

10 - CONFLICTS THROUGH ART

Art as an active social participant

Starting with the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, through totalitarian regimes' styles and the Hollywood factory, to popular culture, the aim of this workshop is to discuss turning points of the 20th century through a prism of culture. The focus is on an analysis of the social contexts and its direct reflection in the shapes of art and culture.

Turning points are difficult to isolate when viewed from a perspective of cultural development, so the aim of this workshop is to present and study the major landmarks of 20th century history as a time of change and their reflection in culture and intellectual production.

Observing the mutual interference between culture, history, politics and society during the century, topics in this workshop are focused on presenting major "crossing points" when art was a reaction to political movements. For that purpose, they should discuss various case studies shedding light on the relationship between politics and art.

Bearing in mind that art is an integral part of any culture; the papers should illuminate a wider context and the accompanying historical background.

PAPERS/CASE STUDIES:

Participants are free to select a topic of their own choice within this framework, in consultation with the moderator, after having received from him notification of their acceptance to the workshop.

I. Twenties in art- Dadaism

Arising as a reaction to the horrors of World War 1 and the nihilism it triggered, Dadaism soon spread from Europe to New York and Tokyo.

The aim of this topic is to introduce the main actors of artistic scene and their work, the styles and shapes of their representation of disillusioned social reality in the postwar period. The focus is on the social relevance of the artistic production and the political structures being criticized in those works.

II. Social realism

Once considered the only 'true, righteous, appropriate, suitable' direction in art by the regimes doctrinating its shapes and expression, social realism today is a leftover mainly in Eastern Europe. In today's world perspective, it seems to have been unique to those regimes.

Can we study art which was created/ produced under the influence of a totalitarian regime outside of its context? Free of any historical implications? What are the main ideas behind the works of art and their political inspirations? What were the rules imposed on artists? How are their works perceived today? Was there freedom of expression during social realism?

III. Nazi and Fascist 'artistic expression'

The focus here could be cultural turning points imposed by two major exhibitions of the period - *The exposition of great German art 1937- 1944*, München, and *The exposition of*

Degenerated art, 1937, München - Who, what and why was not/accepted? What was the ideology, the written thesis and speeches held that backed those exhibitions? In what way was the exhibition viewed as a clear mirror of political programme?

Another point of interest is political propaganda- art used like a tool of spreading ideology through public portraits, sculpture, film, photography, posters, architecture. This also includes futurism in Italy- an art movement which became an aggressive political programme supporting Mussolini.

IV. Influence of Hollywood

The global impact of images released through Hollywood shapes attitudes towards events. The aim is to investigate the background of the stories, their purpose, message and the public targeted by those images.

1. Pro/ anti war messages
2. The preaching of American ideology and the concept of American dream
3. Political activism through show business - influence on elections?
4. Its presentation of historical events today - eg. Valkyrie

V. 1968

The turning point of turning points as represented by 'subversive' movements – precise topic is open to be defined with moderator

VI. 'Novi val' (the New Wave) in ex. Yugoslavia

Music, film, design, posters and photography opening the country to the West. Why was it a turning point in its achievements? What was new, what were the major ideas of its creators and participants? How did the movement end?

VII. Postcolonial art

The consequences of colonialism are still burning issues in the modern culture, how to deal with problems we are facing today:

1. Language of literature- should it be written native languages or the language of ex. colonizers? What are positive and negative sides of both solutions? Who is the targeted reader- a native or a westerner?
2. How to handle works of art in former colonies and countries now at war (for example, Iraq)? Is returning art works to their countries of origin a reflection of 'colonial guilt'?
3. Books like 'Infidel' and 'Girls of Riyadh' and similar biographies- relevant source for determining historical fact or 'chick lit'? Is this modern literature filling top lists a new radical turning point in viewing 'oriental' women, where romantic harem odalisques earlier became tortured Muslim women?

VIII. Fashion nowadays

It is nowadays cool to wear a T shirt with Che, Marx, Freud, Christ, Tito... How can we trace 'shifting symbols' in our popular culture? Why are these people important? What did they represent before and what do they represent now?