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## **Reflections of the Communist Past in the Central Europe Contemporary Art.**

The paper Reflections of the Communist Past in the Central Europe Contemporary Art will focus on those artistic tendencies that reflect the particular experience of those areas with totalitarian – communist past. By „contemporary“ art after the fatal breakdown of the regimes, 1989, is meant. The region of Central Europe countries – Czech republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (another former Eastern bloc area, East Germany, should be considered as a different example) – form a specific space not only in the context of Europe today (they form the so- called „Visegrad Four“ group), but did so even in the former Eastern bloc. The paper will introduce young artists from these countries, who are members of the specific generation born during the rule of the communist regime, but didn't experience all its aspects. They have lived most of their active artistic life in the free society – and are thus first generation with a possibility of completely free artistic performance. These artists are confronting their work with the past in a particular way – they share the relicts of socialistic space, discovering its relation to personal, local or historical memory. Those elements are mixed up with popular culture phenomena of their childhood and adolescence and today's current trends. On several examples of these artists and their work the paper will reveal several different methods and strategies, both formal and conceptual, of reflecting the topic. Some basic categories of those strategies can be marked: Architecture and space as a physical and spiritual platform, represented by artists Monika Sosnowska, Robert Kuśmirowski, Maciej Kurak or Tomáš Džadoň. Everyday experience and ordinary life in art of Julita Wójcik, Paulina Ołowska or Petra Feriancová. Life and art within the ideology presented by works of Zsolt Keserue and projects of Pavel Karous. Archive as a method of interpretation researched by Svätopluk Mikyta or Zbyněk Baladrán and Public space as a platform for activism – a field for art groups Rafani and Little Warsaw and Tamás Kaszás.

All those strategies are widely ranged to contemporary art theory and practice. In the broad flow of „historiographical turn in art“ (H. Foster, D. Roelstraete) they can be put into the

juxtaposition among other representants of this current tendency, which emerged in the first years of the new millenium as a consequence of crisis and deprivation of the western capitalistic civilization. The artists from both East and West are dealing with historical matters, interpreting and re-contextualizing it. They are looking back to different periods – from modernism, avant-garde, Second World War to recent history, the era of their childhood. The specific artistic turn to „socmodernism“ (term originally used for the Polish architecture of the seventies) is one of its form. In this turn, the role of artist is shifting to an artist as an archivist. The aim is not to search the historical true, but to criticize the mechanisms of (especially collective) memory itself (J. Zálešák).

Speaking of memory, especially in the post-communist areas, the term (n)ostalgia should be widely considered as a relationship between individual and collective memory (S. Boym). It's specific form, called „Ostalgia“ („longing for the East“) grew up shortly after the radical political, social and cultural changes brought by the process of transformation at the beginning of the nineties, when the „fight for preserving the memory“ has begun (Zálešák). Many „ostalgic“ pop-culture works emerged (films, books etc.) and this „retro-mania“ is still present. Artistic practice reacts critically and aims to reflect and interpret, and thus represents the desire for finding identity, having a heritage and future (Crowley/Sczerski).

The main aims of the paper is to introduce, reinterpret and put these artistic approaches into a wider, international context, to highlight its specifics and show their special way they enrich the contemporary, global visual culture.