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An Atlas of Ewa Partum's Artistic Practice. Horizontal Monograph.

My dissertation concerns the heterogeneous and ruptured artistic practice of Polish-born artist Ewa Partum who is considered a pioneer of Eastern European feminist art produced within the conceptual idiom. In so far as the work of Ewa Partum has been produced, distributed and interpreted in three distinctive semantical, ideological and institutional spaces, the perspective of horizontal art history with its central notion of parallax effect (localization of meaning) and *framing* as a procedure remains particularly valuable. Moreover, it promises to *overcome a commitment to vertical relations* and enables the pursuit of *(feminist) art history that prioritizes a horizontal axis* (Dimitrakaki 2013).

The constitutive notions of horizontal art history, as proposed in 2008 by Piotr Piotrowski, are indebted in the vocabulary of postcolonial studies (*culture margins, culture transfers, circulation, transnational, parallax effect*), as well as in feminist retroactive art history understood not as a strategy of inserting marginalized names into the hegemonic narration but as an attempt at changing an existing paradigm. Within the horizontal paradigm, a dualism of periphery and centre has been replaced by a dynamic model focusing on the set of relations between centres and plural margins, as well as a margin to margin relation. Piotrowski proposed scrutinizing the local contexts of an artistic production providing that the notion of *local* is not essentialised but conceptualized in performative terms – not as a spatial or scalar quality referring for instance to a national state but as constituted in the process of communication; as lateral networks.

This perspective enables the mapping of a set of dynamic relations between Partum's work and time-places (locations) from which she operated and operates and from which her art is redistributed. Thus the chapters on: *Critical Engagement with Art Infrastructures; The Conceptual Label; Feminist Identifications* and; *Spaces of the Political in Communist Poland and West Berlin* are conceptualized as “frames” that articulate a “triangle of problems”:

- 1 *the strategies of the local cultural policies of the authorities;*
- 2 *the local artistic traditions and varieties of the mythologisation of culture;*
- 3 *the universalist ambitions of the local cultures attempting to find compensation for the*

experience of traumatic reality. (Piotrowski 2009)

The dissertation follows two further paradigms of horizontal art history: the postulate to re-visit and re-write a set of western art-historical concepts (such as “institutional critique”) that, according to Piotrowski, would lead to *provincialising* Western art history; and secondly, to create a transnational narration that focuses on localities.

A monographic focus on the sovereign (male) artist was one of the main tasks of art history from the outset of the discipline. However, within the horizontal paradigm, a monograph is decentralized as a genre and assumes the form of an atlas: a set of articulations connected with each other in a non-linear but problem-centred way. As a multi-perspectival whole, the atlas constitutes an enfolding multiplicity; it is conceived as an interrogation that undermines the notion of completed history but also stays away from the notion of art perceived as an individual mythology. Thus an atlas of Partum’s practice represents a revelatory rather than celebratory art history: it does not aim to *make* a place for Partum’s art in art history but it indicates the mechanisms that guarantee *the place*.

The dissertation inscribes Partum’s practice on the multiple axes constituted by binaries such as the *East* and the *West*, local (distribution) and global (redistribution), national and transnational, historical alterity and interpretative presence, cultural subject of postmodernism and economic subject of globalization.