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Performance art in public space by women artists from communist and post-communist Central and Eastern Europe.

The main research objective of my doctoral dissertation is to analyze performances by women artists creating in public space in three countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the two decades of the 20th century. The project focuses on the performance art of women artists from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland in the decade following the revolutionary events of 1968 and in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the so-called countries of the former Yugoslavia, with a special focus on Serbia and Croatia, in the period of political transformation after the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. The introduction of the category of space for the analysis of performances allows a closer look at the relationship between the artist, her art and politics, because public space, especially in totalitarian countries, had ambiguous status and was largely unavailable for spontaneous artistic activities. The status of public space changed after the political transformation, which revived artistic activities in this area, and opened a discussion on the functioning of art in this space.

I would like to analyze the artists' actions focusing on the perception of changes in the functioning of public space in a given place and time. The juxtaposition of works will allow to see similarities and differences in the practice of performance art in public space by women artists from selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and thus similarities and differences between these countries, which often goes unnoticed. The research hypothesis assumes that changes in the geopolitical situation of a given country affect the status of its public space, and thus the character of the performing arts practiced in it. Due to the changing status of public space in Central and Eastern Europe under the influence of historical and political events, the actions of artists in this space or withdrawal from it should be considered in terms of a political manifesto. The performance, due to its ephemeral and somatic character and the striving to violate the balance, was used by the artists as a medium to enter into an inaccessible or limited public space and thus to express opposition to the current situation. Performative activities were usually a response to current historical and political events, and

their specificity was dictated by the need to adapt to the conditions prevailing at a given historical moment, such as censorship, political repression of artists, changes in cultural policy.

At Forum I would like to present the part of my research regarding to the performance art of the '70s made by women artists from Poland and Czechoslovakia. In my presentation I would like to show the relation between art and politics in countries of Central and Eastern Europe through performance art practiced in public spaces by women artists: Teresa Murak, Ewa Partum, Zorka Ságlová and Jana Želibská. A comparison of the artist's works shows similarities and differences in the political and cultural situation of the countries discussed, as well as the status of public space in the communist system. The mentioned artists adopt different artistic strategies, but in each case the performance becomes a medium that allows them to enter the public zone and comment on the existing reality. The aim of the paper is to show the functioning of women artists and performance art in public space and their dependence on the geopolitical situation of communist Europe.