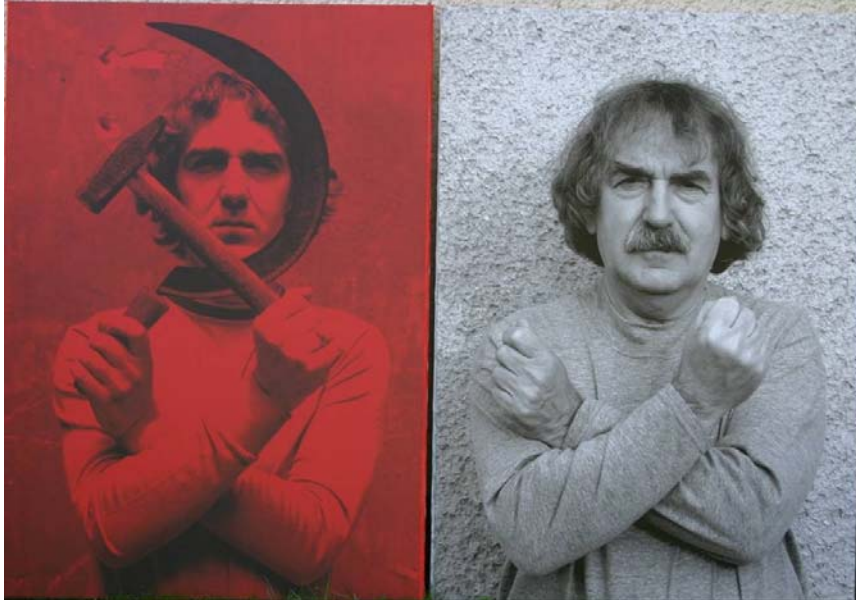


CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION



Roles of the Visual in Overcoming Dictatorships (conference) **Aston Webb Building, University of Birmingham, 9 Oct. 2008, 9-4**

The conference (organised to mark the opening of the exhibition *Overcoming Dictatorships*, Aston Webb Building, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 9 Oct.-9 Nov. 2008) will explore the intersections of the visual arts in mediating the political, socio-economic and cultural changes in post-dictatorial societies and the impact of such changes on cultural production. It brings together a select group of speakers whose research explores aspects of overcoming totalitarian and authoritarian systems in different disciplines but with a focus on the visual arts (and an emphasis on the period since 1989).

Dr. Sue Malvern (University of Reading) will examine works by women artists in Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia and their legacies of feminism and dissidence in post-Communist Europe, while **Maja Fowkes** (UCL) and **Dr. Reuben Fowkes** (Manchester Metropolitan University and initiators of SocialEast Forum) will explore the reluctance to deal with live political questions through the case of Hungarian artist Csaba Nemes, asking whether it reflects more the legacy of local (art) histories or the newly-adopted rules of a politically acquiescent international art system. **Dr. Rose Whyman** (University of Birmingham) will consider trends in counter-culture art since the 1990s in Russia and **Prof. Brandon Taylor** (University of Southampton) will discuss the artistic culture of the British monarchy in recent decades to locate the 'Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie'. The concluding panel discussion will be chaired by **Prof. Cillian Ryan** (University of Birmingham).

The conference will be preceded by a round-table discussion with artists participating in the *Overcoming Dictatorships* exhibition (8 October 2008, 18.30, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham). Chaired by the off-site curator of the Ikon Gallery Helen Legg, it will focus on up and coming contemporary art groups in post-Communist countries and draw parallels with the situation immediately after 1989, when the former underground art replaced the official.

(For the programme and the booking form, see below).

Overcoming Dictatorships (exhibition)
Aston Webb Building, University of Birmingham, 9 Oct.-9 Nov. 2008
(weekdays, 10-5; admission free)

The exhibition explores art produced in response to the collapse of political authoritarian systems, particularly those of the Soviet bloc in 1989. It aims to create a dialogue on post-dictatorial experiences among participants from countries designated as 'Eastern' and 'Western' Europe. The 17 works deal with processes of mourning, remembering and overcoming the past. They critique old collective identity formations (i.e. the Soviet bloc, National Socialism and Fascism), questioning western political and socio-economic uniformities (including the EU) and critically engage with 'new' dictatorships such as consumerism, globalisation and mass media.

Overcoming Dictatorships aims to challenge compartmentalised thinking and thus attempts to overcome authoritarian systems. Starting in Birmingham, where the exhibition will be opened by **Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock** (Leader of the Opposition, 1983-92 and UK Commissioner of the EU, 1995-2004) and **Professor Michael Sterling** (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham), this exhibition will travel to galleries in several European countries.

For information on the project, see the project website <http://lehrstuhl-europastudien.eu/eu/> and the artists' blog <http://overcomings.blogspot.com/>.

For further information about the exhibition
contact Press and Marketing Officer

Antonia Grousdanidou on **07778 573599** or **info.overcomingdictatorships@googlemail.com**

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Round table discussion with the participating artists of *Overcoming Dictatorships* chaired by Helen Legg, 8 Oct. 2008, 6.30pm

Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 · www.ikon-gallery.co.uk · no booking required

Roles of the Visual in Overcoming Dictatorships, 9 Oct. 2008, 9am - 4pm (conference on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition *Overcoming Dictatorships*)

Department of History of Art, The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT
Booking details: see below

Exhibition: *Overcoming Dictatorships*, 9 Oct. – 9 Nov. 2008

The Rotunda Gallery, Aston Webb Building, The University of Birmingham
Mon – Fri, 10 am-5pm; closed weekends
Admission Free

The project is kindly funded by:



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

- Conference -
Roles of the Visual in Overcoming Dictatorships

9 Oct. 2008, 9-4
University of Birmingham (Edgbaston Campus, Aston Webb Building), Birmingham

Wed., 8 Oct. 2008

Venue: **Ikon Gallery, Birmingham**

The gallery remains open until 18.30. The Ikon Gallery will show works by Martin Creed at the time (<http://www.ikon-gallery.co.uk/>)

Art groups in the 1990s and 2000s in East Europe. Round-Table discussion (which will feed into the paper on Russian art presented by Dr. Rose Whyman on the following day) at the Ikon Gallery with artists whose works will be shown in *Overcoming Dictatorships* (chaired by Helen Legg, off-site curator, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham).

Th., 9 Oct. 2008

Roles of the visual in overcoming dictatorships (conference)

(University of Birmingham, Aston Webb Building, Birmingham)

- 9.00 Registration
 - 9.30 Opening of conference and session convener: Dr. Jutta Vinzent (University of Birmingham)
 - 9.35 Dr. Rose Whyman (University of Birmingham): Counter-cultural Art and Performance in Russia since Perestroika
 - 10.00 Maja Fowkes (University College London) and Dr. Reuben Fowkes (Manchester Metropolitan University and initiator of SocialEast Forum; see www.translocal.org): Supported, Tolerated or Forbidden: Contemporary Art and Memory Politics through the case of the 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and Csaba Nemes's REMAKE
 - 10.30 Coffee BREAK
Session convener: Dr. Nick Martin (University of Birmingham)
 - 11.00 Dr. Sue Malvern (University of Reading): The Spoils of Freedom: Feminism and art after the fall of socialism
 - 11.30 Prof. Brandon Taylor (University of Southampton): The Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie (until 12.00)
 - 12.30 Opening of the exhibition (including a buffet lunch) with speeches by Professor Michael Sterling (VC of the University of Birmingham) and Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock (Leader of the Opposition, 1983-92 and UK Commissioner of the EU, 1995-2004)
 - 3-4 Panel discussion with speakers of conference and participants of the EU-project (chaired by Prof. Cillian Ryan, former Director of the European Research Institute, University of Birmingham)
- End of the conference**



CRN
(Heritage, Cultural Production and
Interpretation Collaborative Research
Network of the University of Birmingham)

ABSTRACTs of the papers:

Dr. Rose Whyman (University of Birmingham): Counter-cultural Art and Performance in Russia since Perestroika

This paper considers some trends in counter-cultural art since the 1990s in Russia. Various forms of 'unofficial art' existed in Soviet times, fuelled partly the desire to pursue links with the pre-Soviet past. Conversely, new freedoms have sometimes resulted in the expression of irreverent attitudes to the Russian classics and at other times a desire on the part of artists to be considered as part of international art movements rather than specifically Russian ones. Notions of cultural democracy, so intrinsic to British counter-cultural art are at great variance to Russian ideas of art and empowerment, though for many Russians the link is intrinsic. I will also discuss some of my own experiences of working on community arts projects in Russia and this paper will present as case studies the work of the Blue Noses, a Siberian art collective, German Vinogradov, a performance artist based in Moscow and Vladimir Logutov, a video artist from Samara. The work of all these artists remains subject to censorship of various kinds.

Maja Fowkes (University College London) and Dr. Reuben Fowkes (Manchester Metropolitan University and initiator of SocialEast Forum; see www.translocal.org): Supported, Tolerated or Forbidden: Contemporary Art and Memory Politics through the case of the 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and Csaba Nemes's REMAKE

The relationship of art and politics in contemporary Eastern Europe has a complex pre-history. During the later period of Communist rule, and specifically since the relaxation of the dictates of Socialist Realism following de-Stalinisation, stylistic experimentation in art was generally tolerated by the authorities, as long as artists avoided direct reference to politics in their work. Artists who declined to engage in self-censorship, and directly challenged the political system, or dealt with taboo subjects in recent history, were faced with the banning of their work, the closure of exhibitions, and even personal harassment. At the same time a well-supported network of state artists benefited from regular commissions, prizes and other institutional perks, as a reward for artistic and political conformism. This divisive situation was famously described as the system of the 'Three T's', referring to the categories (in Hungarian) of the Supported, the Tolerated and the Forbidden. This paper looks at the relationship of art and politics in Eastern Europe since 1989 and examines the readiness of contemporary art to address controversial issues around the memory of past political upheavals. It asks whether the overall reluctance to deal with live political questions reflects more the legacy of local (art) histories or the newly-adopted rules of a politically-acquiescent international art system. These wider issues will be discussed through the case of Hungarian artist Csaba Nemes's REMAKE (2007), a series of ten animated films dealing with the riots in Budapest that broke out on the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. REMAKE is significant both for its treatment of the manipulation of popular memories of 1956 by the media and politicians during the anniversary and for the strong reactions that the work provoked in both the art world and Hungarian society.

Dr. Sue Malvern (University of Reading): The Spoils of Freedom: feminism and art after the fall of socialism

Between 1997 and 2001, Croatian artist Sanja Ivekovic made a series of photoworks, *Gen XX*, in which advertisements from women's magazines were annotated with texts remembering women active in anti-fascism and once known as national heroes in socialist former Yugoslavia but forgotten by consumerist society. In 2001, the Belgrade lifestyle magazine *Prestup*, invited Milica Tomic to be photographed for its October issue

cover. She posed as one of five members of the Peoples Liberation Movement publicly hanged in 1941 for anti-fascist resistance. Both Tomic and Ivekovic produce works which examine the implications for women of forgetfulness in the new economic order following the fall of dictatorships. This paper will examine works by women artists from Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia which have examined legacies of feminism and dissidence in post-Communist Europe revealing what sociologist Renata Salecl in her book *The Spoils of Freedom* 1999 has called 'the 'dark-side' of post-socialism'.

Prof. Brandon Taylor (University of Southampton): The Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie

The oppressive tastes of the modern European bourgeoisie are characterised by secrecy, convention, a desire for tradition, and a slavish adherence to various signifiers of reassurance: landscape, the bourgeois family, animals, and accumulated wealth. The epitome of bourgeois taste in contemporary Europe is to be located in the remaining monarchies and their households, that in many cases have resonated with the trappings of the authoritarian dictators. This paper looks a little more closely at the stupefying artistic culture of the British monarchy in recent decades, its attempts and failures to adapt, and finally the prospects for the overcoming of its depthless and philistine ways.

Roles of the Visual in Overcoming Dictatorships (conference)

9 Oct. 2008, 9-4

University of Birmingham (Aston Webb Building), Birmingham

All bookings will be acknowledged with receipt and confirmation of a place. Please ensure you provide your full details below and return to Dr. Jutta Vinzent or Deborah Clements (address below) no later than 5 October 2008.

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Title and name:	
Institution:	
Mailing Address:	
Telephone:	
Mobile:	
<u>Email:</u>	

CONFERENCE FEES: £25,- (reduced conference fee £15,-)

The conference fee includes:

- All conference sessions and the Ikon Gallery event
- Coffee and tea during the conference
- Opening of the exhibition *Overcoming Dictatorships* (with buffet lunch)

I wish to attend the full programme (including the Ikon Gallery event): YES/NO

BOOKING FORM

Please reserve place (s) at this conference at cost (include proof for reduced fee)

Cheque payments:

I enclose a cheque to a total of £_____

*(Cheques must be in sterling and drawn on a UK bank. Please make payable to **The University of Birmingham**)*

Credit/debit card payments:

Please debit my card with £_____

Card type: VISA/MASTERCARD/SWITCH/SOLO (delete as appropriate)

Card no: _____

Expiry Date: ___/___

Card security code (last 3 numbers on back of card): _____

Issue no: (debit cards only) _____

Start date (if applicable): _____

Please note that there can be no refunds 4 weeks after receipt of your payment. Please send this form by **post** for both cheques and credit/debit cards, as it is not secure to send credit card data by any other electronic means including email.

To:

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The Barber Institute of Fine Arts/University of Birmingham
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