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Theorising the Transition

Globalization and Hungarian Contemporary Art after 1989

Culture and identity are often perceived as closely linked notions; both require sensitive attitude towards community / togetherness, both built upon shared values / knowledge, and upon the assumption of having a common ground. My PhD research revolves around the concept(s) of *cultural identity* examined from the specific perspective of social and cultural changes – and their direct and indirect impact on the art scene – after the political transition of 1989-1990 in Hungary. It seeks to investigate the nature of said changes / processes by focusing on the actors and institutions of the art scene of the 1990s and their present-day descendants. It contributes to an understanding of culture as a condition, a political stage for society (Nowotny, Buden 2009) by using cultural translation as an approach, a possible method for transferring specific local – in this case Central Eastern European – knowledge into our globalized world.

The research that I have started at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna under the supervision of prof. Sabeth Buchmann and Suzana Milevska, then, as a guest researcher continued at the Centre for Fine Art Research of Birmingham City University with prof. Johnny Golding incorporates various approaches and methods of art history, visual culture and philosophy in order to understand the complexity of the past few decades. The general aim of this research is to reveal to what extent did certain historical and political events (of Hungary and of the region) affect the cultural scene and its actors around and after 1989 in Hungary? I am very much interested in the conjunction of neoliberalist thinking, postmodernism and the so-called *post-communist condition* (Groys 2008) that were all present – although with different intensity – after the political regime change. In Irit Rogoff's understanding the simultaneity of problems, methods or practices is what forms *contemporaneity*, a necessarily temporal coexistence which needs to be conceived in its discontinuity and multiple singularity (Rogoff 2006). My aim is to find a way to describe

the transition period in Hungary while keeping in mind the contemporaneity of its extremely different theoretical components. By focusing on Hungary as a case study I hope to contribute situating Hungarian contemporary art on a regional as well as on a global map, which is why I am taking part of the *Inside Out – Not So White Cube* long-term research project (initiated by Alenka Gregorič, the artistic director of the City Art Gallery Ljubljana, and Suzana Milevska, independent curator and art theorist based in Macedonia) as well.

Literatur:

Buden, B, Nowotny, S, Simon, S, Bery, A & Cronin, M 2009, 'Cultural translation: An introduction to the problem, and Responses,' *Translation Studies*, 2:2, pp. 196-219.

Groys, B 2008, *Art Power*, MIT Press, Cambridge / London.

Rogoff, I 2006, 'Academy as Potentiality,' in *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.*, eds A Nollert, I Rogoff, B de Baere et al., Frankfurt am Main, Revolver, pp 13-20.