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Intersections Among Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish and Czechoslovak Art Photographers From 1960s to Late 1980s

Research on the history of art photography mainly focuses and describes prominent individuals, photography groups and schools if they were isolated in one country or even city, but the research of local influences and inspirations that helped in development of art photographers' main styles in the Soviet Union republics and its satellite countries is still very minor. Was there a community of like-minded artists that existed under strict censorship of the Soviet system? What were the stylistic, aesthetic, conceptual and technical influences between photographers from countries of the so-called Socialist bloc and Western republics of the Soviet Union in the 1960s – 1980s? How did they differ between these places?

The aim of the research is to provide historical awareness on social intersections between the Czechoslovak, Polish, Ukrainian, and Baltic states' photographers and informal photographic groups, to trace the process of migration of creative ideas and technical approaches, that did not fit to the official Socialist realism doctrine, how in some case particular photographers and organisations benefited from it, while some were pushed to form underground movements.

The thesis of the study is that the contacts and visual inspirations between photographic groups and individuals, were extensive and there was a place for visual impact on photographers from Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine by their colleagues from Poland and Czechoslovakia, which had longer history of photography, less strict censorship, and who served as a bridge between cultures on both sides of the "Iron Curtain." It is supposed that collected clues reveal connections which resulted similarities between individuals and will evidence influences on styles that were used during those times in these countries.

The first part will briefly discuss the acceptance of photography as an art form internationally, and its development in the Socialist countries, with its socio-political differences. The second part will reveal the history of the development of formal and informal photography groups, which from the late 1960s to the late 1980s, had an impact on the medium of photography locally. It will also highlight the main styles that were used, development of new ideas and communicational strategies that included personal connections and exchange of the artworks with photographers from other republics and colleagues from Western Europe countries. The third part will consist of analysis of selected art photographers with examples of their works of art (techniques, materials, approaches), their similarities and radical differences.

Research will use the methods of social art history, to find and summarise biographical data about the important figures and institutions; micro history for investigation of selected events that, through found clues, might reveal larger image of social connections and mutual inspirations; non-systematic review of the selected artworks and their visual comparative analysis.