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## **The role of sculpture in the official art of totalitarian regimes: GDR and CSR 1948-1968 compared.**

I have launched my doctoral studies this year with an intention to research in greater detail the question of the Czech totalitarian sculpture, commissioned by state and produced by related artists between 1948-1968. As far as Czechoslovakia and German Democratic Republic are concerned, there is a vast amount of research opportunities to be worked upon. My dissertation is about to be both comparative and detailed in dealing with extant material, however, it is also going to draw some interesting parallels to the universal development of totalitarian art in the 20th century.

In the presentation at The First International Forum for doctoral candidates in East European art history I would like to introduce my current state of research. Most importantly I would like to acquaint participants with the interesting topic of totalitarian sculpture in the GDR and CSR and secondly I would present the results of my archival research in both Czech and German archives (for more about this kindly see paragraphs below).

I have recently received a grant, which will cover my travel expenses and research in Germany during the months to come. I also have a month research stay in Köln before me (April 2014). As the subject is by its regional and thematic span suitable to the purpose of the Forum, I believe it could be of interest to all participants. For more about me please see my CV. I would also be happy to provide you with my full-length dissertation proposal (9 pages of text plus appendix), if needed.

### **Key Research Questions and Objectives**

The goal of this dissertation is to unravel intrinsic aspects of the development that the totalitarian art experienced from 1948-1968 in the field of sculpture both in Czechoslovakia and German Democratic Republic. I endeavour not only to present a simple comparison of sculptural works, but also to draw a persuasive conclusions as to the nature and character of totalitarian sculpture in general. I will attempt to provide a brief description of the development of GDR official sculpture with an emphasis on the development - since the beginning, when the imported schemes were adopted, until the peak phase in 60's.

Artists such as Friedrich Preß, Otto Rost, Eugen Hoffmann, Johannes Friedrich Rogges, would be examined and used as a demonstration of the state/artist relationship. Also official

institutions and their role in the establishment of a new socialist culture will be thoroughly explained, so as the role of the contemporary press. The role of sculpture in the hierarchy of the art branches in the GDR and intended influence over the audience is another indispensable question to answer.

The same applies to the Czech side of the border, where especially artists like Otakar Švec, Karel Pokorný, Miloš Axman, Konrád Babraj, Josef Malejovský, Luboš Doležal, Vladimír Sychra, Otakar Španiel, would be noted as representatives of the „total realism“. After consulting the relevant literature (for the list see bibliography),

#### Overview of Research Area and Literature

I have already consulted German, English and Russian resources. Study of the relevant literature proved, there is enough space in the research of the GDR and CSR sculpture in 1948-1968. A dissertation, dedicated to sculpture of the followed period, would fill the empty space in the research and also contribute to its internationalisation. By evaluating artistic production of both GDR and CSR, the dissertation is to be substantially comparative and at the same time it ought to unravel intrinsic aspects of the general tendencies, observable in the artistic production of both countries. In my presentation I will also concentrate on the question of analogies, perspectives and differences in sculptural production in both areas, based on direct comparison as well as on general tendencies, observed in both areas. The assessment ought to cover up the free as well as the architecture-bound sculpture.

#### Method

In my research I would like to preserve an equilibrium between formalist and cultural historical method. An analysis of the literature published during the examined period – official documents which determined key aspects of official artistic production, magazines, directives and related materials, all need to be thoroughly examined. Archival research in Czech and German archives would be the key component of the process. The list of the archives I have visit, or wish to visit, are in the appendix. Secondly I will adress the formal aspects of the CSR and GDR production so as to provide the comparative notion to the work.