

Barbara Dudás

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

barbara.dudas@gmail.com

Globalization vs. Eastern European Art History.

My dissertation project focuses on the various impacts of globalization on the contemporary Central Eastern European art world. It aims to reveal the complex nature of globalization as a social and cultural phenomenon and to point out its possible influences on the controversial Central Eastern European / East European / post-communist region and its artistic productions. The research specifically deals with Hungarian contemporary art, especially private institutions initiated around the transition and works created from the 1990s.

The primary aim of my research is to understand how and in which ways globalization affects the art world in general, and how it requires an interdisciplinary thinking to locate the position of art theory on the map of contemporary debates. What are the limits of comparative art theory and in what conditions can globalization be analyzed as an impact factor of generating a constant dialectics between different local cultural narratives? Since globalization is already present at contemporary art theoretical debates, my aim here is to find its possible links to contemporary Central Eastern European – particularly Hungarian – art (theory) as well. As Piotr Piotrowski often states, “our knowledge has been developed under the same umbrella as the West, under the same episteme as the Western one; we are a “close Other” or “not the real Other.”¹ Following his approach, I believe that we need to find a more sufficient way other than simply geopolitics to speak about the art produced on the Eastern part of the continent.

As Michael Henry Heim reveals in one of his studies, we can find a linguistic relationship between the countries concerned. “Language, the most salient carrier of cultural

¹András, Edit. *Provincializing the West: Interview with Piotr Piotrowski*. in: <http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/5-interviews/691-provincializing-the-west>

differentiation, can provide valuable insights into what held Central Europe together, what made it a cultural as well as a political unit.”² He points out that the countries from Central Europe are thoroughly Germanized, so as their culture. Even Hungary, the one that has the least connection to its Slavic neighbors – as far as language is concerned – loaned translations from German. Evidently Hungarians share a lot more than just borrowed and translated words with those countries it had mutual influence for centuries. From my perspective, language is essential in regard to contemporary art as well, especially in a globalized art world where everybody uses the much-debated ‘international art English.’³ In the Central Eastern European region, after the wars and the hegemonies of first the German and then the Russian language, the newly born nation-states acquired cultural independence as well. Their local cultural narratives are deeply conceptualized and theoretized,⁴ which is also rather important in regard of my dissertation project.

Thus, the main goal of my research is to deconstruct the different theories concerning globalization and Central Eastern Europe, and create a new theoretical setting in which the art of the region could define itself as well as could gain international recognition for its own achievements.

²Heim, Michael Henry. ‘Central Europe: The Linguistic Turn.’ in: *Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation. 1910-1930*. Ed. Benson, Timothy O. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the MIT Press, 2002. p. 132.

³Rosler, Martha. *English and All That*. in: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/english-and-all-that/>

⁴For examples, see: <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/>