Marge Monko, Shaken Not Stirred, 2010, video (single-channelled HD), 19’ 35", videostill, courtesy of the artist and Ani Molnar Gallery, Budapest
are intellectuals entrepreneurs.
Introduction

Curatorial text

Exhibition chapters
Meditation on the Eastern identity

Trauma & Revival. Cultural relations between Eastern and Western Europe

Visit Bunkier Sztuki
INTRODUCTION

Over twenty years after the infamous Interpol exhibition, which was aimed at establishing a dialogue between artists from Western and Eastern Europe and which, according to its participants, “set the East and West further apart,” Central Eastern European heritage is still a highly problematic construct. It may seem that the geographic split in Europe has begun to gradually disappear. Artists themselves have discarded the anachronic geographical frames by participating in international exhibitions, biennials, and residencies or by choosing to live in the countries where they can enjoy a better standard of living. They have begun to perceive Europe as a global and universal platform for their art. Nonetheless, contemporary East-West relations are still overshadowed by the Cold War thinking, and Central Eastern European countries, with their reviving nationalisms and anti-democratic feelings, are seen by the “old” Europe as a threat to “true democracy.”

Europe, with its complex history, tradition, and culture, functions as a set of trails, a source of context, references, and implications. It has turned into a lens, focused on the condition of the present. What kind of heritage is now the European tradition and myth for the artists? Do they identify with it or rather consider it a burden?

We posed these questions to the representatives of the “New East” – the artists who are in some way connected with Central Eastern Europe. The knowledge about art, its development, and the history of artistic practice in this region is much easier to explore nowadays than in previous decades. We realise that contemporary artists have difficulties in identifying themselves and their situation in the monolith construct called “post-communist Central Eastern Europe.” Nevertheless, the study of art is still being affected by the Western discourse, while art from Central Eastern Europe is perceived as rather indistinguishable.
Orient brings forth a view of the history of artistic activity that questions the hegemonic model, according to which Central Eastern European art is either simply a belated reaction to Western trends or an instrumentalized ideological production. The exhibition doubts simplified judgments and focuses on relations between cultural circles in the countries where art movements or formal language used by artists were not homogeneous at all. It is the intention of Orient to deconstruct and discard these false and abstract territorial limitations. The exhibition turns our attention to the necessity for formulating new research methods and rules of communication between artists and creators of culture from the regions of Europe, which have been long excluded from the official international history of art. It places the work of historic artists such as Petr Štembera or Jiří Kovanda in new contexts and thus, calls for the creation of a new history of art. It concentrates on areas of research that remain on the margins of the official narrative.

With a critical eye, the project reopens the question of modernist history and heritage, of understanding our own history, identity, and reinterpretation of art history as well as collective trauma and amnesia. It points out the diverse practices by which art can reach viewers and analyses their role in broader relations between art and society.

Anna Bargiel
Wojciech Bąkowski, *Holiday Power Supply*, 2016, part of the sound installation: wood, plywood, c-print, LED lamp, speakers, courtesy of Galeria Stereo, Warsaw, photo: Ansis Starks
Habima Fuchs, ...from his ashes. Constellation for a Seed, a Blossom, a Fruit and a Bowl, 2017, ceramic art: seven objects, courtesy of SVIT Gallery, Prague

“A sprawl of snowy hills and ugly roads... there is no one to see them.”

The exhibition *Orient* is a meditation on the Eastern European identity. It considers the failure of its own identity to be the unifying aspect of this unclear region. The contradictory longing for pride and patriotism and at the same time the feeling of being ashamed of where we come from that leads to the suppression and negation of this belongingness. The embarrassment, growing from the internalisation of the collapse of the surrounding context that used to be built upon a social and political utopia. The expectation of catching up with the Western capitalist standards, to which European integration – meaning integration into Western Europe – was so often reduced on both sides. The disappearance of the Second World from the picture, and hence, belonging neither to Europe nor to the West nor to the “non-Western.”

This exhibition has chosen a projection of the obviously problematic title to constitute the ironical, self-deprecating identity of the “East European (br)Other.” It claims this contradictory “Oedipal relation” by both refusing and craving it as key constituents of the in-between-ness of Eastern (Bloc, Central, post-communist, New, etc.) Europe.

Stating the suppressed inferiority complex as a possible reason for the recent upheaval of nationalism and anti-democratic tendencies in Eastern Europe, it questions whether the acceptance of this failure in constituting and performing Eastern European identities could not be turned into a virtue.

It sees the need for patriotism in a positive way. The kind of patriotism that allows for reflection on the stereotypes, which we all need and with which we live; the kind of patriotism that is both ironical and at the same time entirely serious. A sense
of belonging to a place, rather than a nation. A new mythol-
ogy, which is creating a sense of space in an economy where
space is the most expensive asset.

Built on expectations, desires, stories, experiences, and ste-
reotypes, it stages a drama that takes viewers through five
scenes, or five genres, following the dialectics of the region’s
development since the end of the 1980s. A muddle of the
most ironical and the most earnest intentions for creating
a new museum of (in)famous national histories. A therapeutic
re-enactment of our surprises, victories, traumas, and humil-
iations. A dark satirical comedy of The Fateful Adventures®
in the non-existent region after The End of History.\(^9\) An ap-
propriation of our own insults as a mode of emancipation but
also as a mode of self-reflection.

Despite the conflicting pathos and subsequent irony,\(^10\) this
exhibition believes it will help the “wayward children of Eu-

ger”\(^11\) to finally grow and return to the European home once
again as well as consider this home as one that is “celebra-
tory” rather than “self-congratulatory” and “fraternal” rather
than “patronising.”\(^12\)

This exhibition is not a map, nor is it a survey, but rather
a subjective journey observed from a point in space and time
and constructed with artists that have been chosen not be-
cause of their nationality or language\(^13\) but based on a rela-
tionship. It aims not for equality but rather for inclusion.

Michal Novotný
Laura McLean-Ferris, New Artist Focus: Laura McLean-Ferris on Deimantas Narkevicius in LUX: “The landscape of their country – a sprawl of snowy hills and ugly roads, paints a lonely picture, and suggests that there is no one to see them.”

“Farewell, Poland, farewell, empty wasteland, forever covered in snow and ice […] Barbaric people, arrogant and fickle, Braggarts, blabberers, having nothing but language, Who, day and night shut up in a heated room, Amuse themselves with a glass for every pleasure, Snore at the table and sleep on the ground.” Philippe Desportes, Adieu à la Pologne (1574), trans. Rory Finnin, in “Attendants to the Duel: Classical Intertexts in Philippe Desportes’s ‘Adieu à la Pologne’ and Jan Kochanowski’s ‘Gallo Crocitanti’”, Comparative Literature Studies, vol. 44 (2007), no. 4.

Lucy Steeds at the How We Talk About East-European Art? conference: “There was only one Eastern European artist included in Les Magiciens de la Terre […] We’re now gonna shift to Havana, to consider the 3rd Art Biennale of 1989, which as you can see here, was the subject of the first of the two volumes, under the ‘Making Art Global’ title. And I can tell you right away that no Eastern European Artists were included, but if you look at the catalogue, no Western artists, as strictly, were represented either.”

Larry Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment, Stanford 1996: “As late as the eve of World War I, French scholarship still alternated between two seemingly similar terms, l’Europe orientale (Eastern Europe) and l’Orient européén (the European Orient). […] The idea of Eastern Europe was entangled with evolving Orientalism, for while Philosophic Geography casually excluded Eastern Europe from Europe, implicitly shifting it into Asia, scientific cartography seemed to contradict such fanciful construction. […] Such uncertainty encouraged the construction of Eastern Europe as a para-

In “Welcome to Slaka,” Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius writes: “the ideological construction of the racialised colonial Other and the ‘undeservingly white’ East European (br)Other in the dominant Western discourses reveal too many points in common to be ignored.”

Unknowingly killing his father and marrying his mother, the question of who is who remains.

Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius in Mapping Eastern Europe: Cartography and Art History adds many different names for this region: Marchlands, shatter zone, the belt of political change, the other Europe, New Europe, Mittteleuropa, Zwischeneuropa, and many others.


“In November 1956, the director of Hungarian News Agency, shortly before his office was flattened by artillery fire, sent a telex to the entire world with a desperate message announcing that the Russian attack against Budapest had begun. The dispatch ended with these words: We are going to die for Hungary and for Europe.” Milan Kundera, “The Tragedy of Central Europe, The New York Reviews of Books, April 26th, 1984.

This term that Václav Havel used in his speech to the U.S. Congress on February 22nd, 1990, was translated by the simultaneous interpreter from the original Czech word “zbloudilé,” meaning “abandoned,” “lost,” or “stray children,” as “wayward children.”
In “Eastern Europe According to British Media: More Likely to Go to Italy for Cappuccinos Than Join the Ethnic Fighting in Kosovo”, Anna Azarova further writes: “Eastern Europe’s main attraction is, of course, that it’s cheap. […] ‘knock-down prices, […] lured by dirt-cheap flights,’ ‘cheap beer and even cheaper women’ […]. The inhabitants of these cheap countries who lived the painful past and its consequences were similarly hardly mentioned – except in the context of describing their excitement at the sight of westerners’ purchasing power; or as wild, undesirable side-effects.”

“Well, dearest friend, dearest Hikkitihoki, that is your name as you must know. We all invented names for ourselves on the journey. They are: I am Punkititi. My wife is Schabla Pumfa. Hofer is Rozkapumpa. Adler is Notschopikitischibi. My servant Joseph is Sagadarata. My dog Goukeri is Schomanski. Madam Quallenberg is Runzifunzi. Mlle. Krox is Rumborimuri. Freistaetler is Gaulimauli. Be so kind as to tell him his name.” These lines were written by the German speaking Mozart to Gottfried von Jacquin in January 1787, after his journey from Vienna to Prague through Czech-speaking lands of “Bohemia.”
Ioana Nemeș, Stove, 2009, from the series Relics for the Afterfuture (Brown), object: mixed media; pedestal: plaster, metal construction; two slabs of cheese, stamped with a traditional Romanian cheese stamp ornament, cast in bronze and gilded; two antique wooden bowls, courtesy of Jiri Svestka Gallery, Prague
Chapter 1. Waiting Room
photo: Ansis Starks
The grandeur of railway stations and restaurants becomes a setting for an apparently displaced population; we see tableaux filmed in people’s homes, in their kitchens, as they prepare food, and play sentimental music redolent with nostalgia… for what? For the communism just past, or for an absent partner or child? We will never know as life seems weirdly both quotidian and in suspension, time seems out of joint. [...] 

Akerman’s plan to make the film “before it was too late” begs the question: too late for what exactly? Perhaps before the society formed under Soviet communism disappeared. In this sense, the people in this film may have already been spectral presences, always already ghosts conjured from a past time, and now, twenty years after the event, even more so. We see them only ever in passing, without the agency of a voice to speak for themselves, and if they do, it is in Russian, untranslated. And, as the title with its cardinal directional specificity would seem to assume a Western audience, like the spectre, they withdraw from contact with their intended audience.

My context is a country that was built on a social and political Utopia. But I grew up in the period when nobody really believed in it. The fall of the Soviet Union was at a time when people had other Utopias. Those were liberal Utopias, about the freedom to do what you do. Those kinds of Utopia were also an illusion, and lasted only for a few years. People grew disillusioned very quickly. What kind of Utopias can be created on a human scale? That is the question, and I don’t have an answer.

Chapter 2.  
All dressed up and nowhere to go

Veronika Bromová, *Me Table*, 2000, colour photo, courtesy of the artist
Avdey Ter-Oganyan, *Towards the Object*, 1992, photo of a performance: black and white photo (exhibition copy), courtesy of the artist
In my cabaret, there were no eight-year-old girls. Just girls of age, long-legged girls, girls who looked like angels. Instead of wings, they would spread their long legs, which was no less beautiful than if those had been the wings of real angels. The guests liked it more than any illusionist’s show, and their eyes followed the revealed genitalia with fascination, reminiscent of Muslims facing Mecca during prayer. To make the show more interesting, the girls would include different special effects into their acts. One, for example, would put a blinking plastic ring with a diode in her vagina. Then, she would get naked, spread her legs, and her c***t would be illuminated, though the ring was not visible. Then, once she started to pee, it would look like the famous light fountain in Fučíkárna. [...] Glass eyes were another speciality, the kind that they make for victims of car accidents. The Germans in the bar would ‘ooh’ in amazement when a girl spread her legs and there was a ‘magic eye’ looking at the guests! She would close and open her legs repeatedly, and the eye would wink as she did that. It was an unbelievable illusion of a real live eye, right there in the anus. You must admit, real angels, even with their wings, would never be able to produce such an effect!

Ivan Jonák, unpublished memoir, 700 pages
Ivan Jonák, a Czech businessman, the owner of the legendary club *Discoland Silvie*, which he once infamously promoted by riding naked in downtown Prague, in a convertible, with naked female models, in broad daylight, who served eighteen years in prison for putting out a hit on his wife in the 1990s, and who was himself the subject of two failed assassination attempts, has died at the age of fifty-nine, on the six hundred and sixty-sixth day after his release from prison.

Radio Prague, February 24th, 2016
Chapter 3.
Carpathian Digital Meadows

Pavel Brăila. Work, 2000, video, 5’ 47”, courtesy of Kontakt. The Art Collection of Erste Group and ERSTE Foundation
Petr Štembera, *Grafting*, 1975, photo of a performance: black and white photo (exhibition copy), courtesy of the artist
Back when I was at the art academy, I think it was my 1st or maybe 2nd year, I once read an interview in the newspaper or magazine with a “contemporary” artist from ex-Yugoslavia. I don’t remember exactly where was he from, nor his name, but what stayed with me from this interview is a statement he made at one point, saying something like:

“If I were to live in France or Norway... I, as well, would like to or would make works that analyse or study the relationship between ‘line’ and ‘circle.’ But look at me and look where I live, I can’t just stand with my arms crossed, I have to make art that is socially engaged, art that reacts to the situation that I am in.”

Today, when I moved from Bosnia to France, I decided to use the naivety of this statement...

Ibro Hasanović, *Circle and Line*, installation, black and golden vinyl on wall, text on wall, 2009

Second Field: Virvál, Magion, Master kru, Rotor, Trinidad, Hedonix + Pan:dan, Spofa, Laydakk, Recycle, Basswoos, Rekrea, Zmastek, MassaCrew, Czajovna Soundsys, Milada Chillout, Dyslektická Divize, Funda-Mental, 360° Records, IGRA 1.5V, Locus, Antares, Bione, Illegal Soundsys, Kwan, Pitel, CML, Third Hand, Mozaika, Radio 23, Cable, Haccor

NSK Field: NSK, Metek, Cabaret, Luxor, Ubik, Qwadrant Soundsystem, Stupid Sounds

Desert Storm Field: Trakkass + Oxyde + Metro, Desert Storm + Toltek + New Sense, Hekate + Reset + Headfuk, pH:4, Enzo + D.P

CzechTek Map, line-up, 2004
I looked around and saw whatever there was to see, and it was precisely what I didn’t want to see because I had seen it so many times before: pines and fences, firs and cottages, weeds and grass, a ditch, footpaths and cabbage patches, fields and a chimney… the air… all glistening in the sun, yet black, the blackness of trees, the grayness of the soil, the earthy green of plants, everything rather black. A dog barked, Fuks turned into a thicket.

“It’s cooler here.”

“Let’s go on.”

“Wait a minute. Let’s sit down a while.”

He ventured deeper into the bushes where recesses and hollows were opening up, darkened from above by a canopy of intertwining hazel branches and boughs of spruce, I ventured with my gaze into the disarray of leaves, twigs, blotches of light, thickets, recesses, thrusts, slants, bends, curves, devil knows what, into a mottled space that was charging and receding, first growing quiet, then, I don’t know, swelling, displacing everything, opening wide...lost and drenched in sweat, I felt the ground below, black and bare. There was something stuck between the trees – something was protruding that was different and strange, though indistinct... and this is what my companion was also watching.

Chapter 4.
The Devil in the Machine

Václav Litvan, *Lighter Than Air*, 2017, object: polystyrene, asphalt, courtesy of the artist, photo: Jonáš Richter
The horrific new trend was set on February 19th by a twenty-six-year-old jobless man, who poured a flammable liquid on his half naked body and set himself on fire in front of the local branch of a major bank to the utter horror of a few passers-by. [...] 

Less than twenty-four hours later Bulgaria was jolted even more, when a thirty-six-year-old artist, climber and environmentalist, set himself on fire in the centre of Bulgaria’s sea capital Varna, scene of the biggest rallies of anti-government protesters in recent months. [...] 

While struggling with severe burns that had left healthy skin only on his feet the young man became known as Bulgaria’s Jan Palach, the Prague student, whose death in flames sparked the hope of a whole nation back in 1969.


Andrzej Filipiak came to Warsaw from Kielce on a Tuesday night. At around eleven p.m., he sat on a bench in front of the prime minister’s office and set himself on fire. He did not have any banners, he did not shout. [...] A fifty-six-year-old man could not find a job and did not receive help from the state. “He asked me for thirty zloty for a ticket. He just said he was going to Warsaw. He shaved and left the house,” says his wife.

wpolityce.pl, June 13th, 2013
Lydia Petrova, the thirty-eight-year-old photographer who set herself on fire in front of the Presidency Building in Sofia last week, has passed away. Despite best efforts of the doctors at Pirogov emergency hospital, the woman died last night. She had severe burns, and from the start, the medics warned that her state was incompatible with life. Lydia Petrova set herself on fire before the eyes of dozens of journalists and passers-by around the Presidency Building on November 3rd to signal her despair.

BNR Radio Bulgaria, November 10th, 2014

Piotr Szczesny, a fifty-four-year-old father of two, set himself on fire in front of the Communist-era Palace of Culture in Warsaw. Mr. Szczesny’s outcry was aimed against the far-right policies of the ruling Law and Justice Party, which he believed represented a mortal danger to Poland’s democracy. In a leaflet that he seems to have distributed before his suicide, he was unflinching: “I love freedom first and that is why I decided to immolate myself, and I hope that my death will shake the consciences of many people.”

Chapter 5.
Shadows of the Past Futures
Richard Nikl, Olga, 2017, relief: painted styrofoam, courtesy of the artist
Art of Eastern Europe, if there was one and if it was to be written about by an Anglophone art historian, had to be presented according to the rules of quite another discourse, as convincingly autonomous, immunised, so to speak, against the dominant socio-political clichés about rape, backwardness, imitativeness, and “clean tractors.” Not surprisingly, a tentative and Cold War-underpinned Western research on art in Eastern Europe focused almost exclusively on modernism behind the Iron Curtain, following the patterns of the earlier rediscovery of the persecuted Russian and Soviet avant-garde.

Coincidentally the tongue I use is one of the Czechs, of Slavs, of slaves, of onetime slaves to Germans and Russians, and it's a dog's tongue. A clever dog knows how to survive and what price to pay for survival. He knows when to crouch and when to dodge and when to bite, it's in his tongue. It's a tongue that was to have been destroyed, and its time has yet to come; now it never will. Invented by versifiers, spoken by coachmen and maids, and that's in it too, it evolved its own loops and holes and the wildness of a serpent's young. It's a tongue that often had to be spoken only in whispers. It's tender and cruel, and has some good old words of love, I think, it's a swift and agile tongue, and it's always happening. Not even the Avars could get this tongue of mine, not tanks or burning borders or the most repulsive human species of all: cowardly teachers. What will eventually get it is cash in a shrinking world. But I still have time.


Look inside of my soul
And you can find gold and maybe get rich
Look inside of your soul and you can find out it never exist.

Kendrick Lamar, “Bitch, Don't Kill My Vibe,”
*good kid, m.A.A.d city*, Top Dawg Entertainment, Aftermath Entertainment, 2012
Jiří Kovanda, *Untitled (The Ears)*, 2007, object: wooden chair, courtesy of SVIT Gallery, Prague, photo: Ansis Starks
Let’s start with the obvious – the title. You’ve said that the title, *Orient*, is “obviously problematic.” Would you elaborate on that?

It’s a joke, actually. And fooling people is always problematic, and even more so in state institutions. Someone may also oppose the idea that Eastern Europe has never been colonised by the “West,” only culturally, which, I think, definitely makes a difference. *Orient* is a reference to Edward Said’s “Orientalism,” in
the sense that Eastern Europe, much like the Orient, has never really existed, but was, or is, more like a series of projections. However, it also has to do with the lack of information, a certain ignorance, not only of people in general, but also of the Western media, schools, and other institutions. But we must not forget that projection is double-sided: we have also had our West, our “Occident,” one that was very different from what we had imagined, or what the exotic image given to us by the still persisting cultural dominance had been. The title should also be a certain hyperbolic warning that we do not enter a kind of “oriental despotism.” Because this disenchantment, that it is not how we expected, often leads to some sort of resentment, this thin line, when the inferiority complex turns into complete arrogance and aggression. That pretty much plays into the hands of all those populists who peddle instant solutions.

VK:

I wanted to ask you about what you’ve just mentioned, that “projection is always double-sided,” and what it means in the artistic context of this exhibition. Art history is quite often written from the perspectives of the so-called art centres, not the so-called peripheries. But peripheries also quite often want to catch up with centres, or to refer to them, which is also problematic on many different levels. Did this factor somehow influence your choice of participating artists? Do you want to reveal this two-way mirror projection?

MN:

Maybe in the internet era it becomes even more obvious that the centre-periphery dichotomy, or rather, the civilised-uncivilised, as it is nicely depicted in the book by Larry Wolff that you gave me, Inventing Eastern Europe, isn’t only a question of “manners” but also mainly of money. Democracy itself cannot function under a certain monthly income of the inhabitants. To me, this is not a question of access but rather that of infrastructure. The myth of modern and contemporary art is that of auton-
omy. Free spirit is cashed out only consequently. My conception is much more materialistic. Context matters in what we see as good or bad art. And you can buy this context, walls, people, information channels. Ironically enough, so many of those who have left for “civilization” find themselves facing much lower living standards, struggling with three jobs, but still infinitely grateful to be in New York or London because of the culture. I am very happy to see, for once, a list of names with all these weird diacritical marks. But it’s not about nationality, I mix old and young artists, trend surfers with the forgotten ones. What’s equally important, it’s that there are artists who have left the region as soon as they could, and others who have come to live here, for different reasons. It’s not to break the centre’s walls, but the idea of something inherently good or bad.

VK:

You also mention that “the exhibition Orient is a meditation on the Eastern European identity. It considers the failure of its own identity to be the unifying aspect of this unclear region.” Above, you mention that the capital or lack thereof, to be more exact, is one of the factors that create the centre-periphery dichotomy. What are other factors that constitute this identity?

MN:

Language. Literally, as we all speak languages that nobody else does, so even between ourselves we need to use English. I will never speak and write in English the way I would have liked [to speak and write in English]. That’s maybe why I always use so many quotations, I need to look for someone else to say what I want to say. But also metaphorically, the language of visual art. When you have foreign curators coming, you often see that they repeatedly choose the same people who speak the language they understand. I do the same. Maybe with some mistakes or misunderstandings, a bit like the local avant-garde style, these versions of cubist Parisian cafés you have at the
Latvian National Museum and that we have in Prague as well. And finally, these local modernities, with all their perversions and bastardisations, are more interesting than the classics, or at least just as interesting. I have included in this show artists who have never really lived in the region, don’t even speak the language, but who have the right passport, or, at least, the right place of birth. It is a valid, generally accepted criterion. And I want to be inclusive. But I am also interested in how to make the ones who don’t speak the international language understandable. How to make them look “chic.”

VK:
The exhibition has five chapters – what paradigms or filters do you use to create them? In what way do they structure the exhibition?

MN:
They are interiors, or environments. Making these artworks look like props on a stage is a commentary on this proclaimed autonomy of (Western) arts. Contemporary art has a whole ideology of truth related to the neutrality of presentation, the independence of an artist’s persona, the freedom of his expression, a clear division between the commercial and the non-commercial, etc. I don’t believe in any of these. It is much better to be using theatricality as something openly false. Better to overmanipulate the artworks than pretend you are not doing so. Also, I really think we perceive reality as we have never done before, via something that is probably closest to film “genres,” but this could also allow us to overcome stereotypes, because a genre allows us to be both serious and ironical. And that is something very Eastern European. Lastly, they make up some sort of chronology, a chronology of shattered feelings of “being free,” perhaps, from the 1980s up to now, the history of feelings that freedom has finally arrived, which are always only illusionary, because freedom needs to be created day by day.
VK: In conclusion, I’d like to go back to the starting point – again, about the so-called former Eastern Europe. There is a certain problem with shaping a vision for the future in the region, though this is no different from other global trends. And even worse, it’s no secret that most governments and societies, having a long tradition of migration, are strongly against immigration now, they openly express nationalistic views or tend to steer their constituents in the anti-democratic direction, like in today’s Poland or Hungary, for example. Do you touch upon this subject in the Orient?

MN: The anti-democratic directions you mentioned are depicted here as a relapse of the suppressed inferiority complex as well as long-ignored difficult material conditions. The difference between wages and pensions in Western Europe and those in Eastern Europe is striking, while the cost of living is becoming similar. I have often felt affronted that people perceived me through the prism of my nationality and origin – this baroque church-like frame of a hammer and a sickle, beer and snow around my face – but at the same time, they applied frameworks, this contemporary art globetrotter point of view of things that were so far from the actual material reality of my region. On the other hand, I myself have also understood how my behaviour and reactions are very much shaped by growing up in and belonging to this mutilated nation that hasn’t managed to heal its wounds, covering them with these new Western clothes instead. Therefore, there is also a lot of work that we need to do on our sometimes very self-centred, narrow perspective. And it is mainly about how to use this specific, trauma-related sensitivity to bring about a positive outcome. I hope it’s here in the show.
Jasanský & Polák, Director/Founder, 2011, photo from the series of colour photos: lambda print, courtesy of SVIT Gallery, Prague
Trauma & Revival is an international project which explores cultural relations between Eastern and Western Europe since the end of World War II and until the present, including the Cold War era. The project looks at Europe, which from 1945 was, as it might have seemed, permanently split by the Iron Curtain. Eastern and Western Europe went through this period differently, and thus their experiences are often discussed separately. The aim of Trauma & Revival is to show that, despite the symbolic split, European artists had much in common at that time. They had to face the post-war trauma and hidden but fervent hopes for the future. The project is an attempt both at bringing back the common artistic experience of the times and at understanding the two post-WWII decades from the perspective of art. By reflecting on
the common past as well as political and socio-economic circumstances, it tries to find prospects for a common future and possibilities for creating new forms of cultural dialogue.

The project was originated by the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels (Belgium), which invited different European galleries, cultural institutions, and foundations, including the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art in Krakow, to join in.

Carried out from 2016 to 2018, the project comprises various events, such as exhibitions, screenings, conferences, workshops, and residencies. It was launched with the opening of the *Facing the Future: Art in Europe 1945–1968* exhibition at the BOZAR in Brussels. The exhibition also travelled to the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe (Germany) and to the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow (Russia). It features works by as many as 180 artists from Europe and the former USSR, including Pablo Picasso, Gerhard Richter, Andrzej Wróblewski, Ossip Zadkine, and Fernand Léger.

The two conferences that followed – *East-West Cultural Relations: Interplay of Arts and Cultural Diplomacy 1945–2017* at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland and *Exhibition as a Medium of History* at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery – took up the theme of changes undergone by Europe in the post-war era. The context of the project was then enhanced by three film screenings at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery in 2016 and 2017, during which the public had an opportunity to see films by such artists as Fiona Tan, Sven Augustijnen, Yael Bartana, Mario Pfeifer, Lutz Dammbeck, Ulrike Ottinger, and Daniel Malone.

Engaging young artists and researchers who explore the theme of memory, trauma, and socio-cultural changes in the second half of the 20th century has been an important part of the project. They participated in workshops in Moscow and took up residencies organized by Kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga (Latvia) and Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella (Italy). They are all meeting again at the workshop organized by the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art in Krakow.
The history of the post-war European art has formed the basis of the online almanac, developed by the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe. The story is written in two voices: the first cites key historical events in the years between 1945 and 1968, whereas the second highlights the most important phenomena in contemporary art, such as exhibitions, art manifestos, and creative approaches.

The culmination of the project is the Orient. Designed as a touring exhibition, it was first presented at Kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga, then at the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels, and now – in its most compound form – at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art in Krakow. In November 2018, the three-year project will be summarized theoretically at a conference at the Brussels Palace of Fine Arts, where a concluding publication in the form of a manifesto will have its launch event.

We encourage you to visit our partners’ websites and our Facebook page (facebook.com/traumarevival) for more information and updates on the project.
Dragana Sapanjoš, *Bukake: we are our own devil*, 2013,
sculpture: paper, cardboard, silicone, wax, satin ribbon,
concrete, stucco, paint, enamel, ceramics, trimmings, plastic,
synthetic pearls, beads, non-woven fabric, paper, wood,
glass, courtesy of the artist, photo: Ansis Starks
Exhibitions at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art can be viewed from Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tour the exhibition

All visitors can order guided tours prepared by the exhibition custodians through the project “Exhibition Explained.” Guided tours for adults take the form of joint discussion. For children and young people we offer workshops inspired by the works in the exhibition.

The cost of guided tours is admission to the exhibition + a fee for guided tours is 65 PLN (in Polish) and 85 PLN (in a foreign language). The fee for workshops for children and adolescents is 120 PLN (in Polish) and 150 PLN (in English).

Information and registration: Mikołaj Spodaryk (educator), spodaryk@bunkier.art.pl

Educational Activities

Current exhibitions are also accompanied by free workshops for children and families. They are led by educators, exhibition custodians, curators and artists. The workshops are regularly announced on the websites bunkier.art.pl and sztuka24h.edu.pl. The websites also provide scenarios and various kinds of educational materials.
Guided tours and workshops could be tailored to the needs of visually impaired persons (audio description), those who are hearing impaired (translation into Polish Sign Language), and people with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders.

Information and registration: Mikołaj Spodaryk (educator), spodaryk@bunkier.art.pl

Publications

Our publications – books about art, catalogs, books for children are available at the Gallery cashier and the Ha!art bookstore (from Tuesday to Sunday, 12 p.m. – 7 p.m.). The latest publication issued by us is Księga zmian [Book of Changes], containing texts on projects and exhibitions presented at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery in recent years.

"Exhibition Pavilion"

This is the place where we organize thematic meetings devoted primarily to curatorial strategies and exhibition practices. There is also a specialist library of publications devoted to the history of exhibitions, curatorial practices, and intellectual property rights. Books are available on site for visitors to the Gallery.

Fine Art Collection

Bunkier Sztuki possesses a collection of over three hundred works by contemporary artists. Thanks to the cooperation of the Regional Digitalisation Workshop of the Malopolska Institute of Culture in Krakow the collection has become available on the website “Malopolska’s Virtual Museums” (muzea.malopolska.pl).
All the information about what is happening in the Gallery can be found at:

facebook.com/bunkiersztuki

instagram.com/bunkiersztuki

sztuka24h.edu.pl

bunkier.art.pl
Vlad Nancă, *Untitled (Saturn, plant stand)*, 2015, plant holder: welded round rod, steel, ceramic pot, plant, courtesy of the artists and Gallery Sabot, Cluj-Napoca
Aurora Király, Héroïnes, 2013/2018, part of the installation:
ten drawings: acryl on paper mounted on wooden cutting
boards, courtesy of Anca Poterasu Gallery, Bucharest,
photo: Ansis Starks
Alice Niktinová, *The Coat*, 2015, oil on canvas, courtesy of SVIT Gallery, Prague
Exhibition

duration:
21.09–9.12.2018

artists:

curator:
Michal Novotný

co-curator:
Anna Bargiel

coordinator:
Renata Zawartka

curatorial cooperation and coordination:
Gabriela Brdej

graphic identity:
Agata Biskup

location:
Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art
ground floor and 1st floor

exhibition media patronage:

co-organisers of the exhibition:
Kim? Contemporary Art Centre
Co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage Fund for the Promotion of Culture.

The exhibition organised in the framework of the international project *Trauma & Revival* co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

project partners:

associated project partners:
Austrian Cultural Forum Moscow (Moscow, Russia), Gallery ROSIZO (Moscow, Russia), Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow (Moscow, Russia), Tretyakov Gallery (Moscow, Russia)
David Maljković, *Lost memories from these Days*, 2008, video, 6’ 54”, camera: Hrvoje Franjić, editing: Sanjin Stanić, videostill, courtesy of Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka
Matyáš Chochola, Congress of the Lords, 2016, installation: plastic chairs, spray, hemp hair, courtesy of the artist, photo: Ansis Starks