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Outlines of Social Practice in CEE

The first impulse to conduct this research were missing summed up examples to compare projects in a field of Socially Engaged Art or Social Practice in the CEE area. Next gaps in instruments were the language how to describe these projects and methods of evaluation. There was no intention to compare it with Western discourse in a first step, but just to capture specificity of this field.

I provided historical research of precursors in each country from CEE region (according to Piotr Piotrowski) to understand well particular development. First part is extended by terminology which is taken over from Western art history. The core of the work is built by selected examples from all post-communist European countries. Final capture is targeted to analyze long term project based on care and labour led by Sráč Sam (1969) in the Czech Republic over last thirty years.

According to ethical turn in art, I found the roots of social practice in the unofficial art scene where the social and political engagement is included and evident. There are involved performative works which led to gathering and transformation role of the audience. Next mentioned artworks are focused on environment, ecology, gender, politics, self-institutionalization or body. Part of the terminology refers to concepts as Socially Engaged Art, Social Practice, Participatory Art, Collaborative Art, New Genre Public Art, Connective Aesthetics, Relational Aesthetics, Context Art, Emancipated Spectator and Aesthetic Regime of Art.

The second part consist of particular projects from Poland, Bulgaria Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, ex-Yugoslavia and Romania referring to described terminology. This chapter is extended by text about the influence of social document on social practice. Poland is represented by projects of two individual artists: Joanna Rajkowska (1968) and Artur Żmijewski (1966). *Femina Subtetrax* is Romanian project realized by Larisa Crunțeanu (1984) and Sonja Hornung (1987) at Ivan Gallery in Bucharest in 2015. Multilevel exhibition based on east-gender rewrote the patriarchal history through the speculative fiction. The second example from Romania is Matei Bejenaru (1963) with his long term approach to labour and migrants. Slovakian engagement was composed by differences of woman artists of various

ages; ex-Yugoslavia is continuously represented by groups (Spomenik, IRWIN) following to precursors like OHO group and TOK group.

The third chapter is a detail description of long term specific project titled “A Vision for New Culture and its Place”. The concept was formulated by artist Sráč Sam (1969) at the end of the 1980s. It is an open and complex system of principles containing both, temporary and long-term solutions for the questions which arise during a period of transformation, such as the transition from totalitarianism to democracy in former Czechoslovakia. Main approach to fulfill the idea is a care connected with a labour. Next to examples like relations or architecture there is strong emphasis to language in her work. The project is compared to the concept of social sculpture formulated by Joseph Beuys (1921–1986).

I was working with books: *Antipolitics in Central European Art* (I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2015) by Klara Kemp-Welch, *Socially Engaged Art After Socialism* (I.B. Turis, 2017) by Izabel Galliera, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe* (Reaktion Books, 2012) by Piotr Piotrowski, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (Verso Books, 2012) by Claire Bishop and many other sources. The basic used methodology is the project description with an attempt to reveal intention and subsequently compared with the outcome. Main concern of the first part is to set up the polemic with Bishop’s claim that artists under socialism “wanted to live more free live” avoiding politics. Next one is that the development of social practice is usually connected to performance. I suggest seeing a social document as a next possible source of precursor due to opening excluded discursive fields. As far as contemporary projects concerns, there is no umbrella for all projects; each one has to be read as a specific one. And finally, the question about characteristics of permanent autonomous zone originated as socially engaged art project.