

THE EX-EASTERN BLOC'S POSITION IN THE NEW CRITICAL THEORIES AND IN THE RECENT CURATORIAL PRACTICE

Ostalgia, New Museum, New York, 6 July – 2 October 2011

Sanja Ivekovic, *Sweet Violence*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 18 December 2011 – 26 March 2012

EDIT ANDRÁS

Edit András is an art historian, and senior research fellow at the Research Institute for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest. She is the editor of the publication *Transitland: Video Art from Central and Eastern Europe 1989 - 2009*, (Museum Ludwig, Budapest, 2010). She contributed with articles and studies in collective volumes, like *Art After Conceptual Art* (edited by Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2006).

When the East Was Out

The ex-Eastern bloc's (and definitely Hungary's) desire to integrate in the international art scene reminds of those military troops which were not told that the war was over. In the artistic context this means that the domination of the centre, in which any smaller or marginal scene could integrate, and to which it once had to adjust if it wanted to join the modern world which counted (i.e. the Western civilization) simply ceased to exist. For now it is common knowledge that after the phenomenon called the postcolonial turn, the disintegration of the centre gave rise to many smaller local nuclei. With it the grand narrative, that is, the canon by which one could gain access, if not to prominent places, then at least to the advantaged and well defended temple of art, has disappeared, too. This compass which guaranteed a scale of values, together with a number of related privileges, began to break in its fundamentals around 1989, and in the geopolitical constellation that came after September 11, 2001 it lost all its functions. The place of the grand narrative was taken by a set of micro-narratives which, unlike the precedent construction, which was vertical and hierarchical, began to organize itself as a regional, cross-regional, transnational and awry network, with no formal regularities. Therefore, even the special nature of the West-East axis has lost its *raison d'être*. The "privileged" and undoubtedly attention generating situation resulting from being the "less developed" counterparty to the Western self, as a kind of projection field, does not bother anyone anymore, because marginality – as a position of discourse – has multiplied as well. In other words, all sorts of marginal positions compete for attention on the art scene thus enlarged.

The belief that we must wait patiently or facilitate by PR actions for the world to discover us as a kind of unpolished diamond is a widespread delusion. The truth is that in order to get attention one should work for it. It is almost a commonplace that the product must be specific, local, because today nobody is interested in a mainstream product, which has only been added some local colour. However, the content, the issue, the message to be communicated, must still participate in the global public discourse and even if it has to do it from local positions, the language must also be comprehensible for outsiders. But the mediating action of cultural translation, the exploration of the local cultural context, cannot be avoided. That is, of course, if we want to be seen and heard.

The East Could Be In

The new critical theories seem to be in our favour. We are in the midst of an intensive international discourse, a public discourse consisting of debates, a discourse that is open and in which, at least in principle, anyone can participate. If there is a right time for it, now is the moment to get out of the peripheral situation that characterizes the ex-Eastern bloc, for the world is just waiting for the experience and the accumulated knowledge for which this region has a great potential. In fact, the core of this international discourse is precisely the very desire to find new points of reference in interpreting the world and to weight our survival chances in a world full of tensions, disruptions and violence both at a macro and a micro level. Participation is possible, of course, but not by means of a second hand, low tech imitation of today's tendencies or trends of an imagined centre. If this strategy could still work in the modernist paradigm, nowadays it no longer has a chance. Artificially keeping alive or reviving any historical attitude is also not a viable option, and even less in the name of pluralist neutrality, which had always been a market imperative, an imperative which is simply a fake. Nowadays it is inevitable to pick sides and to neatly define the local and the particular position from which one speaks. (It is for this reason that the word *agency*, meaning "authorization", "representation", is used so often in the international discourse.) But the artificial breathing of a *passé* phenomenon does not work either, because, as it happens with age, we can imagine ourselves young and fit, we can even give this impression to others, but the younger generations know precisely that we are not part of them. However, that does not mean that we should leave the past aside. On the contrary: by modifying and moving to the fore the concept of temporality, that is, the acceptance of the simultaneity of different temporalities, the understanding of the past and its analysis gain an extraordinary importance, but in terms of interpreting the present and its dilemmas, and by no means from the nostalgic desire to relive the past. For modernity and for modernism (in which postmodernism counts as a final act), the present only existed in relation to the future, being treated as something secondary, worthless, while the past was necessarily carved in stone and canonized.¹

A changed relationship with time is one of the main arguments for the fact that, as a concept, contemporary art is used by various theorists in a narrower and more specific sense than that of art made by our contemporaries²: this term designates rather a new period, a new attitude, one that comes after modernity and is fundamentally different from it, and what reaches the centre, in the absence of a clear picture about the future, is, in the shadow of the haunting past, the intense living of the present, its exploration. Therefore, the apolitical character of the preceding epoch, its non-historical vision, came to be substantially eroded after 1989, and after 9/11 it became completely untenable and anachronistic. Its place was taken by the state of permanent intellectual alertness, by self-reflection and critical thinking.

All in all, in this new landscape of discourse, the withdrawal of the modernist canon unfavourable to all kinds of margins and the very large, unprecedented circle of new possible alliances have created a favourable situation: they gave the former Eastern bloc the opportunity to get out of the imaginary shadow of the Iron Curtain. I'm most certainly not speaking about the ephemeral globalism of the nineties, which tricked us with the abolition of state boundaries and wanted to knead the world into a homogeneous dough. This illusion has crumbled along with the collapse of the Twin Towers, when the construction of new walls and the establishment of new borders has begun, along with hunting an illusory enemy in places he has left a long time ago and the suspension, on behalf of this hunt, of democracies, together with the legitimization of this "state of exception"³ and the nationalist and fundamentalist political forces gaining ground.

Most of the contemporary art went against this process meant to establish a new hierarchy and developed horizontal networks covering each other. In this regard,

[1] Boris Groys, "Beyond Diversity Cultural Studies and Its Post-Communist Other," in Boris Groys, *Art Power*, Chicago, MIT Press, 2008, pp. 149–163.

[2] Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?*, Chicago–London, University of Chicago Press, 2009; see also *e-flux journal*, no. 11, December 2010 and no. 12, January 2011, especially the texts on the interpretability of contemporary art.

[3] Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Documenta 11 curated by Okwui Enwezor is a kind of absolute crossroad. It made clear the irrepressible need for space of the margins and the dissolution of the centre, which never recovered after this loss of position and increasingly wanders in the land of spectacle, in the dubious meanders of the cultural industry, in the need for providing entertainment for the masses, that is, in an industry which does not need too many professional references. Many museums are trying to preserve the myth according to which they call the tune by all kinds of blockbuster exhibitions, even if the museum remained only one of the possible venues among the many biennials, alternative exhibition spaces, public space, and community projects. In theory, the regaining of consciousness may be stated in direction shifts such as "provincializing Europe"⁴ (the euro-centrism may even be forgotten – it became unacceptable long time ago), if we look from the former third and fourth worlds, respectively that of "provincializing Western Europe", if we look from the Eastern and Central Europe. In other words, instead of chasing mirages, the formulation and articulation of relevant positions both in the production of art and in its interpretation became topical.

[4] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

East-East Competition

The bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia through civil war has certainly participated in the differentiation of the Balkans from the Eastern bloc and in its differentiation as a sub-region on the European scene, a sub-region which gave rise to powerful works that reflect upon war and changing identities. No doubt that the dominant feature of the nineties was the standing out of the Balkans, due to the former Yugoslavia's relative separation from the socialist camp and to the possibility to quickly mobilize of its communication network which, because of this very separation, was wider than that of other nations. In addition, there came the momentum of the theoretical work focussing on this sub-region, as well as the market's hunger for exoticism. Last but not least, the guilty conscience of the West also contributed to the boom of the Balkans as a topic.

Because of its location, the periphery of the former socialist camp, for example, the Baltic States or Romania, has kept its lucidity and the various types of critical monitoring that it has developed, respectively, the enormous advantage of the margin, which acts against getting too comfortable, as opposed to the paralysing nature of centrality, with its risk of illusory benefits – the case of Hungary. The obtuse sense of a cultural supremacy based on such a centrality has no credibility in a fundamentally multinational and multicultural region: politically, such a concept has already and repeatedly proven damaging, while artistically it is simply untenable. Definitely, it's more than unfortunate to refer to theories of special ticket travellers, to any essential Hungarian-ness, when the era of timeless and essential identities has ended. In fact, even the existence of such an identity is called into question today by the critical discourse. In addition, there is no demand for fixed identities. And, of course, we can obstinately go against the present and the world, but this can only mean that we are simply stuck in a dead end of history.

However, there is receptivity for the mapping of the post-socialist condition, to the analysis of the alloys of socialist remains, populist nationalism and racism, as well as for the capturing of the general life sentiment resulting from these alloys. Last but not least, there is receptivity to the confrontation of these experiences with other similar ones, be they post-totalitarian, post-apartheid or post-colonial. (This is exemplified by the work of WHW and the Istanbul Biennial they organized.) Anyone in the region can participate in these debates. There is enough ammunition for it. Dealing with one's own past, traumas and tragedies experienced is a preparation for approaching the dilemmas and the serious issues of the present. As for art, the exodus from society and the reclusion in the solitude of the studio in order to explore formal issues make us less suitable for such a

preparation; this requires rather communication, responsiveness to social issues, collective responsibility and collaboration. (In the new millennium, Slovak, Romanian, Estonian, Lithuanian artists, the Croatian curatorial collective WHW and the Polish art historian Piotr Piotrovski, an important actor of the region's art and art theory,⁵ started off and came to the fore from this platform of debates.)

Public discourse is not achieved easily. Artists, curators, theorists and critics have to work for it, not to mention the institutions. Public discourse is not something easy to grasp since it is in constant motion, even in its terms and way of speaking: more and more topics and attitudes keep on coming one after another in order of relevance and "urgency". In order to jump on this train in motion, one must travel with the same speed. This is equally true for both art and theory. One cannot ignore the movement of the interpretation framework, if one wants to intervene at a certain point.

East–West Return Match

The terminology referring to Eastern Europe has kind of aged lately, in part because, with the collapse of the Iron Curtain, that homogenizing name has lost its validity, in part because the roads took by the former Soviet Union and its former satellites have also split formally. Speaking about regional relations, the new term "East-Central Europe" is meant to define a special position in Europe and, more importantly, the fact that Russia does not belong to this category. Local scientific discourse prefers terms like post-socialist or post-Soviet, which delimit in time the collective experience and also determine a scale of intensity, while the scientific discourse overseas chooses the word "post-communism", which sounds better and louder. The theory that calls the tune nowadays speaks not only of the former East, but also of the former West.⁶ According to this theory, the East–West/centre-periphery opposition has lost its reason. The East is just one of the many parallel local scenes. Although this leads to a fragmentation of the attention in comparison to the prominent role of a Cold War opponent, there are also beneficial aspects of this restructuring: for instance, an increase in the value of the peripheral position and of the accumulated historical experience. At least in theory.

The proof of the pudding is provided by the exhibition *Ostalgie*⁷ held in the summer of 2011 in New York, which remains a powerful and trend-setting scene. Coined from expressions suggesting East and nostalgia, and used especially in an East German context, even the title seems to imply something negative. But the subtitle (Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics) does it unequivocally, especially as the exhibition itself is a gigantic Russian-Soviet performance (populating all floors, hallways and nooks of the New Museum), spiced with a little "totalitarianism" and bringing "delegates" from all countries. There are, of course, great names (Bulatov, Ivekovic', Stilinovic', Toomik, Sala, Ondák), among which iconic figures (Brătescu, Grigorescu, Koller, Kovanda, Hajas) and great works, but the main issue is not that, but the way these works are used, to whom and to what context they relate, which is the big picture suggested and the message they bear.

The exhibition offers a casual, easily digestible entertainment, for the locals eager to escape by means of ideological shivers the flood of tourists and the hot weather in Manhattan. Perhaps the target audience is the Coney Island Russian emigration, aristocratic, white and on the verge of extinction. Perhaps this explains the frequent references to Nabokov, although the latter's nostalgia, if it existed at all, referred to another period. Anyway, curator Gioni Massimiliano follows Nabokov in taking the position of a curator-artist, interprets his exhibition as a "philological reconstruction of the past and in creating of a new fiction". The ghost of Coney Island is haunting Diana Arbus' perspective, with all its accessories: the oppressive, grotesque, poor atmosphere of the

[5] He proposed the Clark's Research and Academic Program's East-Central Europe initiative: a seminar series entitled *Unfolding Narratives: Art Histories in East-Central Europe after 1989*, which was held in different cities with different focuses ("Thinking Art History in East-Central Europe", Tallinn, 14–15 May 2010; "Art History on the Disciplinary Map in East-Central Europe", Brno, 18–19 November 2010; "Art History Meets Art Theory/Historiography and Theory in East-Central Europe", Bucharest, 20–21 May 2011).

[6] <http://www.formerwest.org/>

[7] *Ostalgie*, New Museum, New York, 2011. See a lengthier review entitled "Whose Nostalgia is Ostalgie", *Springerin*, 2011/4 [<http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft.php?id=74&pos=0&extid=0&lang=en>].

fifties. According to this scenario, Schütte's skeletons, grey-faced, with empty orbits and prematurely aged, and the bishop figure signed Balka, hidden in a dark corner and inspiring fear rather than awe, seem to play the part of the bogeyman. The kin of folklore fairy-tale characters, forced to tinker in socialist conditions, is represented by Vladimir Arkhipov's huge collection of objects found on Soviet territory and the tools made from them, as well as by Anri Sala's hero, Edi Rama, the artist-mayor who coloured Tirana, while the myth of the nomadic, primitive, backward world is brought to life through the shamanic objects created by Evgeny Antufiev, a Siberian under 25, who uses wolf and dog teeth, his mother's hair and rags. The Cossack Said Atabekov promises a little savageness with a video in which "a children's swing reminds of a Kalashnikov" – says the explanation on the wall. The obnoxious "socialist" soft porn photos signed by Boris Mikhailov, a genuine mascot of the art market, remind of some low-tech home videos and occupy a display case the size of an entire hall, taking off the edge or, more precisely, adding strong melodramatic tones to the powerful conceptual work of Stilinović exhibited in the same space. The latter deleted all the definitions in a dictionary and replaced them with the word "pain". Tibor Hajas's *Self-Fashion Show* had also suffered from being put in a context meant to make it more exotic than it is: what transpires through the work is no longer a boundless desire for freedom or an intention to make the public taste a life unwatched by any higher instance; because of the medium, a 13mm film, the costumes seem out-dated, everything is of a dull grey, evoking rather the life sentiment of the spiritually maimed, of the disappointed, a sentiment that twenty years later, in "the goulash communism", was no longer a major attitude.

If within the category called "Eastern Europe" the selection of artists has been mostly acceptable, this is no longer true, despite their numerical advantage, for the Soviets/Russian artists. Mikhailov's slippery pornographies, as well as the collages and prints verging on kitsch signed by Brusilovski and Lobanov, evoking the atmosphere of Soviet souvenirs shops, are hardly representative for the Russian scene. Zarva's distorted portraits on the front cover of the magazine *Ogonyok* (in 2001!) also do not disclose past reality, a reality that – according to the explanation accompanying the work – the false realist-socialist joy of life had hidden. The only thing that these portraits allow us to see is the desire that the existence behind the Iron Curtain is to be seen again – through an "up to date" simplification – as something grotesque.

However, great names of the broader regional scene have been omitted, names whose absence not only makes the story incomplete, offering a much more meagre image of history than it actually was, but also further complicates the reading of works on display, even if the curatorial concept used wanted to avoid a regional-geographical review. The omission of representative names for one period or another is motivated by the curator of the exhibition through the desire to introduce new names for the New York public, other than those who exhibit regularly in the City and are almost considered American artists, whatever their origin (two examples: Kabakov and Abramović), or those who have already had the opportunity of making themselves known (such as Kozyra or Żmijewski), a point of view resembling rather that of a commercial head hunter in search of "fresh meat," and not that of an art-historical argument.

The magic phrase which always claims a sort of immunity from criticism is "personal position." which is supposed to mean the conscience of a life path, of a socialization, of a particular position assumed and determined by a commitment, a conscience that, as such, is inevitably subjective and does not deludes itself with the intent of revealing the only "objective" narrative possible, but definitely does not legitimate, from this only, any whim, and much less excuses someone, in the name of a curator-artist's position, from the exigency of historical research and accuracy.

In the nineties, the New Museum was one of the most radical alternative institutions, the first that rasped all kinds of taboos and assumed sensibility for social issues in the immediate proximity of the SoHo's commercial galleries. Today, its heir on Bowery, in the Lower East Side once populated by Eastern European immigrants and today by more than conveniently remunerated yuppies, retains its old attitudes only through fashionable slogans – even up to date ones – present in its rhetoric. Behind the mask provided by buzzwords and topoi stringing in the exhibition's catalogue, the same dusty clichés whose encouraging disappearance is announced by the new critical discourse are smuggled in. If at a theoretic and rhetorical level one cannot establish blunt hierarchies and subordinations, since the colonial viewpoint become simply tasteless, it seems that there are still plenty of curatorial means by which the old power relations may be restored.

[8] Roxana Marcoci (ed.), Sanja Iveković: *Sweet Violence*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2011.

West–West Match

If the New Museum was an old fairy who put a curse on the ex-Eastern bloc with its *Ostalgia* exhibition then it is MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) that made an attempt to shield the region from the curse's damaging effect by launching its *C-MAP* (Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives) project, and by its Sanja Iveković exhibition entitled *Sweet Violence*.⁸

If there is a loser in the changed discursive landscape – the crisis of modernism, expansion of the new critical theories, and broadening of the scene – it is definitely MoMA, once the sacred temple of modernism. Nowadays, it has to tolerate such atrocities which would have been unimaginable earlier; MoMA and its opinion and value system is not so important anymore, as was declared by Ruth Noah, one of the curators of the latest Kassel documenta on the conference on Iveković. When a local compatriot questioned what an “unknown” Eastern European woman is doing in MoMA, the answer came from the audience again, declaring that the artist is part of the canon (written elsewhere) and that MoMA is the one who is catching up.

The main feature of the New York art scene is its aggressive competitiveness. If it gets knocked down, which rarely happens, but is the case nowadays as a consequence of globalization, it pulls around, and reorients itself. It does not stick to dogmas or specific positions, but is very flexible indeed. The point is to survive and stay in competition. Concerning MoMA, its other virtue is its self-reflective attitude, that it is able to acknowledge the change in orientation, even if it is not favourable to it; so it is ready to reposition itself. We are in the midst of the dynamic restructuring of the scene in New York City, part of which is an exchange of roles.

In the nineties one of the ex-rivals of MoMA, and even a very critical one, was the New Museum, which for now has lost some of its professional prestige, offering light, easily digestible exhibitions that provide posh small-talk topics. MoMA, on the other hand, stood back from the spectacle and glamour of showbiz and made its audience work intellectually; in the same way as the institution itself works hard for its repositioning. Its ongoing *C-map* project is a kind of face-lift, based on research (a key word of today's discourse), which in this case means acceptance of its own limited spectrum and arbitrariness. Thus, it is doing its best to correct the “handicap” of being for quite a while the canonizing center of modernism through learning, travelling, and networking. Our geopolitical region is in the forefront in this process of broadening the fields of interests of MoMA due to its accumulated experiences that have become once again relevant. In the core of this interest lies the region's politically loaded, critical, and highly innovative art of the sixties and seventies, for which the umbrella term “Fluxus” is applied, covering a broader field than just one specific trend of the period.

The exhibition of the Croatian woman artist Sanja Iveković, curated by Roxana Marcoci, has already been the product of this new attitude of MoMA. As it became clear at the press conference, the main reason for exhibiting her was not her geographical origin, but her connection to feminism. The museum wanted to start to correct its narrow canon with an artist with a double "handicap." By the same means, as the sixties is currently the most fashionable period due to its oppositional and political character, feminism is also in a front position on the basis of its criticism of the exclusive and patriarchal canon and its institutional critique; both aspects are highly relevant nowadays worldwide, even if the motivations are diverse in different geopolitical regions. In New York City, it is the rapid commercialization, institutionalization, and "the state of exception" in democracies that radicalizes the art making practices and interpretations. In our region, the overwhelming power, control, and arbitrariness of the state and institutions are the engine behind this drive.

The exhibition of Iveković was very touching and thought provoking, despite the fact that its presentation was very modest, even puritanical; there was no fuss around it. The local interpretations were based by and large on gender reading – which is not some curiosity anymore, but part of the professional discourse – mostly because the feminist context was given (although the text of the catalogue tries to broaden it) and because the institution was cautious about playing the Cold War card. The very political nature of her art still comes through, as it is nurtured by any kind of suppression, whether it is political or gender based.

The third heavy-weight player in the game was the Guggenheim with its big-shot, Marina Abramović, who greatly utilized her capital of radical oppositionality still after she left Yugoslavia in 1976, but which became less and less sustainable. Her performance and installation entitled *Balkan Baroque* in 1999 at the Venice Biennial was so overwhelmingly stirring that it received the Golden Lion Award, and rightly so. However, at the Whitney Biennial in 2004 the representation of the fratricide and its violent bloodshed was narrowed into the conflict of the lapse of Serbia from the European Union. The sort of appropriation of the conflict and its molding into "Serbian martyrdom" generated harsh criticism from the ex-fellow citizens in ex-Yugoslavia. Her video-installation named *Balkan Erotic Epic* in 2005 in Chelsea launched her overseas career, rather than showing commitment to her ex-socialist experiences. In her quite controversial performance reenactments, *Seven Easy Pieces*, one already could hardly find even traces of that cultural heritage anymore.

Instead of a compulsive justification of an illusory mainstream, the artistic strategy of Iveković, who remained in her native country, seems beneficial and rewarding. She takes a firm and persistent stand and from that angle shows the invisible traits of the issue, the canon's blind spots and its incompatibility with other parts of the world outside of the imagined centers. The worn-out slogan of Western feminism, "the personal is political," for example, is of absolutely no use when applied to its East-Center European version; better yet, the very opposite is relevant, that is: "the political is personal." which means that the politics saturate even under your skin. The reversed position is greatly revealed by Iveković's work *Triangle* (1979) in which she makes obvious the strictly monitored borders between private and public life. She is sipping whisky, reading a book, and pretending to masturbate at her balcony at the same time as Tito is visiting Zagreb and passing by with his procession. The celebrating masses and all the public spheres are under constant surveillance from the roof by armed representatives of power, and not even the artist's "private" deviance can be avoided. The small photos speak relevantly about the constant control and patrolling the borders and the need of crossing them, at least symbolically by artists. The personal elements were present in her works from the very beginning of her activity, however, never for their own sake, but rather to shed light

on the social treatment of women (*Tragedy of Venus*, 1975). She confronted the anonymous models of ads with the story of anti-fascist partisans, thus commemorating them through her intervention (*Gen XX*, 1997–2001). In another project, she wrote the account of victims of domestic abuse onto billboards in public spaces (*House of Women. Sunglasses*, 2002). In her high profile anti-monument, a golden plated statue of a pregnant woman in Luxembourg (*Lady Rosa of Luxembourg*, 2001) placed next to the official heroic patriarchal monument, an idealized allegorical female figure, she directs the attention of the public to the everyday violence against women. After the gender critique became accepted she did not intend to be its beneficiary, but rather shifted her focus to other minorities. With the *Living Rohrbach Monument* (2005) she commemorated the victims of the Roma Holocaust of the city by reconstructing a group photo with the help of today's residents. This makes us aware also that feminism is not about replacing patriarchy with matriarchy, and not about narcissism either but rather proposes a reflective attitude towards any kind of exclusion and suppression and gives voice to the voiceless.

Undoubtedly, her modest show at the MoMA did not stir such a fuss as New Museum's *Ostalgia*, as it was more an elaborated, well-researched, and professional exhibition with no fancy showbiz, and it was not supported by good old Cold War stereotypes immediately clicking in. Charles Esche, one of the participants of the conference, proposed that instead of isolated solo-shows, agonistic parallel narratives should have been confronted. Ruth Noah put forward that, for now, an exhibition with a much wider spectrum would be timely, most probably *Gender Check*, as opposed to the policy of making small steps at a time.

MoMA certainly made a huge step forward, especially in comparison to itself, even if quite late, quite slow and quite vague. However, to make its compromised, exclusive, and Francophile past forgettable, it should pick up the pace to be able to outweigh the superficial attitude represented by *Ostalgia* that enforced the old status quo instead of challenging it. One can only hope that the *C-map* project will turn the ex-flagship of the art world into a challenger in parity with the new critical theories regarding its own curatorial practice. As for us, ex-Eastern bloc-ers being aware of the limited power of "fairy godmothers." our anticipation is, if not the altering of a wicked heart, at least assistance in breaking the spell or in the alleviation of its ill effect.

Translated by Alex Moldovan