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Détournement in Iconosphere of Protests in 2011-2012: Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Indignados

Although my dissertation topic is not strictly focused on European studies, representing broader perspective inspired by Fernand Braudel's and Immanuel Wallerstein's macrohistory and global art history projects by Hans Belting and Piotr Piotrowski, crucial context of my research is an issue of aestheticization of protests in the second half of XXth century, along with transformation of art's and artists' social role. This phenomenon was characteristic for May 1968, the Autumn of Nations in 1989, protests of 2011-2012, i.e. Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street and Indignados and is still growing stronger, proof of which are countless artifacts made by participants of women's strike in Poland and anti-government protests in Belarus (both 2020-2021), such as graffitis, banners, posters, stickers, installations etc. Iconosphere of protests, together with its psychology, sociology, aesthetics and rhetoric impacts way of communicating and acting and so it is important – and worth investigating – factor of formation of modern societies, founded on civil disobedience concept.

Aestheticization of protest has its roots in broader tendency – aestheticization of everyday life. Both of these phenomena result in blurring boundaries between art and everyday life, artist and everyman. Moreover, as iconosphere and anesthetization of protest still aren't (or perhaps aren't yet) considered as a serious study subject, it is crucial not only to take up the topic, but also to reflect on possible ways of researching it. In my presentation I would like to point out to a few of essential difficulties occurring while researching it and introduce possible approach, which enables taking into account ephemerality of artifacts, bottom-up structure of creation, anonymity of the authors and often "semi-artistic" character of works. All of aforementioned features of analysed material prompt to using more ambiguous term than simply protest art. Concept of iconosphere, meaning "everything, that surrounds us in form of images, sounds, shapes" was introduced by Polish art historian Mieczysław Porębski in 1972 (Porębski M., *Ikonosfera*, Warszawa 1972, p. 297), along with a proposal to form new research field, iconic studies (pol. ikonika), inspired by structuralism and information theory. Iconic studies were meant to research images more freely and multidisciplinary than art history, but most importantly to raise the value of images of everyday, non-art origin.

As reflected in the title of my dissertation, major analytical category organizing rich and diverse iconographical material is détournement, derived from both theoretical and practical artistic activity of The Situationist International. Détournement can be defined as reusing or transforming the primal source – sensory, artistic, lingual or any other, in

either subversive or neutral way in order to create a new (or almost new, repeated) quality. Term of *détournement*, as proposed by Guy Debord and Gil Wolman can serve as one of the anti-ideological tools of revolution, opposing to alienation and spectacularization of capitalist society and so it was used by situationists next to *dérive* and so called constructed situations. Because of its broad meaning, such artistic practices as collages, emballages, ready made, subvertising, graffiti, culture jamming, iconoclasm, deformation and caricature – many of which are characteristic for protest iconosphere – can be counted as *détournement*.