-called “fancy jobs” or the “magic” of certain occupations where an art connoisseur is able to transform a work of art into a financial sum

in a split second and where the extreme “attraction” of the “power of money” works.

In a society, in which the economic sphere is pre-eminent, rules the merciless imperative of maximum profits manifested in all areas including science and culture. The conjoined contradictory pursuits of the profession of art historian – secular, commercial, scientific and philosophical –, already in the past analysed by the Western art historians,<sup>25</sup> do not yet constitute the most significant subject of art historical critical reflection in Slovakia, aside from small exceptions. Only the international conference *Artwork through the Market*,<sup>26</sup> organized in 2004 by the Institute of Art History with financial assistance from SCCA, which raised the current problem of the art market related also to Slovakia, can be included among them. Particularly recently it seems that while in the capitalist West critical views of the Western art system have existed for a long time, in Eastern Europe it frequently pertains only to imitating democracy and the neo-liberal economy, including the art market. The marketization of art – frequently of questionable quality in questionable galleries – occurs in this area (for example in business centres and shopping malls). This includes not only the loss of evaluation criteria for art and the desire for profit but also the flowering of art magazines that serve as direct PR and promotion for the artist. Trained art historians looking for jobs in the area of contemporary art make fast careers, frequently as freelance curators or art managers. If they succeed in the effective promotion of themselves, especially in front of cameras, they become “local superstars”, sometimes more famous than the artists they manage and produce. Thus commodification applies not only to the work of art but also to the curator-manager. As Viktor Misiano claims: “... *because we are no longer living in the age of curators and pop-philosophers, but in the age of dealers and managers, the ‘command function’ of those who sell and coordinate has partly passed to those who buy and consume.*”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The largest one is Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum, Bratislava-Čunovo (since 2000) founded by Dutch entrepreneur Gerard H. Meulensteen, art collector and art patron.

<sup>24</sup> EDWARDS 1999 (see in note 3), p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. MANSFIELD, E. (ed.): *Art History and Its Institution*. London 2002.

<sup>26</sup> See BAKOŠ, J. (ed.): *Artwork through the Market. The Past and the Present*. Bratislava 2004.

<sup>27</sup> MISIANO, V.: We and the Others. In: *Continuing Dialogues. A Tribute to Igor Zabel*. Eds. Ch. BENZER – Ch. BÖHLER – Ch. ERHARTER. Zürich 2009, p. 98.



#### IV. Conclusion

Today we could characterize the situation of art historical institutions as complicated, particularly due to the fact that there are still a number of unresolved questions from the past. However, the chronic illnesses from the era of Communism have been covered over by new problems and situations. The time of revolution is over and the transformation is considered still in progress. Eastern European democracies are facing equal discrepancies as those in old Western Europe but, as I have already mentioned above, the radical coming to grips with the Communist past has yet to be achieved. The idea of reconstruction/perestroika was fast withdrawn and again the power of stereotypes and rather safe, mainstream concepts, methods and techniques has reappeared. System solutions are lacking in this stratified accumulation of conceptual and economic problems. And maybe therefore the mainstream and residua of the past prevail in the museum concepts as well as poorly masked doctrine of objectivity in art historiography. These popular schemes are often considered as the best road to the recipient, similar to various TV formats. Critical approaches are rare and the new generation of art historians also manifests itself either as neo-conservative<sup>28</sup> or pragmatic, following its utilitarian interests.

When looking for the causes of the current state of art history institutions, it is necessary to ask the question how these institutions operated in the past regime. Eda Čufer, the art theorist from Slovenia, examines not only the enormous development of modern Western art institutions against the background of the Cold War but also how state institutions functioned before and after Communism, what these institutions produced, whom they served and to what extent institutions and social bodies of the Socialist modern state resemble those of modern democratic states. She raised the fundamental question “*not of productivity but credibility:*

*to what extent can we trust and believe in the narratives of East European museums, universities, institutes and academies?”* As she puts it: “*If for Western individuals these institutions represent some kind of prosthetic bodies through which they can extend and fully realise their creative, political or scientific visions and potentials, if for them the institutions are supposed to function as bridges through which individual values become collectivised, and if the history of the institution presents a kind of sum of individual efforts, then for the Easterners, institutions still represent a zone of fear, a source of punishment and frustration, a place where original, subjective inputs get somehow deformed, damned, perverted. Easterners deeply mistrust if not hate their public institutions because those institutions conditioned them to be submissive. On the other hand, paradoxically it is exactly this hatred that reproduces submissiveness. Constructive critique cannot be born from hatred of the object of criticism, only from the desire to constructively modify it.*”<sup>29</sup> The benefit of such analysis of the institutional culture of Eastern Europe can be seen in references to deformations or even dysfunction. Čufer talks about the “*dysfunctional, neurotic institutional culture of the East*”<sup>30</sup> and claims that museums and academies can not be reconstructed as easily as hotels and banks.

The art historical institutions suffer from their own identity crisis. I dare to claim that Slovak culture is experiencing a significant crisis because it failed to come to grips with its Communist past. And so to understand today’s state means not only to examine the concrete outcomes of art historical institutions in the past twenty years but also to look closer at the character of these institutions in the process of social change. Here we must say that although immediately after the changes in 1989 it appeared that radical reforms would occur, the optimism quickly evaporated and was replaced by upheaval and stagnation. Claus Offe, the German sociologist, claims that Eastern Europe began the reform and revision of its state institutions in the form of “*round table talks*”, which meant the transition from an authoritarian regime to a way of co-opting and admitting new actors,<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> ŠEVČÍK, J.: Neokonzervativizmus. In: BALADRÁN – HAVRÁNEK 2009 (see in note 4), pp. 351-355.

<sup>29</sup> ČUFER, E.: Enjoy Me, Abuse Me, I am Your Artist. Cultural Politics, Their Monuments, Their Ruins. In: IRWIN (ed.): *East Art Map. Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge

(MA) 2006, p. 370.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>31</sup> OFFE, C.: *Designing Institutions for East European Transitions*. Bremen 1994, p. 12.

where the creation of a new order took place in the presence of old and new players. But after this phase of hectic changes, the unpreparedness for radical changes occurred. It turned out that society expected not change but “*new stability*” and the so-called “*identical reproduction*” occurred in this process. Offe’s term “*identical reproduction*”<sup>32</sup> in institutional theory means the process which enables stability and at the same time endless variations and mutations of patterns/specimens, as in nature. Besides other factors, either the availability of a positive reference model from the past is essential in the identical reproduction of institutions or an imported institutional model which can be suitably adapted. But in Slovakia, the reference model of the “golden past” was not possible and maybe therefore the “Socialist model” of institution returned quickly in a modified form. On the other

hand, the “golden” West model<sup>33</sup> resonated with a different part of the society. However, “foreign models” similar to the rhetoric of “learning from others” is not popular in Slovakia. And thus eventually we can say that new institutions are not quite new but rather rooted in the Socialist past or freshly implanted from the West. Paradoxes and contradictory relations are also demonstrated by the fact that in today’s “post-Communist nostalgia”, the “Socialist model” of state institutions as a positive reference model is acceptable for many, even though only in the form of memory. The current phase – full of contradictions – is a kind of slow maturation where inherited institutional patterns and generated state of mind operate. As Offe put it: “*Not only are institutions man-made, but men are institution-made.*”<sup>34</sup>

*English translation by E. McCullough*

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<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

## Vitajte v kapitalizme. Inštitucionálne rozmery dejín umenia na postkomunistickom Slovensku

### Resumé

Príspevok odznel na medzinárodnom kolokviu *Dejiny umenia na mape humanitných odborov v strednej a východnej Európe*, ktoré zorganizoval Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute (Williamstown, USA) a Moravská galerie v Brne v dňoch 18. – 19. novembra 2010. Text je pokusom v oblasti inštitucionálnej teórie a vychádza z koncepcie britského sociológa a teoretika kultúry Raymonda Williama. Williamsova kritická teória dominantných, reziduálnych a novovznikajúcich elementov, fungujúcich ako dynamický komplex síl v kultúre, tvorí potom rámec uvažovania o umelecko-historických inštitúciách na Slovensku po roku 1989. Keďže Williams chápe reziduálne ako odkazujúce k praktikám, ktoré sú odvodené z minulosti, štúdia sa zapodieva tými inštitúciami dejín umenia v postkomunistickom systéme, ktoré prežívajú do súčasnosti, aj keď spoločenské podmienky, ktoré umožnili ich fungovanie, už zanikli. Minulé dominantné tu však existuje ako prítomné reziduálne vedľa novovznikajúceho, často značne odlišného, aktívneho, inovatívneho. Text sa venuje tiež zásadnej otázke, ako veda zvaná historiografia umenia konštituuje a distribuuje poznanie v nových podmienkach prostredníctvom konkrétnych inštitúcií. Socializácia epistemológie, ktorá neodmieta kognitívne dimenzie vedy, ale priznáva aj jej inštitucionálne rozmery (teda spoločenskú organizovanosť vedy a jej jednotlivých disciplín), sa objavila iba nedávno v rôznych spoločenských vedách aj na Slovensku. V rámci slovenskej historiografie umenia sa však len pomaly a váhavo objavujú pokusy o skúmanie inštitucionálnych a širších spoločenských podmienok a procesov tvorby umelecko-historického poznania. Historiografia umenia je ešte pomerne často ponímaná ako tradičný modernistický projekt, postavený na humanistických ideáloch a na potvrdzovaní univerzálnych/kanonizovaných hodnôt. Mnohokrát absentuje nielen reflexia metód výskumu historika umenia, ale i podmienok a okolností, v ktorých výskum a veda fungujú. Dlhodobá absencia kritických metód (a totálne zavrnutie

marxizmu, ktorý stál pri zrode kritických metód v západnom svete) sa podpísala na súčasnom stave disciplíny. Pojmom ako je ideológia, moc alebo túžba sa nevenuje pozornosť a v centre záujmu stoja skôr „magické“ pojmy ako umelec-génus, umelecké dielo alebo nové umelecké smery.

Štúdia sleduje tzv. transformačné procesy (transformácia školstva a kultúry) a „nový začiatok“ po roku 1989, kde nebol pripravený projekt premien (okrem vymazania socialistickej minulosti) a kde aktéri reforiem na poli vedy a kultúry nemali predchádzajúce skúsenosti s demokratickou súťažou, ani s trhovou ekonomikou. Mnohé iniciatívy i praktiky na poli galerijných inštitúcií možno preto označiť nielen ako tradičné, konzervatívne či stagnujúce, ale tiež ako neustále opakujúce múzejné umelecko-historické klíše a stereotypy bez teoreticko-kritickej reflexie či pokusov o revíziu. Preto ich možno považovať v rámci Williamsovej teórie za reziduálne, prežívajúce zo socialistickej minulosti. Na rozdiel od múzejných inštitúcií sa v rámci akademických/univerzitných dejín umenia objavili pokusy o kritickú revíziu disciplíny, jej metód, prístupov a nástrojov. Na univerzitách, aj v umenovedných inštitúciách, sa však stále častejšie hovorí o trhu a jeho logike, čo konkrétne predstavuje súťaženie o financovanie zo štátnych a neštátnych (najmä nadačných) zdrojov. Dá sa povedať, že sa jedná o zložitý súbor pravidiel pre uskutočňovanie poznania, ktoré nie je izolované od politiky a ekonomiky. Konzumná kapitalistická ekonómia predstavuje spojené aparáty vedenia a vládnutia, na ktorých produkcia poznania vo vzdelávaní, vede a výskume aktívne participuje a ktorými je zároveň riadená. Je tiež zrejmé, že formy a spôsoby spoločenskej organizovanosti vedy nie sú nejakým vedľajším faktorom, ale naopak, intervedujú do produkcie a podoby poznania. Vedecké poznanie tak možno chápať ako „konštruované“ prostredníctvom sociálnych a ekonomických procesov a mechanizmov a nie ako „autonómne“. Nemožno poprieť, že

všetky oblasti, v ktorých pracuje historik umenia sú dnes zviazané s ekonomikou, trhom či kapitálom a súčasťou jeho výkonov sa stali i tzv. manažérske schopnosti. Pojmy ako rating, ranking či audit patria dnes do slovníka univerzitného profesora a vedca. Do mozaiky postkomunistických zmien/transfor­mácií na poli umeleckých a umenovedných inštitúcií patria istotne aj neštátne a čisto komerčné inštitúcie, ktoré možno považovať za novovznikajúce elementy v kultúrnych vzťahoch a podmienkach po roku 1989. Pre slovenský dejepis umenia aj umeleckohistorickú prax je táto situácia nová (na rozdiel od západných kapitalistických krajín) a znamená rozšírenie pôsobnosti a aktivít historika umenia do komerčnej sféry. V súčasnosti možno charakterizovať situáciu umeleckohistorických inštitúcií ako komplikovanú a to najmä preto, že je tu stále množstvo nevyriešených otázok z minulosti. Chronické choroby z éry komunizmu sú však už poprekrývané novými problémami a situáciami. Idea prestavby/perestrojky sa rýchlo vyčerpala a opäť sa ukázala sila stereotypov a skôr bezpečných, mainstreamových koncepcií, metód

a postupov. V tomto mnohvrstevnatom hromadení koncepčných a ekonomických problémov chýbajú systémové riešenia. A možno aj preto prevažuje napríklad v koncepciách múzeí mainstream a reziduá minulosti a v historiografii umenia zle maskovaná doktrína objektivity. Rôzne populárne schémy sa mnohokrát považujú za najlepšiu cestu k recipientovi, podobne ako rôzne TV formáty. Kritické prístupy sú ojedinelé a aj nastupujúca generácia historikov umenia sa prejavuje buď ako neokonzervatívna alebo pragmatická, sledujúca svoje úzke utilitaristické záujmy.

Záverom sa text venuje otázkam, názorom a analýzam dvoch východoeurópskych teoretikov inštitucionálnej kultúry – Edy Čuferovej a Clausovi Offemu, ktorí vidia charakter inštitúcií v postkomunistických krajinách v súvislostiach s ich problematickou minulosťou, kde inštitúcie dlhodobo nefungovali ako prirodzené predĺženie individuálnych potrieb. Eda Čufer ich vidí ako nefunkčné, stagnujúce či dokonca neurotické a Claus Offe ako identicky sa reprodukujúce v mene stability.

## Vojvoda Albert Sasko-Tešínsky a jeho vkus\*

Ingrid CIULISOVÁ

Ako konštatoval Francis Haskell, pre 18. storočie bolo charakteristické priam obsesívne zaujatie otázkami vkusu. A hoci zmeny boli časté a hojne diskutované, mali prekvapujúco malý vplyv na hierarchiu sformovanú v štyridsiatych, resp. päťdesiatych rokoch 17. storočia. Vo Francúzsku polovice 18. storočia sa priznávalo, že holandské a flámske 'kabinetné' obrazy sú u väčšiny zberateľov viac populárne ako monumentálne talianske renesančné a barokové maľby. Aj preto, že disponovali vyššími morálnymi, a tak aj estetickými kvalitami.<sup>1</sup> Medzi významných stredo európskych 'mužov vkusu' tohto obdobia patrí nesporne aj vojvoda Albert Sasko-Tešínsky (1738 – 1822). Jeho pozoruhodná zbierka grafiky, sformovaná v druhej polovici 18. a na začiatku 19. storočia, sa stala základom svetoznámej viedenskej Albertiny a Albert sám sa radí k významným európskym zberateľom 18. storočia. Začiatky Albertovho intenzívnejšieho záujmu o umenie a zberateľstvo sa spájajú práve s jeho pobytom v Bratislave (v tej dobe Pressburg) v rokoch 1766 – 1780 a súvisia do veľkej miery s vojvodovým hlbokým záujmom

o myšlienky francúzskych osvietenecov a idey slobodomurárstva. Predkladaná štúdia je zacielená práve na Albertovo bratislavské pôsobenie, na sociálny kontext, v ktorom sa formovali Albertove vkusové preferencie, ako aj na jeho záujem o holandské a flámske kabinetné obrazy.

Roku 1765 zomrel uhorský palatín gróf Lajos Batthyány, uhorský aristokrat, ktorý svoj post získal tradične, a síce na základe voľby uhorského snemu. Po jeho smrti zostalo miesto palatína neobsadené iba krátky čas. Ešte v tom istom roku totiž vymenovala cisárovná Mária Terézia za uhorského miestodržiteľa (*locumtenens regius*) a zároveň hlavného uhorského kapitána mladého princa Alberta. Princ Albert, mladší syn saského kurfirsta Frederika Augusta II. a jeho manželky Márie Jozefy Habsburskej, bol nielen cisárovniným chránencom, ale aj budúcim manželom obľúbenej cisárovninej dcéry Márie Kristíny. Po svadbe, ktorej veľkolepé oslavy sa konali v apríli roku 1766 v Schlosshofe, sa vojvoda Albert a arcivojvodkyňa Mária Kristína presťahovali do Bratislavy (Pressburg), kráľovského a korunovačného

\* Štúdia vznikla s podporou vedeckej grantovej agentúry MŠV-VaŠ SR a SAV VEGA č. 2/0087/10. Moje poďakovanie za pomoc a podporu tu patrí viacerým kolegom, predovšetkým však Hanne Benesz, Veronike Birke, Barbare Dossi, Gerlinde Gruber, Herbertovi Karnerovi a Joostovi Vander Auwerovi, ako aj pracovníkom viedenskej Österreichische Nationalbibliothek a bruselského štátneho archívu. Významnú úlohu pri mojom výskume zberateľských aktivít vojvodu Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho v rakúskom Nizozemsku zohrával štipendijný pobyt vo Flámskom akademickom centre pre vedu a umenie (Vlaams Academisch Centrum) v Bruseli v roku 2010. Štúdia mohla byť napísaná aj vďaka študijnému pobytu na pôde

holandského umeleckohistorického inštitútu (Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut) vo Florencii roku 2011.

<sup>1</sup> HASKELL, F.: *Rediscoveries in Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France*. London 1976, s. 5. K otázke obľúbenosti holandských a flámskych obrazov medzi francúzskymi zberateľmi v 18. storočí pozri MICHEL, P.: *French Collectors and the Taste for Flemish Painting during the Eighteenth Century*. In: *Art Auctions and Dealers. Studies in European Urban History (1100 – 1800)*, 20. Ed. D. LYNA – F. VERMEYLEN – H. VLIÉGHE. Turnhout 2009, s. 127-134.



1. Friedrich Heinrich Füger – Jean Galucha (pripísané): Albert, vojvoda Sasko-Tešínsky a arcivojvodkyňa Mária Kristína, 1776, akvarel na slonovej kosti. Viedeň, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Foto: KHM, Wien.

mesta, sídla snemu a centrálnych uhorských úradov [Obr. 1].<sup>2</sup> Rezidenčným sídlom nového miestodržiteľa sa stal bratislavský hrad – jedna z najstarších a najvýznamnejších pevností Uhorska. Plány a prvé práce na adaptáciu hradnej architektúry na obytný palác sa síce uskutočnili ešte pred Albertovým vymenovaním, avšak komplexná prestavba hradu na elegantné dvorské sídlo bola vo svojom základe

realizovaná až neskôr, a síce v šesťdesiatych rokoch 18. storočia. Jej súčasťou bola v rokoch 1767 – 1769 i výstavba novej budovy, neskôr nazývanej Tereziánium [Obr. 2a, 2b].<sup>3</sup>

Tereziánium bolo pristavané k východnej časti hradu a v spolupráci s Albertom ho projektoval Franz Anton Hillebrandt (1719 – 1797).<sup>4</sup> Kým priestory starého hradu mali plniť predovšetkým

<sup>2</sup> K dejinám ich pôsobenia v Uhorsku pozri predovšetkým VYVÍJALOVÁ, M.: Bratislavský dvor miestodržiteľa Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho v rokoch 1766 – 1780. In: *Historický časopis*, 44, 1996, č. 3, s. 383-397; KULCSÁR, K.: The Lieutenant-Governorship. Prince Albert of Saxony (1738 – 1822) – his Appointment and Activity in Hungary. In: *Aetas. Journal of History and Related Discipline*, 17, 2002, č. 1, s. 51-66.

<sup>3</sup> O prístavbe rozhodla Mária Terézia intimátom zo dňa 31. júla 1767. Uhorskej komore nariadila vyplácať na novú stavbu 4000 zlatých mesačne až do ukončenia. V účtovných dokladoch je prístavba označovaná ako novostavba (nova structura,

neu Gebäude). – VYVÍJALOVÁ 1996, c. d. (v pozn. 2), s. 389-390.

<sup>4</sup> Umeleckohistorická literatúra k dejinám stavby bratislavského hradu v 18. storočí je početná. Systematickejšie sa tejto problematike venovala predovšetkým Dobroslava Menclová, ktorá sa vo svojich prácach opierala aj o zachovanú historickú plánovú dokumentáciu. Pozri MENCLOVÁ, D.: Hrad Bratislava. In: *Bratislava. Časopis pro výzkum Slovenska a Podkarpatské Rusi*, 9, 1935, č. 1-2, s. 477-525; MENCLOVÁ, D.: *Hrad Bratislava*. Bratislava 1936; MENCL, V. – MENCLOVÁ, D.: *Bratislava. Stavební obraz města a hradu*. Praha 1936. Porovnaj tiež



2a. Joseph a Peter Schaffer: Poblád na Bratislavu (Pressburg) s hradom, 1787, kolorovaná rytina. Viedeň, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Foto: ÖNB, Wien.

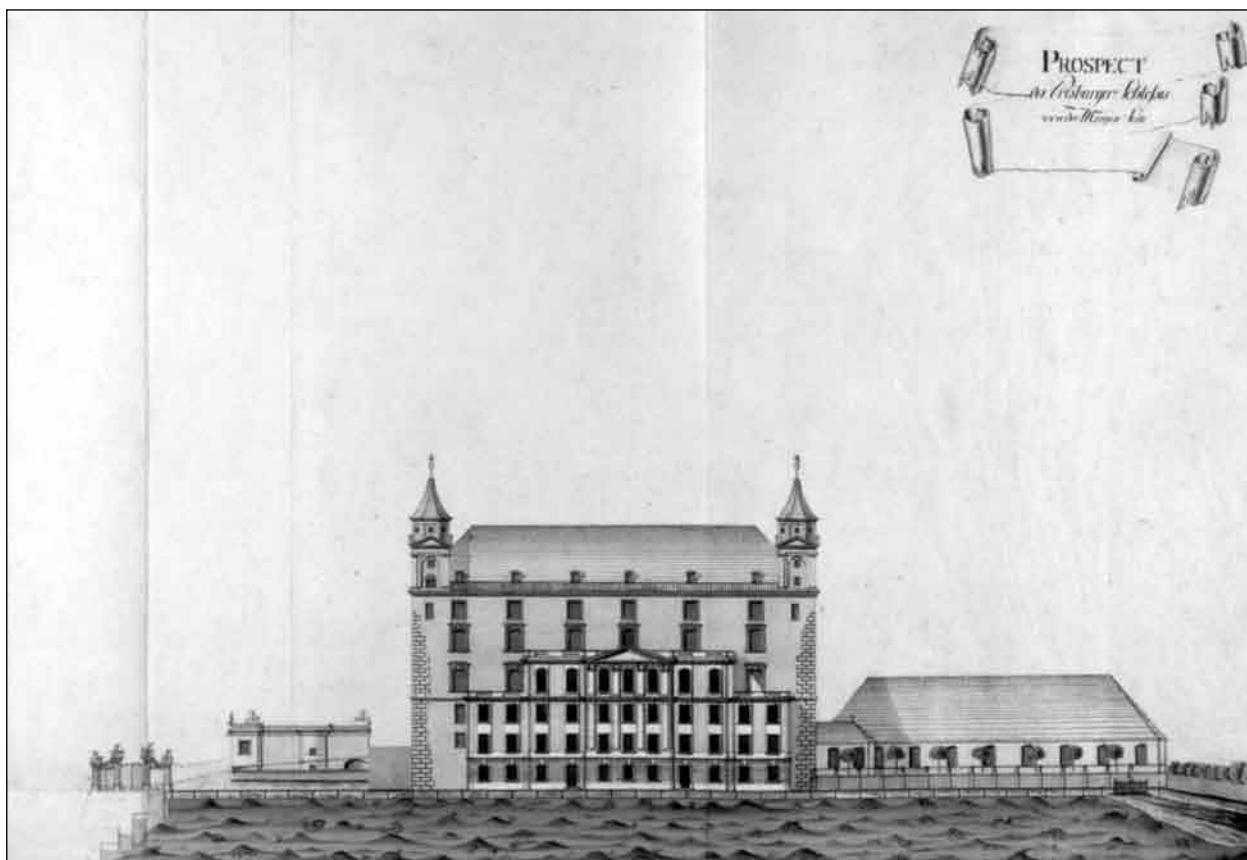
oficiálnu reprezentačnú funkciu, Tereziánum bolo vyhradené pre obytné priestory, a to tak cisárovnej ako aj dynastického páru. Významnému postaveniu hradu ako miestodržiteľského sídla zodpovedalo aj jeho luxusné interiérové zariadenie. Bolo z veľkej časti darom cisárovnej dcére Márii Kristíne, včítane početného súboru obrazov, pochádzajúceho



2b. Joseph a Peter Schaffer: Poblád na Bratislavu (Pressburg) s hradom (detail), 1787, kolorovaná rytina. Viedeň, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Foto: ÖNB, Wien.

RATKOŠ, P. – LICHNER, J. – POLLA, B. – ŠTEFANOVIČOVÁ, T.: *Bratislavský hrad*. Bratislava 1960; ŠÁŠKY, L.: Plány z prestavieb Bratislavského hradu v 18. storočí. In: *Zborník Slovenského národného múzea, 56. História*, 2. Bratislava 1962, s. 82-105; ŠÁŠKY, L.: Der thesesianische Umbau der Burg von Preßburg. In: *Maria Theresia als Königin von Ungarn*. Ed. G. MRAZ – G. SCHLAG. Eisenstadt 1980, s. 125-133; FATSAR, K.: Albert herceg rezidenciája. A pozsonyi királyi vár és kertjei a 18. század második felében. In: *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 50, 2001, č. 1-2, s. 125-132. Novšie sa prestavbou bratislavského hradu v 18. storočí a zachovanou historickou plánovou dokumentáciou podrobne zaoberal

GARMS, J.: Die Residenz von Pressburg. Bau- und Ausstattungsprojekte in maria-theresianischer Zeit. In: *Barockberichte*, 2010, č. 55-56, s. 589-602.



3. Prospekt východného priečelia bratislavského hradu, kolorovaná kresba. Viedeň, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Foto: PÚ SR, Bratislava.

z habsburských umeleckých zbierok.<sup>5</sup> Zároveň je však potrebné dodať, že po svojom príchode do Bratislavy roku 1766 sa Albert a Mária Kristína neubytovali na hrade, ale v meste, v paláci grófa Mikuláša Esterházyho.<sup>6</sup> A zdá sa, že hrad sa stal ich

trvalým príbytkom až okolo roku 1770, po završení stavebných prác na budove Tereziána.

Podrobné opisy interiérov a zariadenia obnoveného bratislavského hradu tak, ako ich dokladajú doposiaľ známe súveké historické zdroje,<sup>7</sup> naznačujú,

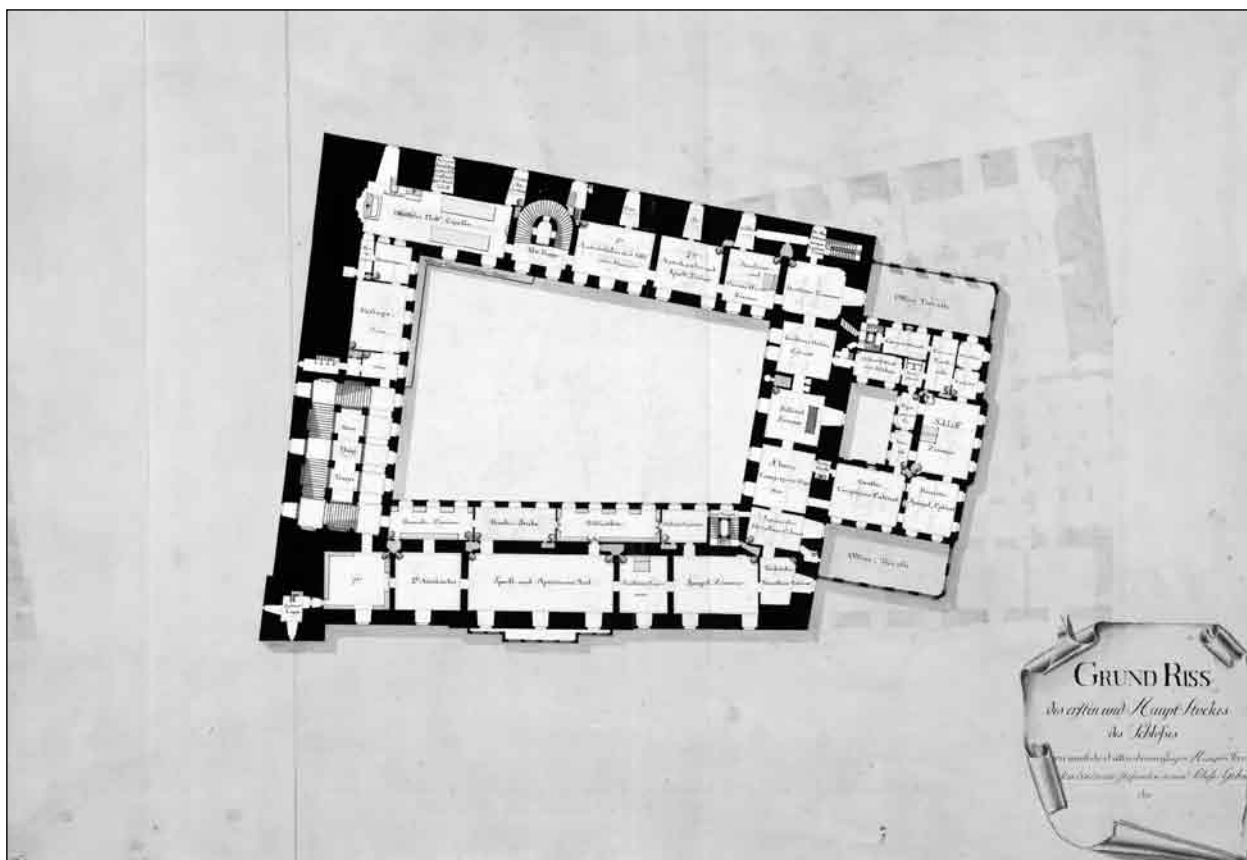
<sup>5</sup> Darovacia listina Márie Terézie, datovaná k 22. novembru 1770, je dnes nezvestná. Text záhlavia tejto listiny publikoval ENGERTH, E. von: *Kunsthistorische Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses. Gemälde. Beschreibendes Verzeichniß*. Zv. I. Wien 1884, s. 53.

<sup>6</sup> MENCL – MENCLOVÁ 1936, c. d. (v pozn. 4), s. 121.

<sup>7</sup> Základné zdroje informácií predstavuje opis interiérového zariadenia bratislavského hradu z roku 1781 od Gottfrieda von Rotenstein (pozri ROTENSTEIN, G. von: *Lust-Reisen durch Bayern, Württemberg, Pfalz, Sachsen, Brandenburg, Oesterreich, Mähren, Böhmen und Ungarn, in den Jahren 1784 – 1791*. Zv. 1-3. Leipzig 1792 – 1793, s. 54-62) a inventár zariadenia bratislavského hradu, spísaný 19. februára 1781 a písomne odovzdaný

1. marca toho istého roku (Viedeň, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Oberstkämmereramtakten, SR 38a, akt. č. 89/1780). Na existenciu tohto inventára a jeho význam pre výskum dejín habsburských umeleckých zbierok zásadným spôsobom upozornila Klára Garas v GARAS, K.: La collection de tableaux du Château royal de Buda au XVIIIe siècle. In: *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, 1969, č. 32-33, s. 91-92. Súpisom obrazov z tohto inventára sa neskôr podrobne zaoberala a jeho slovenský preklad roku 1990 publikovala Mária Malíková v MALÍKOVÁ, M.: Nové poznatky o zariadení bratislavského hradu v rokoch 1766 – 1784. In: *Zborník Slovenského národného múzea, 84. História*, 30. Bratislava 1990, s. 149-172, najmä s. 164-169. V origináli tento súpis publikovala a v dejinnom kontexte habsburských zbierok jednotlivé diela podrobne skúmala Gerlinde Gruber





4. Pôdorys prvého poschodia bratislavského hradu, kolorovaná kresba. Viedeň, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Foto: ÖNB, Wien.

že práce na adaptácii hradných priestorov prebiehali v úzkej spolupráci s Albertom. Bolo tomu tak najmä v prípade novej budovy a obytných priestorov miestodržiteľského páru, kde sa Albertove osobné vkusové preferencie mohli prejaviť najplnšie. Ich vyjadrením bol do veľkej miery už samotný architektonický projekt Tereziána, ktorého jadro tvorila trojdielna budova s bosovanou prízemnou časťou a odstupňovaným rizalitom, ukončeným v ústrednej časti tympanonom. Strohá exteriérová výzdoba sústredená na konzolové hlavice pilastrov s klasicistickými festónmi zreteľne naznačovala odklon od subtilných rokokových foriem, ktoré charakterizo-

vali obnovené reprezentačné interiéry starého hradu [Obr. 3]. Klasicizujúci prístup a inšpirácia antikou ako umeleckou normou bola zrejme aj v interiérovej výzdobe súkromných priestorov obývaných novým miestodržiteľom. Vojvoda Albert Sasko-Tešínsky bol vojakom a jeho sústredený záujem o otázky umenia a idey osvietenstva sa môžu zdať na prvý pohľad prekvapujúce. V rakúskej monarchii 18. storočia to však zďaleka nebolo tak výnimočné a propagácia osvietenstva sa v habsburských zemiach spája s menami ďalších významných aristokratov aktívnych na vojenskom poli.<sup>8</sup> Spomedzi nich jednoznačne vynikal Princ Eugen Savojský (1663 – 1736), ktorý bol rov-

v GRUBER, G.: Das Bilderverzeichnis der Pressburger Burg von 1781. Ein Beitrag zur Sammlungsgeschichte der Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums. In: *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien*, 8 – 9, 2006 – 2007, s. 354–400.

<sup>8</sup> 'Enlightenment in the Habsburg lands was often promoted by soldiers or ex-soldiers; Petrasch, Kinsky, even Sonnenfels are outstanding examples, and plenty of Hungarian cases could be adduced too.' – EVANS, R. J. W.: *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe, c. 1683 – 1867*. Oxford 2006, s. 31. K otázke osvietenstva

nako ako Albert vo Viedni 'cudzincom'. Preslávil sa svojimi víťazstvami nad Turkami a bol považovaný nielen za jedného z najúspešnejších vojenských veliteľov súvekej Európy, ale vynikal aj ako patrón umenia a umelecký zberateľ veľkého formátu. Jeho zbierka obrazov, grafiky, kníh a starých rukopisov, umiestnená v belvedérskom paláci vo Viedni, bola už za jeho života preslávená a obdivovaná. Dobre známe však boli aj jeho vzťahy s francúzskymi encyklopedistami Jeanom J. Rousseauom a Charlesom L. Montesquieum, ako aj s Gottfriedom Leibnizom a Pietrom Giannonem.

Vráťme sa však znova k Albertovi. V septembri roku 1773 navštívil vojvodu Sasko-Tešínskeho v Bratislave Giacomo Durazzo (1717 – 1794), kultivovaný aristokrat, impresário a diplomat z významnej janovskej aristokratickej rodiny, ktorý bol rovnako ako Albert slobodomurárom a zanietým stúpencom osvietenstva.<sup>9</sup> V tej dobe bol vojvoda už čestným členom viedenskej mediryteckej akadémie a vlastnil zbierku rytín, bohatú najmä na diela súvekých francúzskych a anglických umelcov. K rokom 1768 – 1774

sú dokumentované jeho nákupy u Johanna Georga Willeho (1715 – 1808), nemeckého rytca známeho svojimi rytinami podľa diel súvekých holandských a nemeckých maliarov.<sup>10</sup> Pre Durazza, inšpirovaného myšlienkami francúzskych encyklopedistov, najmä D'Alamberta,<sup>11</sup> predstavovali umelecké diela jednu z dôležitých foriem ľudského poznania, ktoré je potrebné uchovávať pre blaho všetkých. Z tohto pohľadu bolo potom budovanie umeleckej zbierky osvieteným patrónom aktom uchovávanía, záchrany, poznania a propagácie výnimočných hodnôt krásy vytvorených ľudstvom. Durazzova návšteva u vojvodu Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho vyústila do pozoruhodného projektu. Bol ním projekt univerzálnych dejín maliarstva, ktorého hlavným cieľom bolo na základe reprodukčných grafik ilustrovať dejiny a pokrok v maliarstve.<sup>12</sup> V rokoch 1774 – 1776 Durazzo s pomocou antikvára Domenica Lovisa a mladého umelca Giovanniho Davida (1743 – 1790) tento pozoruhodný osvietenský projekt potom v základe aj úspešne 'zmaterializoval'. Výsledkom bola *Storia pratica della Pittura, e dell'Intaglio in una Raccolta di Stampe Scelte*.<sup>13</sup>

v rakúskej monarchii pozri predovšetkým PLASCHKA, R. G. et al.: *Österreich im Europa der Aufklärung. Kontinuität und Zäsur in Europa zur Zeit Maria Theresias und Josephs II.* Zv. 1-2. Wien 1985.

<sup>9</sup> Durazzo spomína návštevu v Bratislave vo svojom *Discorso Preliminare* z roku 1776. Pozri *Discorso Preliminare. Widmungsblatt an Herzog Albert*. Viedeň, Albertina, Graphische Sammlung, inv. č. 3085a-f. O Albertovi Sasko-Tešínskom ako slobodomurárovi pozri DOSSI, B.: *Albertina. The History of the Collection and Its Masterpieces*. München – London – New York 2000, s. 153; BENEDIK, Ch.: *The Albertina. The Palais and the Habsburg State Rooms*. Wien 2008, s. 264, pozn. 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Mémoire et Journal de J. G. Wille, graveur du roi publiés d'après les manuscrits autographes de la Bibliothèque impériale par Georges Duplessis; avec une préface par Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*. Zv. 1-2. Paris 1857, s. 385, 410, 447, 455, 468, 476, 492, 541, 583; KOSCHATZKY, W.: Das Fundament des Grafen Durazzo. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Albertina. In: *Albertina-Studien*, 1, 1963, s. 98.

<sup>11</sup> Dôležitú úlohu zohrávala predovšetkým *Úvodná rozprava (Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie)* z roku 1751, ktorú redigoval d'Alambert a ktorá bola akýmsi zhrnutím nového osvietenského postoja. K Durazzovi pozri najmä KOSCHATZKY, W. (ed.): *Giacomo Conte Durazzo, 1717 – 1794. Zum Jubiläum des Wiener Burgtheaters, 1776 – 1976*. [Kat. výst.] Wien : Albertina, 1976; RAGGIO, O.: *Storia*

*di una passione. Cultura aristocratica e collezionismo alla fine dell'ancien régime*. Venezia 2000, s. 71-78, najmä s. 73-74. K jeho kontaktom so súvekým kultúrnym dianím vo Francúzsku pozri okrem iného KARRO-PÉLISSON, F.: *De la Querelle des Bouffons à la réforme de Gluck. Les lettres du Comte Giacomo Durazzo à Charles-Simon Favart, conservées à la Bibliothèque de l'Opéra titou*. In: *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, 38, 1985, s. 163-196.

<sup>12</sup> BENINCASA, B.: *Descrizione della raccolta di stampe di S. E. il Sig. Conte Jacopo Durazzo, patrizio genovese ec. ec. esposta in una dissertazione sull'arte dell'intaglio a stampa*. Parma 1784, s. 8. Durazzo tu nadväzoval na myšlienky Giovanniho Gaetana Bottariho a Francesca Algarottiho. Grafiky nefigurovali iba ako zberateľské objekty s estetickou dimenziou, ale slúžili aj ako poznávací, referenčný materiál k dejinám umenia. – VERMEULEN, R. I.: *Picturing Art History. The Rise of the Illustrated History of Art in the Eighteenth Century*. Amsterdam 2010, s. 9, 61-62.

<sup>13</sup> Podrobne pozri KOSCHATZKY, W.: *Der Discorso Preliminare des Grafen Durazzo. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Albertina*. In: *Albertina-Studien*, 2, 1964, s. 3-16. K Giovannimu Davidovi a jeho práci na tomto projekte pozri NEWCOME-SCHLEIER, M. – GRASSO, G.: *Giovanni David*. New York 2003, s. 205-208. V prípade Albertovho záujmu o zberateľstvo grafiky zrejme zohrávala rolu aj saská zberateľská tradícia grafiky drážďanského dvora. Pozri MELZER, Ch.: *Von der*

Albert počas svojho bratislavského miestodržiteľského obdobia veľa cestoval. Vďaka jeho memoárom sme pomerne podrobne informovaní o tom, ktoré miesta navštívil a čo bolo v popredí jeho záujmu.<sup>14</sup> Za zmienku napríklad stojí, že na svojich cestách po súvekom Uhorsku pobýval roku 1770 spolu s Imrichom Esterházyom v reprezentačnom sídle starého uhorského magnátskeho rodu Esterházyovcov, v Eisenstadte. Na konci roka 1775 sa miestodržiteľský pár vybral na svoju Grand Tour po Taliansku. Z Albertových zápiskov vyplýva, že vojvodovu pozornosť pútala nielen historická architektúra, ale aj umelecké zbierky, predovšetkým umelecké diela z obdobia antiky. Počas pobytu v Ríme mal Albert možnosť pozrieť si zbierku kardinála Alessandra Albaniho (1692 – 1779), známeho talianskeho aristokrata, milovníka umenia a zberateľa, ktorý viac ako storočie dominoval medzinárodnému svetu zberateľov a vzdelancov, ktorí navštívili Rím.<sup>15</sup> Za zmienku však stojí, že Albani sa živo zaujímal nielen o nákupy umeleckých diel, ale aj o ich predaj, a bol známy i ako sprostredkovateľ. Bol to práve on, kto pomohol pri získavaní umeleckých diel princovi Eugenovi Savojskému. Ciceronom, sprievodcom miestodržiteľského páru po rímskych pamätihodnostiach, bol Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein (1719 – 1793), nemecký antikvár a príležitostný umelec. Aj on bol na viacerých európskych dvoroch známy ako agent s umeleckými starožitnosťami, predovšetkým u vojvodu Ernsta II. Saského a neskôr i na dvore Kataríny II. v Petrohrade. V Neapole pobýval miestodržiteľský pár u Ferdinanda IV., neapolsko-sicilského kráľa, a jeho manželky Márie Karolíny, sestry Márie Kristíny. Vykopávky v Pompejach a Herculaneu

urobili v 18. storočí z Neapola atraktívne miesto, ktoré priťahovalo obdivovateľov antiky. Zbierka antických starožitností v Palazzo Reale di Portici zanechala u Alberta mimoriadny dojem a vo svojich memoároch sa jej podrobne venoval. Iste aj preto, že objavovanie antických pamiatok bolo pre neho ako slobodomurára súčasťou hľadania tajomných právd minulosti.<sup>16</sup> Vojvoda Pompeje aj osobne navštívil a zážitok si odniesol aj z kolekcie obrazov vystavených v neapolskom paláci Capodimonte.

V Neapole bol sprievodcom miestodržiteľského páru britský vyslanec v kráľovstve Neapola a dvoch Sicílií Sir William Hamilton (1730 – 1803), jeden z najplyvnejších propagátorov neoklasicistického vkusu druhej polovice 18. storočia. Hamilton, vedec, antikvár a znalec, patril však aj k prominentným zberateľom obrazov, minerálov a gréckych váz. Jeho oficiálna neapolská rezidencia, Palazzo Sessa, v ktorej boli umiestnené jeho zbierky,<sup>17</sup> bola zariadená s obdivuhodným vkusom, a patrila k najnavštevovanejším miestam Neapola. Hamilton bol však známy aj tým, že zásoboval antickými starožitnosťami, predovšetkým vázami, tak prominentných návštevníkov Neapola, ako aj celý rad zberateľov v Anglicku. V Turíne mal Albert možnosť pozrieť si flámske obrazy pochádzajúce zo spomínanej slávnej zbierky Princa Eugena Savojského, ktoré sa po jeho smrti dostali do vlastníctva sardínskeho kráľa vojvodu Karola Emanuela III. a od roku 1741 boli umiestnené v Palazzo Reale. Na spiatocnej ceste roku 1776, počas pobytu miestodržiteľského páru v Benátkach, bol Albert hosťom v Palazzo Loredan, benátskej rezidencii Giacoma Durazza, a pravdepodobne práve tu obdržal aj spomínanú

*Kunstammer zum Kupferstich-Kabinett. Zur Frühgeschichte des Graphiksammelns in Dresden (1560 – 1738).* Hildesheim 2010, s. 380-427.

<sup>14</sup> Pracovala som s kópiou Albertových memoárov, ktorá je deponovaná v štátnom archíve Belgicka (Brusel, Archives Générales du Royaume, Algemeen Rijksarchief en Rijksarchief in de Provinciën) – Albert Sasko-Tešínsky: *Mémoires de ma vie*, mikrofilm I. a II. dielu exempláru z Národného archívu v Budapešti (Magyar Országos Levéltár). Brusel, Algemeen Rijksarchief, inv. č. 1681/1, 1681/2.

<sup>15</sup> HASKELL, F. – PENNY, N.: *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500 – 1900.* New Haven – London 2006, s. 65.

<sup>16</sup> RAO, A. M.: Antiquaries and Politicians in Eighteenth-Century Naples. In: *Journal of the History of Collections*, 19, 2007, č. 11, s. 169.

<sup>17</sup> KNIGHT, C.: La quadreria di Sir William Hamilton at Palazzo Sessa. In: *Napoli Nobilissima*, 24, 1985, č. 3, s. 45-59, RAMAGE, H. N.: Sir William Hamilton as Collector, Exporter, and Dealer: The Acquisition and Dispersal of His Collections. In: *The American Journal of Archaeology*, 94, 1990, č. 3, s. 469-480. V širšom kontexte pozri MacGREGOR, A.: *Curiosity and Enlightenment. Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century.* New Haven – London 2007, s. 190-193.

kolekciu grafických listov tvoriacich jadro *Storia practica della Pittura*.

Známy rodinný portrét cisárskej rodiny namalovaný Friedrichom Heinrichom Fügerom v roku 1776 zobrazuje Alberta a Kristínu práve vo chvíli, keď ukazujú cisárovnej obrazy (kresby?) dovezené z ich cesty po Taliansku. Miestodržiteľský pár si z Talianska nepochybne priniesol celý rad umeleckých diel, a to nielen z Ríma, ale pravdepodobne aj z Neapola a Lombardie.<sup>18</sup> Zoznam týchto umeleckých predmetov však nepoznáme.<sup>19</sup> O aké diela sa konkrétne jednalo, možno iba predpokladať, pričom základným oporným bodom zostávajú známe inventáre bratislavského hradu a súveké opisy jeho interiérov. Kľúčovú úlohu pritom zohrávajú cestovateľské zápisky Gottfrieda von Rotenstein, ktorý okolo roku 1780 bratislavský hrad osobne navštívil a viaceré jeho miestnosti detailne popísal.

Súčasťou Rotensteinových záznamov je aj pomerne podrobný opis hradnej knižnice. Vďaka zachovanej plánovej dokumentácii prestavby bratislavského hradu a s ňou korešpondujúcim Rotensteinovým popisom vieme tento priestor presne lokalizovať.<sup>20</sup> Knižnica ('Bibliothec') sa nachádzala na prvom poschodí južného hradného krídla [Obr. 4]. Bola teda súčasťou reprezentačných priestorov, rovnako ako audienčná sieň, či zrkadlová sála. Osvetľovali ju okná s výhľadom na hradné nádvorie a predchá-

dza jej menšia pracovňa, ktorá pravdepodobne slúžila aj ako predsieň. Tak knižnica, ako i predsieň boli prístupné aj z nového bočného schodiska situovaného v juhovýchodnej časti hradu. Znamenalo to, že do oboch priestorov mohli vstúpiť aj tí návštevníci, ktorí nepatrili k nobilitě, a ktorým v súlade s habsburskou dvorskou etiketou nebol prístup do reprezentačných hradných priestorov umožnený. K nim patrili aj znalci a milovníci umenia. Tí mohli týmto schodiskom vojsť nielen do knižnice, ale aj do dvoch susediacich umeleckých kabinetov – do kabinetu so saským porcelánom a kabinetu s japonským porcelánom. Rotenstein vo svojich zápiskoch o knižnici píše: '*Knižnica bola početná a vyberaná, nachádzajú sa tam najvzácnejšie medirytiny, ktoré dostal vojvoda ako dar čiastočne zo Saska, Francúzska, Neapolu a Ríma, čiastočne si sám žadovážil na svojej talianskej ceste. Na skriniah na knihy stoja najpozoruhodnejšie modely sóch z alabastru, ktoré sa čiastočne nachádzajú v Ríme a Florencii, čiastočne v Herkulaneu, medzi nimi stoja veľmi pekné vázy. Predsieň knižnice má na podstavcoch na stenách veľký počet etruských váz pomiešaných s bustami.*'<sup>21</sup>

Z uvedeného vyplýva, že Albert uchovával svoju grafickú kolekciu v knižnici, a to spolu s ďalšími umeleckými objektmi. Už samotné umiestnenie grafík spolu so zbierkou kníh napovedá, že sa tu kladol dôraz na význam ľudského poznania, za súčasť ktorého sa pokladalo aj umenie.<sup>22</sup> V zmysle osvietených ideí

<sup>18</sup> To by plne korešpondovalo so súvekými zberateľskými preferenciami stredoeurópskej aristokracie, ktorá sa v dôsledku politických zmien a nových aliancií imperiálneho dvora sústredila na nové teritória pod habsburským vplyvom. Princ Eugen Savojský, rovnako ako Lichtensteinovci, či Harrachovci, sa pri svojich umeleckých nákupoch do veľkej miery orientoval práve na Bolognu a Neapol. – GARAS, K.: *Collecting Venetian Painting in Central Europe*. In: *Treasures of Venice*. Ed. G. KEYES – I. BARKÓCZI – J. SATKOWSKI. Minneapolis 2005, s. 33.

<sup>19</sup> K darom, ktoré miestodržiteľský pár obdržal od pápeža Pia VI. v Ríme, pozri KOSCHTZKY, W. – KRASA, S.: *Herzog Albert von Sachsen-Teschen, 1738 – 1822. Reichsfeldmarschall und Kunstmäzen*. Wien 1982, s. 121-122. Okrem kolekcie grafických listov rímskych vedút od Piranesiho k nim patrili napríklad aj relikvie sv. Augustína a sv. Kristíny.

<sup>20</sup> Historická plánová dokumentácia tzv. terezianskej prestavby bratislavského hradu v druhej polovici 18. storočia je dnes súčasťou zbierok Österreichische Nationalbibliothek vo Viedni. Umiestnenie knižnice dokumentuje pôdorys prvého

poschodia bratislavského hradu (Viedeň, ÖNB, Karten Slg. Alb. 11a-2-4).

<sup>21</sup> '*Die Bibliothek war zahlreich und auserlesen, es befanden sich darinnen die sonbarsten Kupferstiche, welche der Herzog theils aus Sachsen, Frankreich, Neapel und Rom zum Geschenk bekommen, theils sich aus seiner italienischen Reise selbst angeschafft hat. Auf den Bücherschränken stehen die bemerkungswürdigsten Modelie von Statuen aus Alabaster, welche sich theils zu Rom und Florenz, theils in Herkulanum befinden, darzwischen stehen sehr schöne Vasen. Das Vorzimmer der Bibliothek hat an den Wänden auf Tragsteinen eine grosse Anzahl betrurischer Vasen mit Büsten untermischt.*' – ROTENSTEIN 1792 – 1793, c. d. (v pozn. 7), s. 60. Pozri tiež MALÍKOVÁ 1990, c. d. (v pozn. 7), s. 164.

<sup>22</sup> Encyklopedické zbierky rytín boli zvyčajne umiestňované v knižniciach s cieľom stimulovať štúdium všetkých aspektov ľudského poznania. – WARWICK, G.: Introduction. In: *Collecting Prints and Drawings in Europe, c. 1500 – 1750*. Ed. Ch. BAKER – C. ELAM – G. WARWICK. Aldershot 2003, s. 4.

predstavovala kolekcia grafiky vizuálny ekvivalent k tu uchováanej zbierke kníh. To všetko, spolu so situovaním priestorov knižnice na piano nobile starého hradu, reprezentatívnej časti miestodržiteľského sídla, veľa vypovedalo nielen o Albertovej sebareprezentácii, ako aj o jeho sociálnych a intelektuálnych aspiráciách.<sup>23</sup> Z Rotensteinovho opisu ďalej vyplýva, že v knižnici boli okrem kníh a grafík umiestnené aj alabastrové kópie sôch, ktoré sa nachádzali v Ríme, Florencii a Herkulaneu, a v predsieni busty a etruské vázy. Napokon, tento model bol uplatnený už v prípade knižnice princa Eugena Savojského v jeho viedenskom paláci v Hornom Belvedéri.<sup>24</sup> O pôvode zmieňovaných alabastrových kópií antických sôch nás známe písomné pramene neinformujú. Vieme však, že alabaster patril k materiálom, s ktorým pracoval Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1736 – 1783), známy viedenský sochár, ktorý sa po svojom odchode z Mníchova roku 1777 usídlil v Bratislave. Je známe, že roku 1765 pobudol Messerschmidt niekoľko mesiacov v Ríme a jeho neoklasicistické sochárske portréty, ktoré vytvoril v nasledujúcich rokoch a ktoré vyobrazujú práve stúpcov osvietenstva, jednoznačne nesú znaky inšpirácie portrétmi bustami republikánskeho Ríma. Navyše, z rokov 1777 – 1780, teda z obdobia, kedy Albert Sasko-Tešínsky sídlil v Bratislave, pochádza aj niekoľko Messerschmidtových portrétov vojvodu, vyhotovených z mramoru, olova i alabastru. Z alabastru boli vyhotovené aj Messerschmidtove komorné portrétne reliéfy Alberta a Márie Kristíny.<sup>25</sup> Ak si Rotensteinom spomínané alabastrové modely antických sôch nepriviezol vojvoda Albert priamo zo svojej talianskej cesty, tak potom bol Franz Xaver Messerschmidt určite tým najlepšie pripraveným sochárom na takúto objednávku. V prípade váz sa zdá byť viac ako pravdepodobné, že Albert ich získal na

svojej cesty po Taliansku, snáď v Neapoli, kde bolo ich zbieranie veľkou módou. Tu je potrebné poznamenať, že jednu z najpozoruhodnejších zbierok gréckych váz vlastnil práve Sir William Hamilton, sprievodca miestodržiteľského páru počas jeho pobytu v Neapoli.

V priestoroch obnoveného bratislavského hradu sa okrem knižnice spájala s osobou vojvodu Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho ešte jedna miestnosť – bol ňou vojvodov pracovný kabinet s obrazmi ('Arbeits Cabinet', resp. 'Arbeit Cabinet mit Bildern'), situovaný na tret'om poschodí hradnej prístavby, neskoršieho Tereziána. Na rozdiel od knižnice sa kabinet nachádzal v tej časti hradu, ktorá bola vyhradená privátnym priestorom cisára, cisárovnjej a miestodržiteľského páru. V tomto prípade nám Rotenstein popis miestnosti nezanechal. Zo zachovaných hradných inventárov však vieme, že sa tu nachádzala kolekcia štyridsiaticich troch obrazov, zväčša komorného 'kabinetného' formátu.<sup>26</sup> Na základe zachovanej plánovej dokumentácie možno predpokladať, že väčšina z nich bola vystavená na severnej stene kabinetu, ktorá bola bez okien. Dokumentácia tiež dokladá, že pri dekorácii interiéru sa tu využívali klasicistické ornamentálne prvky. Albertov kabinet bol prepojený s veľkou obrazovou galériou umiestnenou na prvom poschodí starého hradu a aj v tomto prípade sa v bezprostrednej blízkosti nachádzalo schodisko, ktoré umožňovalo návštevníkom vstup do veľkej obrazovej galérie.

Keďže sa jednalo o privátny pracovný kabinet vojvodu, možno predpokladať, že výber obrazov, ktoré z rozhodujúcej väčšiny pochádzali z cisárskych zbierok a boli súčasťou vena Márie Kristíny, bol osobnou záležitosťou Alberta a jeho vkusových preferencií. V nami sledovaných súvislostiach sú preto otázky súvisiace s výberom jednotlivých obrazov, ich autorov, a v neposlednom rade aj tém a žánrov,

<sup>23</sup> 'It was characteristic of the major aristocratic collections of the Aufklärung – themselves monuments to the rediscovery of history and respect for Renaissance values – that they heralded a fresh era in both social and communal terms.' – EVANS 2006, c. d. (v pozn. 8), s. 72.

<sup>24</sup> *Prince Eugene. General-Philosopher and Art Lover.* [Kat. výst.] Ed. A. HUSSLEIN-ARCO – M.-L. von PLESSEN. München 2010, s. 206-207.

<sup>25</sup> K bratislavskému pobytu F. X. Messerschmidta a jeho dielu pozri PÖTZL-MALÍKOVA, M.: *Franz Xaver Messerschmidt.*

Wien 1982, s. 60-66; *Franz Xaver Messerschmidt.* Ed. M. PÖTZL-MALÍKOVA – G. SCHERF. [Kat. výst.] New York, Neue Galerie, 16. 9. – 10. 1. 2011; Paris, Musée du Louvre, 26. 1. – 25. 4. 2011. Paris 2010, s. 17-24.

<sup>26</sup> Jedná sa o spomínaný inventár zariadenia bratislavského hradu z 1. marca 1781 (pozn. pozn. 7). Pozri MALÍKOVÁ 1990, c. d. (v pozn. 7), s. 168-169; GRUBER 2006 – 2007, c. d. (v pozn. 7), s. 390-395. Gruber spojila veľkú časť obrazov inventárne dokumentovaných vo vojvodovej pracovni s konkrétnymi dielami zo zbierok Kunsthistorisches Museum vo Viedni. V texte sa opieram o výsledky jej výskumu.



5. Peter Paul Rubens: *Búrľivá krajina s Jupiterom, Merkúrom, Philemonom a Baucis*, okolo 1620 – 1625, olej na dreve. Viedeň, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Foto: KHM, Wien.

klúčové. To, čo je však potrebné zvlášť zdôrazniť, je skutočnosť, že hoci vojvoda Sasko-Tešínsky bol vyznávačom osvietenského ideálu antiky, v jeho pracovnom kabinete sa práce talianskych majstrov nenachádzali. Naopak, dominovali tu diela holandských a flámskych majstrov 17. storočia. Venujme sa však týmto dielam podrobnejšie.

Väčšina obrazov z Albertovho kabinetu pochádzala zo známych umeleckých zbierok. Napríklad maľby Petra Paula Rubensa *Búrľivá krajina s Jupiterom, Merkúrom, Philemonom a Baucis* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 690) [Obr. 5], Daniela Seghersa *Portrét ženy v kvetino-*

*vom venci* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 9105), Pietera Jansza Quasta *Sedliaci v krčme* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 1726), či Cornelisa de Wael *Mojžiš uzatvára vody Červeného mora* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 1736),<sup>27</sup> Jana Thomasa *Bakchanálie* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 1727), ale napríklad aj portréty Filipa II. a Márie I. Tudor, v starom hradnom inventári spájané s menom Hansa Holbeina (Budapešť, Szépművészeti Múzeum, inv. č. 374, 375), pochádzali zo zbierky arcivojvodu Leopolda I. Wiliama Habsburgského, miestodržiteľa rakúskeho Nizozemska.<sup>28</sup> Z pražských imperiálnych zbierok pochádzali zasa obrazy Lukasa Furtenagela *Maliar*

<sup>27</sup> BALDASS, L.: Two Biblical Histories by Cornelis de Wael. In: *The Art Quarterly*, 20, 1957, s. 266.

<sup>28</sup> Pri otázke proveniencie obrazov, ktoré sa nachádzali v Albertovej pracovni v Tereziáne, som sa opierala predovšetkým

o nasledovné publikácie: DEMUS, K.: *Holländische Meister des 15., 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts. Katalog der Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien*. Wien 1972; DEMUS, K.: *Verzeichnis der Gemälde. Führer durch das Kunsthistorische Museum, Wien*. Wien 1973; FERINO-PAGDEN, S. – PROHASKA, W. –

*Hans Burgkmair a jeho žena Anna* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 924), resp. obraz Hendricka van Steenwyck ml. *Večerná boboslužba v gotickom kostole* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 638). Zaujímavá bola aj tematická stránka vybraných obrazov. Albert ako vojak mal vo svojom kabinete menšiu kolekciu malieb s vojnovými scénami. Ich autormi boli Jan Pieter van Bredael II. a maliari z okruhu, resp. inšpirovaní Ignacom J. Paroccelom, ktorý pracoval pre princa Eugena Savojského. Výber portrétov Filipa II. a jeho manželky Márie I. Tudor mohol súvisieť s náboženským postojom oboch panovníkov, s ich zanietenou obhajobou katolicizmu. Osobitné miesto v kabinete vojvodu Sasko-Tešínskeho, osvietenca a slobodomurára, pravdepodobne patrilo komornému obrazu Jana Brueghela st. a Hendricka van Balen, z roku 1604, *Ceres a štyri elementy* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 815).<sup>29</sup> Pri voľbe zrejme rozhodovala obrazová téma so symbolikou štyroch elementov ako súčasť filozofického, ezoterického a metafyzického konceptu vzniku sveta. Skutočne kabinetným kusom bol komorný obraz *Večerná omša v gotickom kostole* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 638) od holandského maliara Hendricka van Steenwyck ml. (1580/1582 – 1649), ktorého práce sa nachádzali v zbierkach prominentných stredoeurópskych aristokratov, včítane Esterházyovcov, Lichtensteinovcov a Czerninovcov, a boli obľúbené tak medzi súvekými katolíckymi, ako aj protestantskými zberateľmi.<sup>30</sup> Dva Rubensove obrazy, *Pustovník a spiaca Angelika* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 692) a už spomínaná *Búrľivá krajina s Jupiterom, Merkuróm, Philemonom a Baucis*, mali vyslovene intímny charakter. V Albertovom kabinete však viseli aj diela dnes málo známeho maliara činného v 18. storočí vo Viedni, Ríme a Bruseli, Hyacintha de la Peigne, vyobrazujúce parížsky most Pont-Neuf a v neposlednom rade i maľby približujúce scény z každodenného života ‘malých’ ľudí. Dokumentujú

to napríklad obrazy Johanna Lingelbacha *Rozprávajúci sa sedliaci* (Viedeň, KHM, GG 580), či už spomínaného Pietera Jansza Quasta.

Zbierka vojvodu Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho je dnes známa predovšetkým ako jedna z najpozoruhodnejších zbierok kresieb starých majstrov. Rozhodujúcu väčšinu z nich však Albert získal až po svojom odchode z Uhorska. Otázka, aký bol jeho záujem o kresby starých majstrov v čase jeho bratislavského pôsobenia, je preto nanajvýš zaujímavá. Kresby sa totiž v doposiaľ známých historických a archívnych materiáloch nespomínajú ani v knižnici, ani v Albertovom pracovnom kabinete. Na druhej strane však vieme, že v čase inventarizácie hradných interiérov a návštevy bratislavského hradu Gottfriedom von Rotenstein (okolo roku 1781) časť predmetov z interiérov bratislavského hradu už chýbala. Potvrdzujú to chýbajúce inventárne záznamy tykajúce sa knižnice i oboch kabinetov s porcelánom. V tomto zmysle preto deponovanie kresieb v priestoroch knižnice, či už v albumoch, alebo fóliách, nemožno s určitosťou vylúčiť. Napokon, k roku 1778 sa viaže zmienka, podľa ktorej Mária Kristína zaslala Albertovi kresby Fransa van Mieris a Davida Teniersa.<sup>31</sup>

O to viac preto zaujme skutočnosť, že v závere Albertovho bratislavského miestodržiteľského pobytu boli kresby starých majstrov evidované aj v iných priestoroch hradu. V reprezentačnej časti starého hradu, vo Veľkej obrazárni, boli roku 1781 popri dielach známych talianskych maliarov dokumentované aj ‘*Die Transfiguration Schizzen nach Raffael aus Raffaels/Schule*’, a na tretom hradnom poschodí, v *garde-meuble* (‘*Garde Moenbles*’), teda v nereprezentatívnom priestore vyhradenom pre nábytok, boli zasa v tom istom roku zmieňované ‘*doppelte Schizzen oder Zeichnung der Auf-/erstehung*’ od Albrechta Dürera. Doposiaľ sa im však venovala iba malá pozornosť.<sup>32</sup>

SCHÜTZ, K. (ed.): *Die Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien. Verzeichnis der Gemälde*. Wien 1991. K portrétom Filipa II. a Márie I. Tudor pozri EMBER, I. – GOSZTOLA, A. – URBACH, Z.: *Early Netherlandish, Dutch and Flemish Paintings. Summary Catalogue*. Zv. 2. Budapest 2000, s. 114.

<sup>29</sup> ERTZ, K. – NITZE-ERTZ, Ch.: *Jan Brueghel der Ältere (1568 – 1625). Kritischer Katalog der Gemälde*. Zv. 3. Lingen 2008, s. 1080-1082, kat. 518.

<sup>30</sup> HOWARTH, J.: *The Steenwyck Family as Masters of Perspective. Hendrick van Steenwyck the Elder (c. 1550 – 1603), Hendrick van Steenwyck the Younger (1580/82 – 1649), Susanna van Steenwyck (dates unknown – active 1639 – c. 1660)*. Turnhout 2009, s. 37, s. 170.

<sup>31</sup> WOLF, A.: *Marie Christine, Erzherzogin von Österreich*. Zv. 1. Wien 1863, s. 157.

<sup>32</sup> GRUBER 2006 – 2007, c. d. (v pozn. 7), s. 375, č. 80; s. 390, č. 244.



6. Albrecht Dürer: *Zmŕtvychvstanie Krista*, okolo 1510, papier, kombinovaná technika. Viedeň, Albertina. Foto: Albertina, Wien.

<sup>33</sup> Viedeň, Albertina, inv. č. 193, 237. Pozri BIRKE, V. – KERTÉSZ, J.: *Die Italienische Zeichnungen der Albertina*. Zv. 1. Wien – Köln – Weimar 1992, s. 110-111, 140-141. Proveniencia oboch kresieb nie je podrobne preskúmaná. Vieme však, že štúdia nahého muža s knihou (inv. č. 237) bola súčasťou zbierok viedenskej dvorskej knižnice a do Albertovej zbierky sa dostala v roku 1798, alebo neskôr.

<sup>34</sup> THAUSING, M. von: La Collection Albertine à Vienne, son histoire, sa composition. In: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 29, 1870

Súčasťou zbierky Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho bola aj malá kolekcia kresieb viažucich sa k Raffaelovej *Transfigurácii* vo vatikánskej Pinakotéke. Rozhodujúcu väčšinu z nich získal vojvoda až po svojom odchode z Uhorska, a to kúpou zo zbierky vojvodu Charlesa Antoine de Ligne roku 1794. Avšak dve kresby, dnes uchovávané v Albertine, sa do jeho zbierky dostali z iného zdroja a nemožno vylúčiť, že môžu byť identické s tými, ktoré sa spomínajú roku 1781 na bratislavskom hrade.<sup>33</sup>

Albertova zbierka sa stala známou aj vďaka početnej a kvalitnej kolekcií kresieb Albrechta Dürera. Rozhodujúca väčšina z nich bola výsledkom programovej zberateľskej aktivity cisára Rudolfa II. Kresby z Rudolfovej zbierky sa po jeho smrti stali súčasťou dvorskej klenotnice, neskôr viedenskej dvorskej knižnice a v roku 1796 ich na základe výmeny získal vojvoda Albert Sasko-Tešínsky.<sup>34</sup> V nami sledovaných súvislostiach je zaujímavý záznam Christiana von Mechel, ktorý v inventári cisárskej galérie z roku 1783 eviduje dve zarámované a zasklené kresby na šedom papieri zobrazujúce *Samsonove skutky* a *Zmŕtvychvstanie Krista*.<sup>35</sup> Klára Garas, ktorá sa podrobne zaoberala dejinami Rudolfovej zbierky, vyslovila názor, že súčasťou dedičstva, ktoré po Rudolfovej smrti postupne prešlo do cisárskych umeleckých zbierok, boli aj Dürerove kresby so *Zmŕtvychvstaním Krista* a *Zápasom Samsona*.<sup>36</sup> Nemožno preto vylúčiť, že skice, dokumentované roku 1781 na bratislavskom hrade ako Dürerove práce, mohli byť totožné s tými, ktoré spomína o dva neskôr Christian von Mechel [Obr. 6]. Čo je však v nami sledovaných súvislostiach dôležité, ich nereprezentatívne umiestnenie naznačuje, že v čase Albertovho bratislavského pôsobenia Dürerove kresby neboli zďaleka v centre jeho pozornosti, či zberateľského záujmu.

Spomínali sme, že umelecké diela, ktoré uvádzajú známe inventáre a popisy interiérov bratislavského

– 1871, s. 78-79; BENESCH, O.: A Short History of the Albertina Collection. In: BENESCH, O.: *Collected Writings*. Zv. 4. Ed. E. BENESCH. London 1973, s. 245.

<sup>35</sup> MECHEL, Ch. von: *Verzeichniss der Gemälde der Kaiserlich Königlich Bilder Gallerie in Wien*. Wien 1783, s. 231.

<sup>36</sup> GARAS, K.: Zur Geschichte der Kunstsammlungen Rudolfs II. In: *Umění*, 18, 1970, s. 139. Dürerova kresba so *Zmŕtvychvstaním Krista* je súčasťou zbierok Albertiny (Viedeň, Albertina, Graphische Sammlung, inv. č. 3126).



hradu, pochádzali z rozhodujúcej časti z imperiálnych cisárskych zbierok a boli súčasťou vena Márie Kristíny. Zdá sa však, že v interiéroch hradu sa nachádzali aj diela, ktoré mali inú provenienciu. Dokumentuje to napríklad rytina *Odyseus vytrháva Andromache jej syna Astyanaxa* z roku 1778 [Obr. 7], dedikovaná Márii Kristíne, ktorú jej autor, Jacob Schmutzer, vyhotovil na základe o desať rokov staršej kresby Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho. Ako uvádza nápis na tomto grafickom liste, predlohou tu bola maľba talianskeho maliara Mattia Preti nachádzajúca sa na bratislavskom hrade.<sup>37</sup> Uvažovalo sa, že Albert, inšpirovaný Durazzom, začal zbierať kresby pravdepodobne v snahe vybudovať svoju zbierku tak komplexne a inštruktívne, ako to len bolo možné.<sup>38</sup> Tak Schmutzerova rytina, ako aj Albertova kresba dnes nezvestného obrazu sa zdajú túto domnienku potvrdzovať. Obe boli súčasťou ambiciózneho projektu vizuálnych dejín umenia, na ktorom sa rozhodujúcou mierou podieľal Giacomo Durazzo, a ktorého základným cieľom bolo lepšie poznanie umeleckej minulosti.

4. júla 1780 zomrel miestodržiteľ rakúskeho Nizozemska princ Karol Lotrinský a 29. novembra toho istého roku aj Mária Terézia. Pre Alberta a Máriu Kristínu tieto udalosti znamenali zásadnú zmenu v ich živote. V zmysle svadobnej zmluvy z roku 1766 mali totiž v súlade s práním cisárkovej zaujať uvoľnený miestodržiteľský post. Albert a Kristína sa s Bratislavou rozlúčili na začiatku roku 1781 a už 10. júla tohto roku sa konalo ich privítanie v Bruseli. Zaujatie nového miestodržiteľského postu však neznamenalo iba púhy presun z Uhorska do rakúskeho Nizozemska. Bolo zároveň aj presunom z jedného kultúrneho priestoru do iného. Nie je potrebné zvlášť zdôrazňovať, že v novom, umelecky bohatom prostredí Nizozemska sa pre Alberta a jeho zberateľské záujmy otvorili podstatne



7. Jacob Schmutzer: *Odyseus vytrháva Andromache jej syna Astyanaxa*, 1778, rytina. Londýn, British Museum. Foto: British Museum, London.

väčšie možnosti. Dôležitú úlohu pritom zohrávala nepochybne aj blízkosť Paríža, ktorý až do začiatku Francúzskej revolúcie patril k najdôležitejším centráram umeleckého obchodu, a v neposlednom rade aj úzke rodinné vzťahy miestodržiteľského páru s francúzskym panovníckym párom a francúzskym umeleckým prostredím. Albert a Kristína sa hneď po svojom príchode plne sústredili na vybudovanie a zariadenie nového reprezentačného sídla Laeken (Schönenberg), kam dal Albert preniesť nielen svoju knižnicu, ale aj zbierku [Obr. 8].<sup>39</sup> Tak, ako tomu bolo

<sup>37</sup> Obraz *Odyseus vytrháva Andromache jej syna Astyanaxa* je v relevantnej literatúre spomínaný v súvislosti s dvomi maľbami atribuovanými Giuseppemu Mariu Crespimu (1665 – 1747). Predovšetkým s Crespimov obrazom *Tarquinius a Lucrecia* (Zbierka S. H. Kressa, National Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. č. 1952.5.30), ktorý bol v minulosti pripísaný Mattiovi Pretimu, ako aj s obrazom *Hekuba oslepujúca Polymnestora* (Brusel, Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts, inv. č. 257), ktorého provenienciacia sa taktiež spája so zbierkou Alberta Sasko-Tešínskeho. – MERRIMAN, M. P.: *Giuseppe Maria Crespi*. Milan

1980, s. 280, kat. 158, <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg33/gg33-41640-prov.html>. K Albertovej kresbe pozri KOSCHATZKY – KRASA 1982, c. d. (v pozn. 19), s. 98.

<sup>38</sup> KOSCHATZKY 1964, c. d. (v pozn. 13), s. 14; DOSSI 2000, c. d. (v pozn. 9), s. 26.

<sup>39</sup> K dejinám zámku Laeken pozri YPERSELE de STRIHOU, A. van – YPERSELE de STRIHOU, P. van: *Laeken*. Bruxelles 1970; tiež OERS, W.: *Schönenberg. A Palace in an Enlighte-*



8. S. Lefebre – Samuel Middiman: Pohľad na zámok Laeken, 1786, kolorovaná rytina. Viedeň, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Foto: ÖNB, Wien.

pri výstavbe Tereziána, aj v prípade paláca v Laekene vojvoda veľmi úzko spolupracoval s architektom.<sup>40</sup> Na základe doposiaľ známych historických prameňov i zachovaných umeleckých predmetov možno povedať, že Albertove vkusové preferencie, ktoré sa vo veľkej miere sformovali práve počas pobytu miestodržiteľského páru v rokoch 1766 – 1780 v Bratislave, sa ani počas rokov jeho pôsobenia

v rakúskom Nizozemsku zásadne nezmenili. Zámok Laeken, rovnako ako Tereziánium, niesol pečať Albertovho hlbokého zaujatia neoklasizmom, včítane jeho presahov do orientálnych kultúr. Prejavom Albertovho vlastného vkusu a súčasťou jeho privatej 'kultúrnej voľby' však aj naďalej zostali diela flámskych a holandských maliarov.

ned Europe. In: *The Influence of Intellectual and Esoteric Currents, such as Freemasonry*. Ed. J. A. M. SNOEK – M. SCHOLL – A. A. KRON. Den Haag 2006, s. 219-241.

<sup>40</sup> Plány pre palác v Laekene boli navrhnuté Albertom a architektonicky upravené a spracované francúzskym architektom Charlesom de Wailly (1730 – 1798). – YPERSELE de STRIHOU, A. van: Charles de Wailly, architecte du château royal de Laeken (Belgique). In: *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français*, 1990, s. 117-132, najmä s. 117-123.

## Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen and His Taste

### *Summary*

The beginnings of Albert of Saxe-Teschen's (1738 – 1822) more intensive interest in art and art collecting are associated with his period in Bratislava (former Pressburg) from 1766 to 1780, and his fascination with the ideas of the French Enlightenment and Freemasonry. The present essay is primarily concerned with the social and cultural values which shaped Albert's taste and his preferences in this period. The Empress Maria Theresa appointed the young Prince Albert to the position of Governor (*locumtenens regius*) and Chief Captain of Hungary in 1765. Albert was a younger son of Frederick Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and his wife, Maria Josepha of Austria. He was not only a favourite of the Empress, but also the future husband of her daughter Maria Christina. Bratislava Castle, one of the oldest and most important fortresses in the Kingdom of Hungary, became the seat of the young couple. In the 1760s, it was refurbished into an elegant court residence. This renovation also included the erection of a new building, later called the Teresianum, built in the eastern part of the castle and designed by Franz Anton Hillebrandt (1719 – 1797) in close cooperation with Albert. In 1773, the Duke of Saxe-Teschen was visited in Bratislava by Giacomo Durazzo (1717 – 1794), a cultivated aristocrat, impresario and diplomat from a noble Genoese aristocratic family. Like Albert, he was a Freemason and an enthusiastic supporter of the French Enlightenment. Durazzo's visit to the Duke led to the remarkable project of producing an encyclopaedic survey of the visual arts from the early Renaissance. Its main aim was to use reproduction prints to illustrate the history and progress of painting and to contribute to a better knowledge of the art of the past. Albert, for whom art was one of the integral aspects of human knowledge, kept his graphic collection in the library, together with other objects. In accordance with Enlightenment ideas, the collection of prints represented a visual equiva-

lent to the collection of books stored there. The placing of prints with the book collection demonstrated the importance of human knowledge, including art. Apart from the books and graphic works, alabaster copies of sculptures found in Rome, Florence and Herculaneum were also on display here with busts and Etruscan vases in the anteroom. Thanks to the surviving documentation of the reconstruction of Bratislava Castle in the eighteenth century, we know that the library ('Bibliothec') was located on the piano nobile, the first floor of the south wing of the castle. Apart from the library, the renovated Bratislava Castle included another room associated with Albert, namely his picture cabinet ('Arbeit Cabinet mit Bildern'), situated on the third floor of the new building. There Albert installed a collection of forty-three paintings, mostly of the 'cabinet' format. Although he acknowledged the Enlightenment ideal of the antique, his cabinet did not contain works by Italian masters. Instead paintings by seventeenth century Flemish and Dutch masters predominated there. However, during Albert's time as governor in Hungary, old masters drawings were also found in other rooms in the castle. For instance, in the picture gallery are documented works by renowned Italian painters together with sketches for Rafael's famous *Transfiguration* in the Vatican Pinacoteca, while in the *garde-meuble* are listed sketches of the *Resurrection* by Albrecht Dürer. It is important to mention that the sketches from the *garde-meuble* may be identical with drawings showing *Resurrection of Christ* and *Samson Battling the Philistines* mentioned two years later by Christian von Mechel. However, their location suggests that Dürer's drawings were not in the centre of Albert's attention at the time. Moreover, it seems that there were also other works of art on display in the interior of the castle that were not recorded in the discussed inventories. This is confirmed, for example, by an engraving by Jakob Schmutzer of *Ulysses Abducting Andromache's Son Astyanax* which is dated

1778 and dedicated to Maria Christina. Schmutzer created it on the basis of a drawing made ten years before by Albert of Saxe-Teschen. According to the text on this print, the model was a painting by the Italian painter Mattia Preti, which was located in Bratislava Castle. The governor of the Austrian Netherlands, Prince Charles of Lorraine, died on 4 July 1780, and Maria Theresa herself died on 29 November of the same year. According to the marriage agreement from 1766, Albert and Christina were to take over the vacant position of governor of the

Netherlands. They left Bratislava at the beginning of 1781 and were welcomed in Brussels on 10 July of the same year. They immediately concentrated on building and furnishing the new residence at Laeken (Schönenberg), to which Albert transferred his library and collection. The chateau at Laeken, like the Teresianum, proudly bore the stamp of Albert's passion for Neoclassicism. The works of Flemish and Dutch painters, however, continued to display Albert's own taste and his private cultural choice.

*English translation by M. C. Styán*

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**Journal of the Institute of Art History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences**

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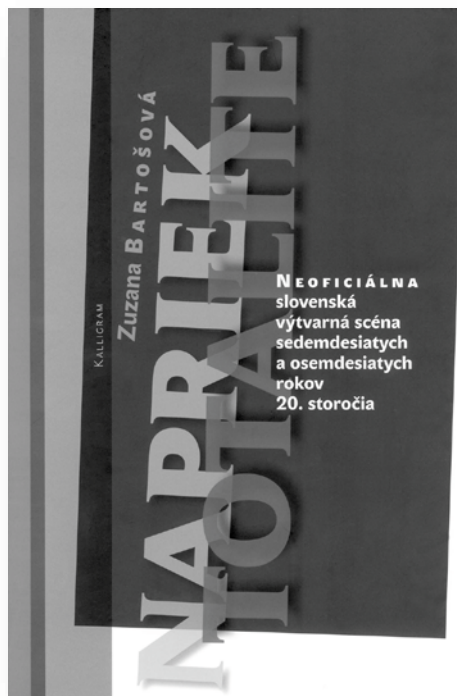
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Zuzana Bartošová:

**NAPRIEK TOTALITE.  
NEOFICIÁLNA SLOVENSKÁ VÝTVARNÁ SCÉNA  
SEDEMDESIATYCH A OSEMDESIATYCH ROKOV  
20. STOROČIA**

(Despite the Totalitarianism. Unofficial Slovak Art Scene of the 1970s and 1980s)

Bratislava : Kalligram, 2011, 360 pp.,

ISBN 978-80-8101-570-0

The publication presents and analyzes activities of the artists who were expelled from the Union of Slovak Artists (Zväz slovenských výtvarníkov) in 1972, in the aftermath of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, due to the character of their work during liberal 1960s. Although they weren't allowed to publicize their works at exhibitions or in media, most of them continued to follow their personal artistic strategies. Numerous illustrations – unique documentary photos and reproductions of the key works of art from the analyzed time periods – complete the text.

Ingrid Ciulisová:

**DEJEPIS UMENIA NA SLOVENSKU.  
VYBRANÉ KAPITOLY**

(Historiography of Art in Slovakia.  
Selected Chapters)

Bratislava : Veda, 2011, 192 pp., 100 illus.,  
ISBN 978-80-224-1204-9

The publication consists of selected papers published by the author mostly in scientific journals in the period after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. The initial studies present a detailed history of art historiography in Slovakia in the periods of 1919 – 1938 and 1948 – 1968. These are then followed by a paper dedicated to destinies of historical monuments in Slovakia in the years 1919 – 1949 and by portraits of some of the key art historians of the analyzed eras – Jan Hofman, Gizela Weyde, Vladimír Wagner and Václav Mencl.



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